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TOLSTOI AND THE DOCTRINE OF PEACE

Nowhere in modern times, I dare say, have the ideals that the current war in Europe has violated found a more moving exposition than in the later works of Tolstoi. Is war right? Are any of our hopes, or beliefs, or ideas worth fighting for? Tolstoi spent the last thirty years of his life giving these old and almost trite questions an impassioned negative. It is impossible to say what his influence has been. No corner of the world but has his admirers, even his disciples. The cult of peace has perhaps never had so many followers. And yet the irony of the present war, coming, as indeed he foresaw, within a few years of his death, is not without its comment on an inveterate militancy in the human passions that no interim of peace has as yet long suppressed.

There is a temptation to say that the past, even the present, is no criterion for the future. To stick forever at the limits of what has been is a poor-spirited way of taking life, unimaginative, not even pedestrian. Men change. No outworn and discarded institution but has had in its own day the support of the argument from reality. We have passed through and left behind conditions which had seemed too deeply rooted in human nature ever to go out—that human nature that has been the stalking horse for so many human weaknesses! At the same time hope and prediction gain no support from the bare fact that men do change, or even from the analogy of other hopes deferred but at last triumphant. Change has intensified many an evil; and there are hopes deferred over which the hearts of imen are still sick. Expectation must grow on firmer ground,

on the character of the idea itself—in relation, inevitably however, to that elastic but persistent human nature that has, as war has proved, its breaking point.

If the ideal is that of peace, the task is one for the reason. And this from logical necessities that strike one at the outset. In the first place the ideal of peace, unlike every other ideal, has deprived itself at a stroke of the normal last resort of self-defence. It can not take to arms. It has nothing to support it but its own degree of reasonableness. This would be a disadvantage a little hard to bear in the stress of practice. But it would have to be borne. The feelings, too, can hardly enter into the matter in more than a secondary and remote way. The ideal of peace is not the love of peace and not the hope that peace may indefinitely prevail. It differs from these feelings much as the ideal of universal love differs from the love of friends, or as any guiding principle differs from the corresponding instinctive enjoyment. For it is just the dreary function of the principle to regulate us when the instinctive enjoyment fails and the instinct rears itself in opposition.

And it will be just the dreary function of the ideal of peace to keep us unarmed when all our instincts are for fight. Moods and feelings change and only the passing one is valid. They are the running obligato to the current situation; as we listen it is only the passing cadence that moves us. Love of peace gives way to the passions of war. But the reason stays pretty much the same. And if we are to have something to fall back upon when our feelings are for war, it must be the recollection of a firm logic prepared in times when heads were cool. This restriction too has its disadvantage for the moment of practical need. It disarms the strongest ally of concerted action. But for the rational consideration of it there is a simplification in the enforced riddance of all but the rational appeal. We can hold ourselves the more persistently to the plain logic of the case, without sacrifice of essential factors, and without a dogging reflection that if logic fails there will still be a way out. If the examination of the doctrine of peace, therefore, is a task for the reason, Europe is scarcely in a state to-day to undertake it. One may question, indeed, whether the temper of America is quite cool enough. We have wished passionately for peace. And we have thrown our sympathies on the whole against the nations which we believe to have been responsible

for its breach. But the very presence of those sympathies rather takes the ground from under our feet. For we can hardly in logic sympathize even with a war against war without committing ourselves to the principle of war—that certain ideas are after all worth fighting for. It is because of just such inconsistencies that one may question whether our peace propagandists have in reality faced the problem in all its implications—whether they have not rather merely intensified their love of peace and their hope for its duration, without a too curious examination of their own logic, and without a full sense of all that the ideal must carry with it. For such superficiality, if it exists, Tolstoi is an ample corrective.

I

The examination dare hardly be cursory. Tolstoi, whether right or wrong, drank deeply of life, and touched it in many places with a nature so intense and a mind so well equipped that he carries us far below the surface. It is perhaps hazardous to venture an analysis of the reason; but if we may for the moment speak of it as falling into the religious reason on the one hand and the worldly reason on the other, we may view more clearly the two kinds of defence that Tolstoi offered for his ideal. And though he himself made no such dry categories for his impassioned appeals it may simplify our own task to risk them. We may do this with a better conscience, moreover, because we have agreed to be dryly logical.

