

THE KINGDOM OF  
GOD IS WITHIN YOU

LEO TOLSTOY



# **The Kingdom of God is Within You**

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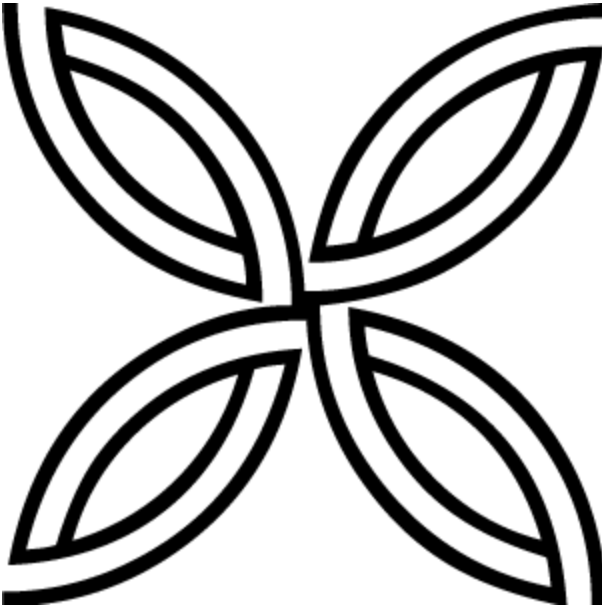
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# **The Kingdom of God is Within You**

**Leo Tolstoy**



# INTRODUCTORY

In 1884 I wrote a book entitled "My Religion," wherein I formulated my creed.

While affirming my faith in the doctrine taught by Christ, I could not refrain from manifesting at the same time the reason why I look upon the ecclesiastical doctrine commonly called Christianity as erroneous, and to me incredible.

Among the many deviations of the latter from the doctrine of Christ, I called attention to the principal one; namely—the evasion of the commandment that forbids man to resist evil by violence, as a striking example of the perversion of the doctrine of Christ by ecclesiastical interpretation.

I knew but little, no more than other men, of what had been taught or written on the subject of non-resistance in former times. I was familiar with the opinions of the Fathers of the Church, Origen, Tertullian, and others; and I also knew of the existence of certain sects called Mennonites, Herrnhuters, and Quakers, all of which forbid Christians the use of arms, and will not submit to conscription, but I never knew the arguments by which these sects sought to maintain their views.

My book, as I had anticipated, was prohibited by the Russian censors, but partly in consequence of my reputation as a writer, partly because it excited curiosity, it had a circulation in manuscript, and while, on the one hand, it called forth from those persons who sympathized with my ideas, information concerning works written on the same subject, on the other, it excited criticisms on the opinions therein maintained.

These two results, together with the historical events of recent years, made many things clear to me, and led me to many new deductions and conclusions which I now desire

to set forth.

I shall speak in the first place of the information I received in regard to the history of this matter of non-resistance to evil; and in the second place, of the arguments upon the subject offered by religious critics, that is, by critics who profess the religion of Christ, as well as those of secular critics, that is to say, of men who make no such profession; and finally, the conclusions which I drew from the arguments of both parties, as well as from the historical events of later years.

# CHAPTER I

## **DOCTRINE OF NON-RESISTANCE TO EVIL FROM THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY, HAS BEEN, AND STILL IS, PROFESSED BY THE MINORITY OF MEN**

Concerning the book "My Religion"—Information called forth by this book—Letters of Quakers—Professions of Garrison—Adin Ballou, his works and Catechism—"The Net of Faith" of Helchitsky—Relations of men toward works that explain the teachings of Christ—The book of Dymond "On War"—Assertion of Non-resistance by Musser—Relations of government in 1818 toward those who refuse to join the military service—General inimical attitude of governments and liberal men toward those who refused to take part in the violence of governments and their conscious effort to conceal and ignore these demonstrations of Christian Non-resistance.

Among the early responses called forth by my book were letters from American Quakers. In these letters, while expressing their sympathy with my ideas in regard to the unlawfulness of violence and war where Christians are concerned, the Quakers made known to me many details in relation to their sect, which for more than two hundred years has professed the doctrine of Christ in the matter of non-resistance, and which never has, nor does it now use weapons for self-defense. Together with the letters, the Quakers sent me many of their pamphlets, periodicals, and books. From these publications I learned that already, many years ago, they had demonstrated the Christian's duty of keeping the commandment of non-resistance to evil by violence, and the error of the church which countenances wars and executions.

Having shown by a succession of arguments and texts that war—the slaughter and mutilation of men—is inconsistent

with a religion founded on peace and good-will to men, the Quakers go on to assert that nothing is so conducive to the defamation of Christ's truth in the eyes of the heathen, or so successful in arresting the spread of Christianity throughout the world, as the refusal to obey this commandment, made by men who call themselves Christians, and by the sanction thus given to war and violence. The doctrine of Christ, which has entered into the consciousness of men, not by force or by the sword, as they say, but by non-resistance to evil, by humility, meekness, and the love of peace, can only be propagated among men by the example of peace, love, and concord given by its followers.