For Tolstoi the doctrine of peace was a religious dogma. But it was peculiar in this, that instead of being the dogma of a religion already accepted, the dogma and the religion evolved in his mind together. The dogma was, in effect, the religion. And this fact offers so salient a surface to the consideration of what I have called the religious reason that if we are to take him on his own ground it will be well to follow the development that ended so significantly.

He began far enough away from both peace and moral fervor. At twenty-four he was a junker in the Russian army, and he fought through the Crimean war. And he was an aristocrat, an idler, a property owner, a man of letters, a libertine. "He is going the pace," wrote Tourgénéf from Petersburg shortly after the war, "sprees, gypsy girls, cards all night long—and

then he sleeps like a corpse till two in the afternoon. "His youth and his prime held, indeed, infinitely more than that, but they held that too. There follows from his Confession, published in 1879, the culmination of his life after forty-five years of rare success and distinction :

"My life came to a standstill. I could breathe, eat, drink, and sleep, and I could not help doing these things; but there was no life for there were no wishes the fulfilment of which I could consider reasonable. . . . Had a fairy offered to fulfil my desires I should not have known what to ask. . . . If in moments of intoxication I felt something which I can not call a wish, but a habit left by former wishes, in sober moments I knew this to be a delusion, and that there was nothing to wish for. I could not even wish to know the truth, for I guessed in what it consisted. The truth was that life is meaningless. . . .

"It had come to this, that I, a healthy, fortunate man, felt I could no longer live; some irresistible power impelled me to rid myself one way or another of life. I can not say I wished to kill myself. The power which drew me away from life was stronger, fuller, and more widespread than any mere wish.

"The thought of self-destruction now came upon me as naturally as thoughts of how to improve my life had come formerly. And it was so seductive that I had to be wily with myself lest I should carry it out too hastily. . . . And it was then that I, a man favoured by fortune, hid a cord from myself, lest I should hang myself from the cross-piece of the partition in my room where I undressed alone every evening; and I ceased to go out shooting with a gun, lest I should be tempted by so easy a way of ending my life.

"Involuntarily it appeared to me that there, somewhere, is someone who amuses himself by watching how I live for thirty or forty years, learning, developing, maturing in body and mind, and how—having now with matured mental powers reached the summit of life, from which it all lies before me, I stand on that summit—like an arch-fool—seeing clearly that there is nothing in life, and that there has been and will be nothing. And he is amused. . . .

"To-day or to-morrow sickness and death will come (they have come already) to those I love or to me; nothing will remain but stench and worms. Sooner or later my deeds, whatever they may have been, will be forgotten, and I shall not exist. Then why go on making any effort? How can a man fail to see this? And how go on living? That is what is surprising. One can only live when one is intoxicated with life; as soon as one is sober it is impossible not to see that it is all a mere fraud! That is precisely what it is there is nothing either amusing or witty about it; it is simply cruel and stupid."

All this takes us pretty near the bottom, Tolstoi lived on, however, thus submerged in despair. Moments of hope gave him from time to time a breath of life. But as often he sank back, going over and over the pages of his own experience, and of the life about him, and of the past, only to find his conclusions confirmed by his readings. Life was a tale told by an

idiot. How he emerged is a long and intricate tale of half rational, half spontaneous perceptions along the only path that leads out of such depths—the path of religious faith. For if a cosmic despair comes from a failure to find a significance revealed in life itself—from a failure to find a larger idea or will to which it contributes—the only hope must come from the conception of such an idea or will. That is, essentially, religion.

It takes no little courage, indeed, to face life in the crisis that comes to men of intelligence whose passion is for wisdom, and justice, and religious assurance. For what confronts them is the perception that all they care for is immaterial, insubstantial; that unlike knowledge it is not based on facts and is not susceptible of accumulation in external repositories; that it leads its precarious existence in the shifting desires of men. They have to bear the perception that just these supreme things have no sanction but men's passionate convictions, and that when conviction opposes conviction there is no appeal but to force. And force itself, though it determines which shall prevail, does nothing in the event to determine which is right. It is the belief of such natures that there is such a thing as truth, and that if truth could be found it would free men from just this plight. But what truth is there is no one to say.