A Christian, according to the teaching of the Lord, should be guided in his relations toward men only by the love of peace, and therefore there should be no authority having power to compel a Christian to act in a manner contrary to God's law, and contrary to his chief duty toward his fellow-men.

The requirements of the civil law, they say, may oblige men, who, to win some worldly advantages, seek to conciliate that which is irreconcilable, to violate the law of God; but for a Christian, who firmly believes that his salvation depends upon following the teaching of Christ, this law can have no meaning.

My acquaintance with the activity of the Quakers and with their publications, with Fox, Paine, and particularly with a work published by Dymond in 1827, proved to me not only that men have long since recognized the impossibility of harmonizing Christianity and war, but that this incompatibility has been proved so clearly and irrefragably, that one can only wonder how it is possible for this incongruous union of Christianity with violence—a doctrine which is still taught by the church—to remain in force.

Besides the information obtained from the Quakers, I also received from America about the same time advices on the

subject from another and hitherto unknown source. The son of William Lloyd Garrison, the famous anti-slavery champion, wrote to me that, having read my book, wherein he had found ideas similar to those expressed by his father in 1838, and taking it for granted that I should be interested to know that fact, he sent me a book written by Mr. Garrison some fifty years ago, entitled "Non-resistance."

This avowal of principle took place under the following circumstances:—In 1838, on the occasion of a meeting of the Society for the Promotion of Peace, William Lloyd Garrison, while discussing means for the suppression of war, arrived at the conclusion that the establishment of universal peace can have no solid foundation save in the literal obedience to the commandment of non-resistance by violence (Matthew v. 39), as understood by the Quakers, with whom Garrison was on friendly terms. Having arrived at this conclusion, he wrote, offering to the Society the following proclamation, which at that time, in 1838, was signed by many of its members:—

*" Declaration of Sentiments adopted by the Peace Convention, held in Boston, September 18, 19, and 20, 1838 :—*

"Assembled in Convention, from various sections of the American Union, for the promotion of Peace on earth and Good-will among men, We, the undersigned, regard it as due to ourselves, to the cause which we love, to the country in which we live, and to the world, to publish a Declaration, expressive of the principles we cherish, the purposes we aim to accomplish, and the measures we shall adopt to carry forward the work of peaceful, universal reformation.

"We cannot acknowledge allegiance to any human government; neither can we oppose any such government by a resort to physical force. We recognize but one King and Lawgiver, one Judge and Ruler of mankind. We are bound by the laws of a Kingdom which is not of this world;



the subjects of which are forbidden to fight; in which Mercy and Truth are met together, and Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other; which has no state lines, no national partitions, no geographical boundaries; in which there is no distinction of rank or division of caste, or inequality of sex; the officers of which are Peace, its exactors Righteousness, its walls Salvation, and its gates Praise; and which is destined to break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms. Our country is the world, our countrymen are all mankind. We love the land of our nativity only as we love all other lands. The interests, rights, liberties of American citizens are no more dear to us than are those of the whole human race. Hence, we can allow no appeal to patriotism to revenge any national insult or injury; the Principle of Peace, under whose stainless banner we rally, came not to destroy, but to save, even the worst of enemies. He has left us an example, that we should follow His steps. God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

"We conceive that if a nation has no right to defend itself against foreign enemies, or to punish its invaders, no individual possesses that right in his own case. The unit cannot be of greater importance than the aggregate. If one man may take life, to obtain or defend his rights, the same license must necessarily be granted to communities, states, and nations. If *he* may use a dagger or a pistol, *they* may employ cannon, bombshells, land and naval forces. The means of self-preservation must be in proportion to the magnitude of interests at stake, and the number of lives exposed to destruction. But if a rapacious and bloodthirsty soldiery, thronging these shores from abroad, with intent to commit rapine and destroy life, may not be resisted by the people or magistracy, then ought no resistance to be offered to domestic troubles of the public peace or of private security. No obligation can rest upon Americans to regard foreigners as more sacred in their persons than

themselves, or to give them a monopoly of wrong-doing with impunity.

"The dogma, that all the governments of the world are approvingly ordained of God, and that the powers that be in the United States, in Russia, in Turkey, are in accordance with His will, is not less absurd than impious. It makes the impartial Author of human freedom and equality unequal and tyrannical. It cannot be affirmed that the powers that be, in any nation, are actuated by the spirit or guided by the example of Christ, in the treatment of enemies; therefore, they cannot be agreeable to the will of God; and therefore their overthrow, by a spiritual regeneration of their subjects, is inevitable.

"We register our testimony not only against all wars, whether offensive or defensive, but all preparations for war; against every naval ship, every arsenal, every fortification; against the militia system and a standing army; against all military chieftains and soldiers; against all monuments commemorative of victory over a fallen foe, all trophies won in battle, all celebrations in honor of military or naval exploits; against all appropriations for the defense of a nation by force and army, on the part of any legislative body; against every edict of government requiring of its subjects military service. Hence we deem it unlawful to bear arms, or to hold a military office.

"As every human government is upheld by physical strength, and its laws are enforced virtually at the point of the bayonet, we cannot hold any office which imposes upon its incumbent the obligation to compel men to do right, on pain of imprisonment or death. We therefore voluntarily exclude ourselves from every legislative and judicial body, and repudiate all human politics, worldly honors, and stations of authority. If we cannot occupy a seat in the legislature or on the bench, neither can we elect *others* to act as our substitutes in any such capacity.

"It follows that we cannot sue any man at law, to compel him by force to restore anything which he may have wrongfully taken from us or others; but if he has seized our coat, we shall surrender up our cloak, rather than subject him to punishment.

"We believe that the penal code of the old covenant, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' has been abrogated by Jesus Christ; and that under the new covenant, the forgiveness instead of the punishment of enemies has been enjoined upon all His disciples, in all cases whatsoever. To extort money from enemies, or set them upon a pillory, or cast them into prison, or hang them upon gallows, is obviously not to forgive, but to take retribution. 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.'

"The history of mankind is crowded with evidences proving that physical coercion is not adapted to moral regeneration; that the sinful disposition of men can be subdued only by love; that evil can be exterminated from the earth only by goodness; that it is not safe to rely upon an arm of flesh, upon man whose breath is in his nostrils, to preserve us from harm; that there is great security in being gentle, harmless, long-suffering, and abundant in mercy; that it is only the meek who shall inherit the earth, for the violent who resort to the sword are destined to perish with the sword. Hence, as a measure of sound policy—of safety to property, life, and liberty—of public quietude and private enjoyment—as well as on the ground of allegiance to Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, we cordially adopt the non-resistance principle; being confident that it provides for all possible consequences, will insure all things needful to us, is armed with omnipotent power, and must ultimately triumph over every assailing force.

"We advocate no jacobinical doctrine. The spirit of jacobinism is the spirit of retaliation, violence, and murder. It neither fears God nor regards man. We would be filled with the spirit of Jesus Christ. If we abide by our principles,

it is impossible for us to be disorderly, or plot treason, or participate in any evil work; we shall submit to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; obey all the requirements of government, except such as we deem contrary to the commands of the gospel; and in no case resist the operation of law, except by meekly submitting to the penalty of disobedience.

"But while we shall adhere to the doctrine of non-resistance and passive submission, we purpose, in a moral and spiritual sense, to speak and act boldly in the cause of God; to assail iniquity in high places and in low places; to apply our principles to all existing civil, political, legal, and ecclesiastical institutions; and to hasten the time when the kingdoms of this world will have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever.

"It appears to us a self-evident truth, that, whatever the gospel is designed to destroy at any period of the world, being contrary to it, ought now to be abandoned. If, then, the time is predicted when swords shall be beaten into plowshares, and spears into pruning-hooks, and men shall not learn the art of war any more, it follows that all who manufacture, sell, or wield those deadly weapons do thus array themselves against the peaceful dominion of the Son of God on earth.

"Having thus briefly stated our principles and purposes, we proceed to specify the measures we propose to adopt in carrying our object into effect.

"We expect to prevail through the foolishness of preaching,—striving to commend ourselves unto every man's conscience, in the sight of God. From the press we shall promulgate our sentiments as widely as practicable. We shall endeavor to secure the coöperation of all persons, of whatever name or sect. The triumphant progress of the cause of Temperance and of Abolition in our land, through the instrumentality of benevolent and voluntary associations, encourages us to combine our own means and

efforts for the promotion of a still greater cause. Hence, we shall employ lecturers, circulate tracts and publications, form societies, and petition our state and national governments, in relation to the subject of Universal Peace. It will be our leading object to devise ways and means for effecting a radical change in the views, feelings, and practices of society, respecting the sinfulness of war and the treatment of enemies.

"In entering upon the great work before us, we are not unmindful that, in its prosecution, we may be called to test our sincerity even as in a fiery ordeal. It may subject us to insult, outrage, suffering, yea, even death itself. We anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, calumny. Tumults may arise against us. The ungodly and violent, the proud and pharisaical, the ambitious and tyrannical, principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places, may contrive to crush us. So they treated the Messiah, whose example we are humbly striving to imitate. If we suffer with Him we know that we shall reign with Him. We shall not be afraid of their terror, neither be troubled. Our confidence is in the Lord Almighty, not in man. Having withdrawn from human protection, what can sustain us but that faith which overcomes the world? We shall not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try us, as though some strange thing had happened unto us; but rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings. Wherefore, we commit the keeping of our souls to God, in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. For every one that forsakes house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for Christ's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

"Firmly relying upon the certain and universal triumph of the sentiments contained in this declaration, however formidable may be the opposition arrayed against them—in solemn testimony of our faith in their divine origin—we

hereby affix our signatures to it, commending it to the reason and conscience of mankind, giving ourselves no anxiety as to what may befall us, and resolving in the strength of the Lord God calmly and meekly to abide the issue."