The fault, after all, if fault must be imputed for such a sorry state of affairs, is to be laid at the door of humanity itself. If humanity had been content, so to speak, with its merely brute life, it could have got on with its eating and drinking and propagation without troubling itself with vague aspirations for it hardly even yet knows what. But it was not content. It had its vague aspirations. And it devised infinite maxims, rules, laws, principles by which to attain its uncertain end. Moral affairs are an arbitrary invention. They have their origin in growing nuclei of human desires and opinions, and have their sanction only in the strength and prevalence of belief. Men do, it may be, grope in the dark for ultimate truth, but ultimate truth still lies hidden. And though now here and now there a man believes he had found it, yet he has no assurance but his inner conviction—which from another's point of view is no better than his own—indeed not so good. If such a description seems to repudiate the authority of religion it must still appear that religion is in the same case, resting either upon arbitrarily conceded authority or upon passionate belief ;

and that if an overruling providence is concerned with the growth of truth and justice and wisdom among men, he still works only through natural and human sanctions.

It was just this disheartening perception that sent Tolstoi in search of a calmer resting-place outside the turmoil. He found it, indeed, in Christianity, but in a Christianity curiously bent to his own purpose. It was a Christianity purged of all ritual and institutional expressions, and of all historical accumulations. It was based on the Gospels, but not on all of them or on all parts of any of them. It was a selection of particular utterances of Christ.

Inevitably such an eclecticism implies a standard of selection. This was supplied in Tolstoi's case by the consistent development of another idea in his mind. He was a Slav, and he inherited the deep inertia of Oriental passivism. This took shape in an aversion to practical affairs, to all organization, to parts within parts, to subordination. The spectacle of industrial, political, and social life filled him with horror because they were systems and complex—ungovernable by the simpler formulas of personal wisdom. No doubt it was from this predisposition that he found himself deeply affected by the writings of Rousseau. At all events no other secular writer had held him so steadfastly. And the primitivism of that arch-romanticist gave the bent that fixed the inclination of his later years.

"And indeed," he says in a later part of his *Confession*, "the bird lives so that it must fly, collect food, and build its nest; and when I see the bird doing that I joy in its joy. The goat, hare, and wolf live so that they must feed themselves, and propagate, and feed their families, and when they do so I feel firmly assured that they are happy and that their life is a reasonable one. And what does man do? He should earn a living as the beasts do, but with this difference—that he would perish if he did it alone; he has to procure it not for himself but for all. When he does that I have a firm assurance that he is happy, and that his life is reasonable."

It was but a step, if a step, to the simple ideal of the peasant's life. And this ideal from now on determined for Tolstoi the whole aim of his philosophy. To work with one's hands in the fields, to provide for all one's own wants, to make one's own house, and clothes and shoes, and to do this co-operatively with one's neighbours—that was the perfect thing. It did away with all the larger complexities of the social organization—with

administration, regulation, system, subordination, with all but the personal relation of man to man—and left the village and the pastoral tribe again the largest social unit. With the spectacle constantly before him of the villages of his own estate, it was not hard to determine the hindrances to such an ideal. The peasants were forced to pay taxes, to pay rent, and to contribute to the defence of their country in military service. All of these compulsions were contrary to their immediate desires, and contrary to the primitive simplicity of the life that nature seemed to have suggested to men in the example of the brutes. Moreover rent, taxes, and military service were contributions to that part of life that he had come to abhor. That life took its objective expression in property and government; and behind property and government, as their only sanction, was the principle of force.

The religious doctrine that emerged was simplifying. The Christian Gospels are indeed baffling, sometimes contradictory. But one who goes to them with a predisposition got elsewhere as a principle of selection, and with no regard to the authority of the documents themselves, finds the task fairly simple. It was by virtue of such an attitude that Tolstoi could ignore, for instance, the incident of Cæsar's taxes, and the incident of the money-changers in the temple, and pronounce as the central doctrine of Christ the sweeping principle of physical non-resistance. This principle undermined at a stroke all property, all government, the whole complex organization of society—undermined all that seemed to lie in the way of the ideal life of the peasant. Such was the evolution in Tolstoi's mind of the religion of peace.