Later on, Garrison founded a Non-resistance Society and started a periodical entitled *The Non-resistant*, wherein the full significance and consequences of the doctrine were plainly set forth, as has been stated in the proclamation. I gained, subsequently, further information concerning the fate of this society and the periodical from a biography of William Lloyd Garrison, written by his sons.

Neither the periodical nor the society enjoyed a long life. The majority of Garrison's associates in the work of liberating the slaves, apprehensive lest the too radical views expressed in the *The Non-resistant* might alienate men from the practical business of the abolition of slavery, renounced the doctrine of non-resistance as expressed in the declaration, and both periodical and society passed out of existence.

One would suppose that this declaration of Garrison, formulating, as it did, an important profession of faith in terms both energetic and eloquent, would have made a deeper impression on men, and have become a subject for universal consideration. On the contrary, not only is it unknown in Europe, but even among those Americans who honor the memory of Garrison there are but few who are familiar with this.

A similar fate befell another American champion of the same doctrine, Adin Ballou, who died recently, and who for fifty years had preached in favor of non-resistance to evil. How little is known in regard to the question of non-resistance may be gathered from the fact that the younger Garrison (who has written an excellent biography of his father in four large volumes), in answer to my inquiry whether any society for the defense of the principles of



non-resistance was yet alive and possessed adherents, wrote me that, so far as he knew, the society had dissolved and its members were no longer interested, while at this very time Adin Ballou, who had shared Garrison's labors, and who had devoted fifty years of his life to the teaching of the doctrine of non-resistance, both by pen and by tongue, was still living in Hopedale, Massachusetts. Afterward I received a letter from Wilson, a disciple and co-worker of Ballou, and subsequently I entered into correspondence with Ballou himself. I wrote to him, and he sent me his works, from one of which I made the following extract:—"Jesus Christ is my Lord and Master," says Ballou in one of his articles, written to show the inconsistency of Christians who believe in the right of defensive and offensive warfare. "I have covenanted to forsake all and follow Him, through good and evil report, until death. But I am nevertheless a Democratic Republican citizen of the United States, implicitly sworn to bear true allegiance to my country, and to support its Constitution, if need be, with my life. Jesus Christ requires me to do unto others as I would that others should do unto me. The Constitution of the United States requires me to do unto twenty-seven hundred thousand slaves" (they had slaves then; now they could easily be replaced by workmen) "the very contrary of what I would have them do unto me—viz., assist to keep in a grievous bondage.... But I am quite easy. I vote on. I help govern on. I am willing to hold any office I may be elected to under the Constitution. And I am still a Christian. I profess on. I find difficulty in keeping covenant both with Christ and the Constitution.

"Jesus Christ forbids me to resist evil-doers by taking 'eye for eye, tooth for tooth, blood and life for life.' My government requires the very reverse, and depends, for its own self-preservation, on the halter, the musket, and the sword, seasonably employed against its domestic and foreign enemies.

"In the maintenance and use of this expensive life-destroying apparatus we can exemplify the virtues *of forgiving our injuries, loving our enemies, blessing them that curse us, and doing good to those that hate us* . For this reason we have regular Christian chaplains to pray for us and call down the smiles of God on our holy murders.

"I see it all" (that is, the contradiction between profession and life), "and yet I insist that I am as good a Christian as ever. I fellowship all; I vote on; I help govern on; I profess on; *and I glory in being at once a devoted Christian and a no less devoted adherent to the existing government* . I will not give in to those miserable non-resistant notions. I will not throw away my political influence, and leave unprincipled men to carry on government alone.

"The Constitution says—'Congress shall have power to declare war, grant letters of marque and reprisal,' and I agree to this, I indorse it. I swear to help carry it through. I vote for men to hold office who are sworn to support all this. What, then, am I less a Christian? Is not war a Christian service? Is it not perfectly Christian to murder hundreds of thousands of fellow human beings; to ravish defenseless females, sack and burn cities, and enact all the other cruelties of war? Out upon these new-fangled scruples! This is the very way to forgive injuries, and love our enemies! If we only do it all in true love nothing can be more Christian than wholesale murder!"

In another pamphlet, entitled "How many does it take?" he says—"One man must not kill. If he does, it is murder; two, ten, one hundred men, acting on their responsibility, must not kill. If they do, it is still murder. But a state or nation may kill as many as they please, and it is no murder. It is just, necessary, commendable, and right. Only get people enough to agree to it, and the butchery of myriads of human beings is perfectly innocent. But how many does it take? This is the question. Just so with theft, robbery, burglary, and all other crimes. Man-stealing is a great

crime in one man, or a very few men only. But a whole nation can commit it, and the act becomes not only innocent, but highly honorable."