The disturbing element in this evolution is the essentially secular origin of the predilection from which it took its start. For given such a predilection it was not hard to draw from the Scriptures a body of principles which would rationally fit with it. What is hard is to clothe such a selection with the sanctions of religion. Anyone alas!—even the devil himself—can quote Scripture for any opinion: For Tolstoi, indeed, it had full religious authority, for he had given it the voluntary acquiescence that is the essential note of religious faith. It could therefore solve his own personal problem, and afford a resting-place for his own spirit. But for other men who were oppressed by the finality of the worldly reason, it could, except by coincidence,

afford no resting-place at all. For when he had rejected the Bible, and even any whole unit of it to which a religious faith might have attributed an authority that was more than human, the weight of authority fell back upon his own very human judgment—on the discriminations and selections of his worldly reason. They were too clearly not dogma, but dogmatism. When all is said, the words of the prophet gain their authority through the abdication of his own reason in favour of a reason higher still. Newman falling back on Rome before the advance of rationalism in the Anglican church was more consistent with religious logic. For not only did he accept the Bible as absolute, but he accepted a current interpretation of it that was more absolute still. His own reason played no part in the postulation of ultimate truth. He had shifted the responsibility to an oracle whose foundation went back into a dim antiquity where tradition said that God Himself had spoken. It was in the hope of peace, indeed, that both men sought their religious solutions. But in this too Newman would seem to have been more essentially religious. For if religion is a spiritual matter, Tolstoi's peace was but remotely spiritual. Its dogma was physical non-resistance. For Newman, on the other hand, peace meant the serenity of the spirit itself, the surcease of his cosmic unrest, the peace that passeth all understanding. The clash of bodily force was but an aspect of that physical life for which Christianity was but little concerned—an affair of Cæsar's. The object of his quest was a refuge from just those troublings that the worldly reason was so helpless before. He found his peace in a surrender of his worldly reason before the predicated infallibility of Rome.

The world, however, has found something cold and archaic in this apparent giving-up. It fails to stir the modern sense. It means the relinquishment of too many passionately felt, individually conceived ideas—the resignation of too many precious heritances of independence and reason. But if we look thus closely into the roots of this antagonism to Newman's solution we may detect a latent irony awaiting those who find Tolstoi and his doctrine of physical peace more to their liking. For the very reasons that make the latter seem so much more vital are the militant hopes and aspirations that lie at the springs not of peace, but of war—the sense that their understanding is not to be passively resigned, that there is something in

the moral individuality too poignantly their one ultimate possession to be given up without compunction. They have not perhaps remembered that the physical peace that they have looked for can not come until such a surrender is made. For only when men relinquish their individual sense of right and truth in favour of some arbitrary authority will such peace actually come. Rome, Germany, England, Russia, America—some one's authority will have to be acknowledged and all other opinion relinquished, or there can be no peace. There seems, however, to be no such tendency to-day. Our peace advocates have kept their moral freedom. They have not, like Newman, put themselves on a peace footing, physical or spiritual.

In the end it is the effect of Tolstoi's religious doctrine that it has left the problem essentially where he found it—with truth and right still resting on men's passionately held opinion. If he found the worldly plight intolerable because the world yielded him no answer to his questionings, and no absolute standards by which to measure conflicting beliefs, it was no escape from this plight to erect but another opinion for men to disagree upon. We find ourselves, as a consequence, back in the province of the worldly reason.

II

If Tolstoi's religious reason left the problem still unsolved, he himself did not abandon it at that. He went on attacking it in right worldly terms. And indeed there is much to be said about it in this manner. For in logical thought there is something so uniform that we are not utterly without grounds of harmony and peace aside from religious precept. The universality of mathematics, for instance, in which struggle takes the form of rivalry and emulation, stands as a kind of exemplar of what the reason can do to bring men together in amity and agreement.

But the moral reason, alas! is not the mathematical reason. It has no such stable premises. It tries to rear a structure, but its foundations are unstable desires, and vague and elusive aspirations. Barmaid and scholar, St. Francis and Napoleon, Germany and France, Middle Age and Renaissance—its premises shift and vary from person to person, from people to

people, from time to time. And it is over moral matters that men go to war; not over matters of knowledge.