The following is, in substance, a catechism of Ballou, compiled for the use of his congregation:—

#### THE CATECHISM OF NON-RESISTANCE. [\[1\]](#)

Q. Whence comes the word non-resistance?

A. From the utterance: "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil."—Matthew v. 39.

Q. What does this word denote?

A. It denotes a lofty Christian virtue, commanded by Christ.

Q. Are we to understand the word non-resistance in its broad sense, that is, as meaning that one should offer no resistance to evil whatsoever?

A. No; it should be understood literally as Christ taught it—that is, not to return evil for evil. Evil should be resisted by all lawful means, but not by evil.

Q. From what does it appear that Christ gave that meaning to non-resistance?

A. From the words which he used on that occasion. He said: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also."

Q. Whom did he mean by the words: "Ye have heard that it hath been said"?

A. The patriarchs and the prophets, and that which they spoke and which is contained in the Old Testament, that the Jews generally call the Law and Prophets.

Q. To what laws did Christ allude in the words: "Ye have heard"?

A. To those in which Noah, Moses, and other prophets grant the use of personal violence against those who

commit it, for the purpose of punishing and destroying evil deeds.

Q. Mention such commandments.

A. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."—Genesis ix. 6.

"He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe."—Exodus xxi. 12, 23, 24, 25.

"And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death. And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbor; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth."—Leviticus xxiv. 17, 19, 20.

"And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother. And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."—Deuteronomy xix. 18, 19, 21.

These are the injunctions of which Jesus speaks.

Noah, Moses, and the prophets taught that he who murders, mutilates, or tortures his neighbor doeth evil. In order to combat and destroy this evil, the evil-doer must be chastised by death, mutilation, or some personal torture. Transgressions are to be avenged by transgressions, murder by murder, torture by torture, evil by evil. Thus taught Noah, Moses, and the prophets. But Christ forbids all this. The gospel says: "I say unto you, resist ye not evil, avenge not one transgression by another, but rather bear a repetition of the offense from the evil-doer." That which has been allowed is now forbidden. Having understood what resistance we have been taught, we know exactly what Christ meant by non-resistance.

Q. Did the teaching of the Ancients admit of resisting transgression by transgression?

A. Yes; but Christ forbade it. A Christian has no right in any case to take the life of, or to offend against, the evil-doer.

Q. May he not kill or wound another in self-defense?

A. No.

Q. May he enter a complaint to the magistrates for the purpose of chastising the offender?

A. No. For that which he does through others, he practically does himself.

Q. May he fight in the army against foreign or domestic enemies?

A. Certainly not. He can take no part in war, or in the preparation therefor. He cannot make use of weapons. He cannot resist one transgression by another, whether he is alone or in company, either personally or through other agents.

Q. May he voluntarily select or drill soldiers for the government?

A. He cannot do this, if he wishes to be *faithful* to the law of Christ.

Q. May he voluntarily contribute money to assist a government which is supported by military power, executions, and violence in general?

A. No; unless the money is to be used for some special purpose, justifiable in itself, where the object and the means employed are good.

Q. May he pay taxes to such a government?

A. No; he should not pay taxes on his own accord, but he should not resist the levying of a tax. A tax imposed by the government is levied independently of the will of the citizens. It may not be resisted without recourse to violence, and a Christian should not use violence; therefore he must deliver his property to the forced damage caused by authorities.

Q. May a Christian vote at elections and take part in courts of law or in the government?

A. No. To take a part in elections, courts of law, or in the administration of government is the same thing as a participation in the violence of the government.

Q. What is the chief significance of the doctrine of non-resistance?

A. To show that it is possible to extirpate evil from one's own heart, as well as from that of one's neighbor. This doctrine forbids men to do that which perpetuates and multiplies evil in this world. He who attacks another, and does him an injury, excites a feeling of hatred, the worst of all evil. To offend our neighbor because he has offended us, with ostensible motive of self-defense, means but to repeat the evil act against him as well as against ourselves,—it means to beget, or at least to let loose, or to encourage the Evil Spirit whom we wish to expel. Satan cannot be driven out by Satan, falsehood cannot be purged by falsehood, nor can evil be conquered by evil. True non-resistance is the only real method of resisting evil. It crushes the serpent's head. It destroys and exterminates all evil feeling.

Q. But admitting that the idea of the doctrine is correct, is it practicable?

A. As practicable as any virtue commanded by the law of God. Good deeds cannot be performed under all circumstances without self-sacrifice, privations, suffering, and, in extreme cases, without the loss of life itself. But he who prizes life more than the fulfilment of God's will is already dead to the only true life. Such a man, in trying to save his life, will lose it. Furthermore, wherever non-resistance costs the sacrifice of one's life, or of some essential advantage of life, resistance costs thousands of such sacrifices.

*Non-resistance preserves; resistance destroys.*

It is much safer to act justly than unjustly; to endure an offense rather than resist it by violence; safer even in



regard to the present life. If all men refused to resist evil, the world would be a happy one.

*Q.* But if only a few were to act thus, what would become of them?

*A.* Even if but one man were to act thus, and the others should agree to crucify him, would it not be more glorious for him to die in the glory of non-resisting love, praying for his enemies, than live wearing the crown of Cæsar, besprinkled with the blood of the murdered? But whether it be one man or thousands of men who are firmly determined not to resist evil by evil, still, whether in the midst of civilized or uncivilized neighbors, men who do not rely on violence are safer than those who do. A robber, a murderer, a villain, will be less likely to harm them if he finds them offering no armed resistance. "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," and he who seeks peace, who acts like a friend, who is inoffensive, who forgives and forgets injuries, generally enjoys peace, or if he dies, he dies a blessed death.

Hence, if all were to follow the commandment of non-resistance, there would manifestly be neither offense nor evil-doing. If even the majority were composed of such men they would establish the rule of love and good-will even toward the offenders, by not resisting evil by evil nor using violence. Even if such men formed a numerous minority, they would have such an improving moral influence over society that every severe punishment would be revoked, and violence and enmity would be replaced by peace and good-will. If they formed but a small minority, they would rarely experience anything worse than the contempt of the world, while the world, without preserving it or feeling grateful therefor, would become better and wiser from its latent influence. And if, in the most extreme cases, certain members of the minority might be persecuted unto death, these men, thus dying for the truth, would have left their doctrine already sanctified by the blood of martyrdom.

Peace be with all ye who seek peace; and may the all-conquering love be the imperishable inheritance of every soul who submits of its own accord to the law of Christ.

*Resist not evil by violence.* —Adin Ballou.

For fifty years Ballou wrote and published books chiefly on the subject of non-resistance. In these writings, remarkable for their eloquence and simplicity of style, the question is considered in all its aspects. He proved it to be the duty of every Christian who professes to believe that the Bible is a revelation from God, to obey this commandment. He enumerates the arguments against the commandment of non-resistance, drawn from the Old as well as the New Testament, the expulsion from the Temple, among others, and answers each one in turn. Setting the Bible aside, he points out the practical good sense on which this principle is founded, sums up the arguments against it, and refutes them. For instance, in one chapter of his work he treats of non-resistance to evil in exceptional cases, and affirms that granting the truth of the supposition that there are cases to which the rule of non-resistance cannot be applied, that would prove that the rule in general is inconsistent. Citing such exceptional cases, he proves that these are the very occasions when the application of this rule is both wise and necessary. The question has been viewed from every side, and no argument, whether of opponent or sympathizer, has been neglected or left unanswered. I mention this in order to call attention to the deep interest which works of this class ought to excite in men who profess Christianity; and it would seem therefore that Ballou's zeal should have been recognized, and the ideas he expressed either accepted or disproved. But such was not the case.

The life-work of Garrison, the father, his founding the society of the Non-resistant, and his declaration, convinced me, more even than my intercourse with the Quakers, that the divergence of the Christianity of the State from Christ's

law of non-resistance by violence has been long since noticed and pointed out, and men have labored and still do labor to counteract it. Thus Ballou's earnestness has fortified my opinion. But the fate of Garrison, and particularly that of Ballou, almost unknown, notwithstanding fifty years of active and persistent work in one direction, has confirmed me in the belief that there exists a certain inexpressed but fixed determination to oppose all such attempts by a wall of silence.

In August of 1890 Ballou died, and his obituary appeared in the *American Religio-Philosophical Journal* of August 23d.

From this obituary we learn that Ballou was the spiritual leader of a community, that he had preached from 8000 to 9000 sermons, married 1000 couples, and written 500 articles, but in regard to the object of his life's devotion not a word is said; the word "non-resistance" is never mentioned.

All the exhortations of the Quakers for 200 years, all the efforts of Garrison, the father, the foundation of his society, his periodical, and his declarations, as well as the life-work of Ballou, are the same as if they had never existed.

Another striking example of the obscurity into which a work written for the purpose of explaining the principle of non-resistance, and to denounce those who refuse to recognize this commandment, may fall, is the fate of a book by the Czech Helchitsky, which has only recently been discovered, and which up to the present time has never been printed.

Shortly after the publication of my book in German, I received a letter from a professor of the Prague University, who wrote to tell me of a book which had never been printed, a work written in the fifteenth century by the Czech Helchitsky, and entitled "The Net of Faith." In this work, written four centuries ago, Helchitsky, as the professor tells me, has expressed exactly the same opinion in regard to true and false Christianity that I did in my

work entitled "My Religion." The professor wrote that the work of Helchitsky was to appear in print for the first time in the Czech language in one of the publications of the St. Petersburg Academy of Science. As I was unable to obtain the book, I endeavored to ascertain all that was known of Helchitsky himself, and this knowledge I gained from a German book sent to me by the same professor in Prague. Besides that I learned something from Pipin's "History of Czech Literature." Pipin says:—

"'The Net of Faith' is the doctrine of Christ, wherewith man is to be raised from the gloomy depths of the social sea of iniquity. True faith is to believe the words of God; but we are living in times when men call the true faith heresy; hence it is upon our own reason that we must rely to discover the truth if we possess it not. Darkness has concealed it from men, and they no longer recognize the true law of Christ.