This distinction comes home to Tolstoi because the religious intransigence with which he assumed his tenet of non-resistance took on perforce, when he asserted it for other men, the character of a mathematical postulate. "A true Christian," he averred, "will always prefer to be killed by a madman than to deprive him of his liberty,"—or let a child be killed by a drunkard, he assented, than prevent its death by physical interference. This intransigence was characteristic of all the thinking of his later years. After he had written the *Kreutzer Sonata* and had formulated the law of perfect chastity, he stood unmoved by all sense of consequences. Better the race should perish in a generation, he said, than that the principle should be relaxed. There is a touch of the heroic in such an attitude, as of a Galileo maintaining a natural law that could afford in its eternity to mock at the ephemeral opinions of men. But it was after all an heroic futility. There is no such finality in the moral law.

Curiously enough Tolstoi was aware of this mathematical complexion of his logic, though not apparently of the fallacy of it. He used the geometric analogy again and again to defend the dogmatism of his assertions. Answering a critic he returned: "He does not realize when he says that the commandment of non-resistance in the doctrine of Christ is an exaggeration, that he is like one who, teaching the theory of the circle, declares that the equality of the radii is an exaggeration." The difficulty is of course that the circle is after all a mere postulate with all its laws implied in its universal definition, while in the moral life, not only is there no universal definition of the perfect thing, and no agreement as to its attainment, but these disagreements are just the occasion of all the evils the assumption proposes to correct. In effect, therefore, the intransigent postulation of the perfect thing in the moral world quite begs the question.

"Although we can never draw a mathematically straight line," he wrote, "we must never make another definition of a straight line than 'the shortest distance between two points.'" He would not see that in the moral world we are forever limited to the drawing of lines, and are trying to draw them straight, but that the definition of a straight line is just the thing no one

can make. We know neither the location of the points, nor the shortest distance between them. He would not see that the function of the moralist was not, like the mathematicians, to conceive the ideal and utter counsels of perfection, but rather to guide men in the intermediate steps in a very real and very baffling world. Here too, therefore, just as in his religious solution, he has failed to meet the difficulty. Just as there he met the insufficiency of the worldly reason with another worldly reason, so here he has met the problem of right living with a counsel of perfection.

III

Perhaps not many who hold the ideal of peace to-day have laid for it such deep foundations as Tolstoi has tried to do. Whether they might not have succeeded better if they had tried is a question that justifies a degree of quiet skepticism. If, weary of the infinality of the worldly reason, they had gone to religion for those standards upon which to base their judgments and guide their conduct, they would still have had to submit to established authority or else to proceed by a rational selection of dogmas. In the one case they would have had to abandon their own beliefs, even their belief in peace if that were not among the tenets of the accepted church. And in the other case they would have found the clearness of their own inner consistency roiled by the consciousness that they had started with a secular predilection to which the religious colour must forever seem but a superficial gloss. If they had resorted to dogmatism, they must have ignored the baffling realities that make the very problem they have sought to cure.

The course left to pursue, it would seem, is to abandon the mathematical reason, and follow the moral reason as far as it will take us. But there is a fatal difficulty in the way of this procedure. For if the moral reason goes forward by first examining the situation about it, and then finding the best that can be made of it, it can hardly, on this particular journey, discern an ideal of peace at the end of any vista. Tolstoi's own experience would seem to be an epitome of the difficulty. He had faced the moral dilemma from the point of view of a life rarely varied and deep. He saw that moral ideas have no sanction but the intensity of men's belief and their willingness

to defend them to the utmost. He saw that for those ideas, therefore, the only chance to prevail is the fighting chance. And his moral logic refused to assert that to give up that chance was the best that could be made of it. The ideal of peace, as he saw, must be got at a leap or it was not to be had. In his geometric method, therefore, there was the logic of necessity. What is left for us, then, is to follow that method, assume the ideal, deduce its implications, and see whether, in the light of the moral reason, they prove to be the things our love of peace prefigures them.

And here it is that Tolstoi is enlightening. He saw fearlessly and fully what the ideal implied. Those who merely want peace, he would have said, will go on as before; they do not count; everyone wants peace. Only those who believe in the principle of peace and disbelieve in the principle of war are with us, for only they have a constant guide to steady them when their feelings waver. The principle of war is force. The principle of peace is non-resistance. They must have the courage to face the fact that the principle of peace undermines all forms of property and all forms of government.

"... a true Christian," he says, "not only can not claim any right of property, but the term property can not have any significance for him. All that he uses a Christian only uses until someone takes it away from him. He can not defend his property so he can not have any." "... for a true Christian the term government can not have any signification and reality. Government is for a Christian only regulated violence; Government, States, Nations, property, Churches, all these for a true Christian are only words without meaning; he can understand the meaning other people attach to those words, but for him they have none. No compromise!"

There is indeed no compromise for those who cling to the ideal of peace. Property and government are nothing without the exercise of all necessary force. The case of property is interesting for the very simplicity of the demonstration—"All that he uses a Christian only uses till someone takes it away from him. He can not defend his property so he can not have any." There is a kind of irony not without illumination in the aloofness with which Tolstoi regarded the actual societies that sprang up under the inspiration of his teaching. He would have nothing to do with them—was impatient even at casual reference to them. They broke up one after another through troubles the very sordid trivialness of which made a kind of

Elizabethan low-comedy incongruity with the noble aspirations with which they set out, A youth—typically in one of the communes—awoke before his elder bed-fellow, and seeing a figured waistcoat among his companion's clothes, desired it, took it, and would not part with it, And indeed on the principle of non-resistance to which the commune was committed he was right. There was no *meum* and *tuum*. He wanted the waistcoat—and the commune disbanded. Men may indeed agree upon a *modus vivendi* by which to adjust a conflict of desires, but without the support of force such agreements are, simply, without force when men don't agree.

The case of government is only a degree less obvious. We do indeed grant it but reluctantly. The policeman as he saunters down his beat seems too feeble in the presence of the mass of citizens who throng by him to do more than symbolize an empty convention, relic of an older time when burghers were indeed ruled by the armed will of their over-lords. But when we inquire into the sanctions behind the laws we make, we find nothing but that sauntering policeman. Our child-labour inventions, marriage-law conventions, socialistic conventions come together, express their aspirations, appeal to our reason, touch our sympathies; but they adjourn and children go on working in factories, Reno flourishes, poverty and riches live on side by side. Such conventions have all the power that non-resistance can give them, And yet who that does not obey them now would obey them then when non-resistance was the principle of government? There would be no such thing as law but only the airy dreams of legislators,

It is perhaps a hard saying, but it has to be said, that government is nothing but the imposition by force of the will of the stronger upon the weaker. Whether the murderer, the swindler, the robber may not be absolutely right, no one knows, We deal with them because we are stronger than they and they have violated our opinions. Democracy seems at first sight to be a relaxation of this law. The popular voice in framing statutes and the "common consent" of the governed veil the appearance of imposition. And yet in fact democracy is a fuller expression of it than other forms of government—a franker admission that the laws are but the conventions of the stronger majority, without illusion of divine right or even of a closer approximation to absolute truth. No government—democracy, monarchy,

tyranny—has any other sanction for its laws than the force it can muster. Nothing, as Tolstoi saw, is consistent with the ideal of peace but anarchy.

The difficulty—if now that we have the implications before us I may venture a criticism on the basis of stubborn reality and the moral reason—lies in the bare fact that if nothing but anarchy is consistent with the ideal of peace, nothing is so inconsistent as anarchy with the reality of peace. Demonstrations lie all about us. We have tried anarchy and we have not been able to bear it. The history of the West illustrates how quickly men find utter freedom intolerable. To Tolstoi, indeed, such illustrations were abhorrent; they dragged the purity of truth down to the dust. Strangely enough the realistic novelist of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* would grant to reality no authority at all in his philosophy. But for us, who are trying to find a way through the dust itself, it takes but a glance at our own peaceful neighbourhood or quiet profession to know that men do disagree and trample on the hopes and dreams and beliefs of others; and that without government to express authoritatively the collective sense of the community and suppress its grosser violations we should be farther from peace than we are now for all our occasional wars.