"As an illustration of the law, Helchitsky cites the original social organization of Christian society, which is considered by the Church of Rome of the present time as rank heresy.

"This primitive church was his own ideal of a social order founded upon equality, liberty, and fraternity. Christianity, according to Helchitsky, still preserves this foundation, and has but to return to its pure teaching to render any other social order, whose existence requires the authority of pope or king, quite superfluous. The law of love will suffice for all....

"Historically, Helchitsky assigns the decadence of Christianity to the time of Constantine the Great, whom the Pope Silvester received into the Church in spite of his pagan life and morals. Constantine, in return, rewarded the Pope by endowing him with riches and temporal power. Since then these two forces have played into each other's hands, seeking only outward glory. Doctors, men of learning, and the clergy, caring only to maintain their influence over the world, excited the nations one against

the other, encouraging the crimes of murder and rapine, and thus destroying Christianity, both in faith and practice. Helchitsky totally denies the right of man to wage war or to exact the penalty of death. According to him, every soldier, even if he be a 'knight,' is only a transgressor, a criminal, and a murderer."

All this, with the addition of some biographical details and extracts from the correspondence of Helchitsky, is related in the German book.

Having thus become acquainted with the essence of Helchitsky's teachings, I waited with still greater impatience the appearance of "The Net of Faith" in the Academy's periodical. But one, two, three years passed, and the book was not forthcoming. It was only in 1888 that I learned that the printing had been suspended. I obtained the proof-sheets of what had been printed, and read them. In many respects it was a wonderful book.

Its contents have been accurately summarized by Pipin. Helchitsky's principal idea is that Christianity, in league with sovereignty during the reign of Constantine the Great, and continuing to develop under these conditions, became corrupted, and ceased to be Christianity. He called his book "The Net of Faith" because he had chosen for his motto that verse from the New Testament which speaks of the disciples as fishers of men. He carries on the simile thus: "Through His disciples, Christ caught the world in the net of His faith, but the larger fishes, breaking the net, escaped; then others followed through these same holes made by the large fishes, and the net was left almost empty." By the big fish he means the popes, emperors, and sovereigns who, without giving up their authority, accepted Christianity, not in its reality, but in its semblance.

Helchitsky teaches the same doctrine that is now taught by the non-resistant Mennonites and Quakers, and in former times by the Bogomiles, the Paulicians, and other sects. He teaches that Christianity, requiring, as it does from its

followers, humility, gentleness, a forgiving spirit, the turning of the other cheek when one is struck, and the love of one's enemies, is not compatible with that violence which is an essential element of authority. A Christian, according to Helchitsky, should not only refuse to be a commander or a soldier, but he should take no part in government, neither should he become a tradesman, nor even a landowner. He might be an artisan or a farmer. This book is among the few which have been saved from the flame into which books denouncing official Christianity were commonly cast. As all such so-called heretical works were usually burned with their authors, very few of those which denounce official Christianity have been preserved—and for this reason the book of which we speak has a special interest.

But apart from its interest, concerning which there may be differences of opinion, it is one of the most remarkable results of human thought, both on account of its profundity and the wonderful power and beauty of its language, not to mention its antiquity. And yet this book has remained unprinted for centuries, and continues to be unknown except to a few specialists. ( *See Note, end of Chapter.* )

One would think that works like these of the Quakers, of Garrison, of Ballou, and of Helchitsky,—which affirm and prove by the authority of the Bible that the world misinterprets the teaching of Christ,—would arouse an interest, would make a sensation, would give rise to discussions between the clergy and their flocks.

One might suppose that works which deal with the very essence of the Christian doctrine would be reviewed, and either acknowledged to be just, or else refuted and condemned.

Not at all. Every one of these works suffers the same fate. Men of widely differing opinions, believers, and, what is still more surprising, unbelieving liberals, as though by common consent, preserve an obstinate silence in regard to



them. Thus every attempt to explain the true meaning of Christ's doctrine goes for nothing.

And more astonishing still is the ignorance concerning two works whose existence was made known to me after the publication of my own book. One is a work by Dymond, "On War," printed for the first time in London in 1824, and the other by Daniel Musser, entitled "Non-resistance Asserted," was written in 1864.

The ignorance in regard to these books is amazing; the more so, that apart from their merit, both treat, not so much of the theory as of its practical application to life; of the relations of Christianity to military service, which is particularly interesting in view of the system of conscription. It may be asked, perhaps, what action is befitting for a subject who believes that war is incompatible with religion when his government calls upon him for military service?