If compromise with reality is of the essence of the moral law, however, it seems only rational to ask why it should not be possible to halt at a point between government and property on the one hand and war on the other. But if we proceed with the moral reason such a point affords us no resting-place. For if we have committed ourselves to the right of government to administer its laws with all necessary force upon its unarmed citizens, we could hardly logically hesitate at their enforcement upon armed citizens or upon armed aliens within the frontiers. If it should draw the line there we should have a government abdicating in favour of any man with a weapon. And we should have anarchy on the morrow. Government is, in practice, impossible without admitting the principle of war.

There is, it is true, a justifiable plea for an ideal that it is an ideal, distant, perhaps unattainable, and yet a thing to have in mind, to strive toward however slowly. And it is, I take it, in this sense that most of those who cling to the ideal of peace still give it their allegiance. But an incidental weakness lies at the base of such an attitude. We have indeed objected that

utter intransigence belongs to the mathematical rather than to the moral reason. But if we look closely at this particular case we shall find, even from the moral point of view, that unless it is intransigent it is nothing. We do not ordinarily say that the least transgression nullifies a moral ideal; we try again and again after repeated failures. But the ideal of peace does not afford us such a chance. War has this difference from other transgressions that it is in itself a dire extremity, a last resort. Our instinctive love of peace ordinarily suffices. The temptation to war comes normally but once in a lifetime. As a consequence the ideal must work at just that one moment or it has no use at all. If it fails once in a lifetime it leaves the situation just as it is. If it is not intransigent, therefore, it is indeed nothing. We can not gradually strive for it. We must take it or leave it. A new generation is on our heels, for it too there can be no compromise.

It is possible, indeed, to abandon the ideal as such, and to look for permanent peace through the intensification of that love of peace that has already reduced war to an occasion of once in a lifetime. If this seems the most rational of all attitudes, it is, at the same time, I dare say, the most insidious, the most weighted with dire consequences, threatening the constitution of the moral world itself. It contains a flaw that grows under examination into an appreciable breach with the very morality it sets out to serve. Not that some wars may not be averted by calm reflection and the love of peace. And not that arbitration may not now and again tide over moments of unwise passion. All that goes without saying. But to commit oneself to the hope for permanent peace is to belittle the importance of moral ideas themselves.

For the simple, clear implication of such a hope is that it is better to let falsehood, injustice, every form of wrong prevail than to lift a hand against them. It is a protest against holding out for right to the last ditch. It says with finality that right is not worth fighting for. Better see one's country overrun, his home destroyed, his family violated, his liberty taken away, than die resisting to the utmost. More broadly still it is a protest against the only effective tenure that right and justice and truth have in the world. For such ideas have their only existence in men's convictions. If they lived anywhere else, as knowledge lives not only in men's memories but also in lasting

records, they might have a chance of survival when convictions slacken. But they do not. Men's convictions are their existence. And to protest against the extremity of conviction is to protest against the only life they have. It is to put the tenuous chance for their survival in the world into sudden disrepute.

There emerges a paradox which perhaps may best be seen in the dryness of a diagram. Little by little as civilization has fought its slow way upward, it has grown by accumulating, now here and now there, bodies of common opinion. Since nature itself provides no standards of truth and right, each accumulation expresses something very precious that comes as near to truth and right as it can attain. The hope for the growth of civilization lies in the chance that those who come nearest, whose agreement embodies the greatest justice and the greatest wisdom, shall maintain themselves and grow in volume and extent. If then the less wise and just should accept the ideal of peace, throw down their defences, and care no more to uphold their foolish opinions, the hope for both civilization and peace would be great indeed. Such a consummation would perhaps have its ironic comment on the wisdom of the ideal, but the logical difficulty would be tolerable in the glory of the event itself. The despair of such a consummation, however, lies in the difficulty of selecting the less wise and just, and getting them to accept the ideal. Only if the ideal were really wise would selection be possible. For then it would be the wise who would accept it, while the others maintained their fighting front. But then not only would the hope of civilization be lost, but also the hope of peace. Only if all should cease to care to defend their sense of right and justice would peace at last prevail. But then right and justice would have foregone their living chance.

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