One would take this to be a vital question, whose answer, in view of our present system of conscription, becomes one of serious importance. All men, or the majority of mankind, are Christians, and every male is required to do military duty. How man, in his Christian character, is to meet this demand, Dymond gives the following reply:—

*"It is his duty, mildly and temperately, yet firmly, to refuse to serve."*

"There are some persons who, without any determinate process of reasoning, appear to conclude that responsibility for national measures attaches solely to those who direct them; that it is the business of governments to consider what is good for the community, and that, in these cases, the duty of the subject is merged in the will of the sovereign. Considerations like these are, I believe, often voluntarily permitted to become opiates of the conscience. I have no part, it is said, in the councils of the government, and am not, therefore, responsible for its crimes. We are, indeed, not responsible for the crimes of our rulers, but we

are responsible for our own; and the crimes of our rulers are our own, if, whilst we believe them to be crimes, we promote them by our coöperation....

"Those who suppose that obedience in all things is required, or that responsibility in political affairs is transferred from the subject to the sovereign, reduce themselves to a great dilemma. It is to say that we must resign our conduct and our consciences to the will of others, and act wickedly, or well, as their good or evil may preponderate, without merit for virtue or responsibility for crime."

It is worthy of notice that the same is expressed in a maxim to soldiers, which they are required to memorize. Dymond says that only a commander answers for the consequences of his order. But this is unjust. A man cannot remove the responsibility for his actions from himself. And this is evident from the following: "If your superior orders you to kill your child, your neighbor, your father, or your mother, will you obey? If you will not, there is an end of the argument; for if you may reject his authority in one instance, where is the limit to rejection? There is no rational limit but that which is assigned by Christianity, and that is both rational and practicable....

"We think, then, that it is the business of every man who believes that war is inconsistent with our religion, respectfully, but steadfastly, to refuse to engage in it. Let such as these remember that an honorable and an awful duty is laid upon them. It is upon their fidelity, so far as human agency is concerned, that the cause of peace is suspended. Let them, then, be willing to avow their opinions and to defend them. Neither let them be contented with words, if more than words, if suffering also, is required. It is only by the unyielding fidelity of virtue that corruption can be extirpated. If you believe that Jesus Christ has prohibited slaughter, let not the opinions or the commands of a world induce you to join in it. By this

'steady and determinate pursuit of virtue,' the benediction which attaches to those who hear the sayings of God, and do them, will rest upon you, and the time will come when even the world will honor you as contributors to the work of human reformation."

Musser's work, entitled "Non-resistance Asserted; or, Kingdom of Christ and Kingdom of this World Separated," was published in 1864.

This book deals with the same question, drawing its illustrations from the drafting of the United States citizens during the time of the Civil War. In setting forth the reasons why men should have the right to decline military service, his arguments are no less applicable to the present time. In his Introduction the author says: "It is well known that there are great numbers of people in the United States who profess to be conscientiously opposed to war. They are mostly called non-resistants, or defenseless Christians, and refuse to defend their country, or take up arms at the call of the government and go forth to battle against its enemies. Hitherto this conscientious scruple has been respected by the government in this country; and those claiming it have been relieved or excused from this service.

"Since the commencement of the present civil war in the United States the public mind has been unusually agitated on this subject. It is not unreasonable that such persons as feel it to be their duty to go forth and endure the hardships of camp life, and imperil health, life, and limb in defense of their country and government, should feel some jealousy of those who have, with themselves, long enjoyed the protection and benefits of the government, and yet, in the hour of its need, refuse to share the burden of its defense and protection. Neither is it strange that such a position should be looked upon as most unreasonable and monstrous, and those who hold it be regarded with some suspicion. "Many able speakers and writers," says the author, "have raised their voices and pens to refute the idea

of non-resistance, as both unreasonable and unscriptural. This is not to be wondered at, seeing that those who profess the principle and do not possess it, or correctly understand it, act inconsistently, and thereby bring the profession into disrepute and contempt. However much misapplication or abuse of a principle may prejudice the minds of those who are unacquainted with a subject, it is yet no argument against its truth."

The author at first proves it to be the duty of each Christian to obey the rule of non-resistance. He says that the rule is perfectly explicit, and that it has been given by Christ to all Christianity without any possibility of being misinterpreted. "Judge for yourselves, whether it is right or wrong to obey man more than you do the Lord," said both Peter and John; and in exactly the same way every man who wishes to be a Christian should regard the requirement of his nation to be a soldier, remembering that Christ has told him, "Do not resist evil."

This, in the opinion of Musser, decides the question of principle. Another point, as to the right of declining military duty while one enjoys the advantages accruing through violence, the author considers in detail, and arrives at the conclusion that should a Christian who follows the teaching of Christ refuse to go to the war, he must also decline to take any position under the government or any part in the elections, neither must he have recourse to any officer of the law for his own personal advantage. Our author goes on to consider the relation between the Old and New Testaments, and the significance of government for non-Christians; arguments against the doctrine of non-resistance are enumerated and refuted. The author closes his book with the following words:—"Christians need no governments: for they ought not to obey it in those matters wherein Christ's teaching is set at naught, and still less should they take an active part in it.