

must shine into and overcome his dark self. He must discover himself as he really is, not as he would like to be, and allow the sacramental grace to transform this reality.

What we look for today are witnesses to the Gospel of Peace, men who will take Peace, as they have taken Religion, for their vocation by self-dedication and vow. These will be true Pacifists, peace-makers, fed by the Body of Christ and looking towards every single man on earth, whether he be a Stalin or a Churchill, a striker or a murderer, a man under injustice and oppression or an inciter to race hatred, with the same peaceful spirit that sees them all as brethren in Christ.



PROBLEMS OF THE PACIFIST

NOTES FOR A TALK ON PEACE

DOROTHY DAY

IN the fortieth annual social week held in Pau, France, this year the subject under discussion was 'Peace'. There was a brief note in the *Denver Register* calling attention to a letter of Monsignor Montini, pro-Secretary of State, which said that 'this examination of the problems of peace by men of faith, thought and action is most timely today when men's souls are more troubled than ever before. Never in human history has greater discord been known. This world-wide dissension invades the daily lives of the people. It feeds and maintains social conflict. Its origins are of an ideological as much as of an economic nature. It eats into the very hearts of families and institutions. Its psychological effects sap the will-power and cloud judgment. Even the flag of peace, unfurled for partisan ends, frequently divides mankind.'

This is a good sentence to open on, when I remember how Father O'Connor, theologian of the diocese of New York, said at one time that it was as much as one's life was worth to talk about pacifism at the Catholic worker. Fr O'Connor was being humorous, but unfortunately it has often been the

reason for acrimonious dispute, thereby violating the spirit of peace that should be present in discussion.

In a recent weekend at Peter Maurin Farm, there were no priest speakers, the conferences were with laymen, and no priests were available to participate in the discussions. We know a number of pacifist priests: Father Francis Meenan, of Nowalk, the Holy Ghost Father, who sent back his registration card to his draft board, to repudiate the registration which was compulsory for clerics as well as laymen; Fr Joseph Meenan, his brother in the Pittsburgh diocese, did the same; also Fr John J. Hugo, Fr Marion Casey, Fr Judge, Fr Harvey Egan, and some others. None of these priests was able to get away from parish duties. Fr Judge and Fr Casey both gave five-day retreats this year at Maryfarm, Newburgh. Complete silence was kept by the retreatants so that the Holy Spirit might speak to their hearts.

They were laying the foundations of peace there. They were dealing with fundamentals. 'Who is God?', that great question of St Thomas Aquinas. 'What is man that thou art mindful of him?', the question of King David. We firmly believe that without these answers there is no possibility of peace in the natural order. As Ivan Karamazov said, it is impossible to love man if one does not believe. This is almost to deny the natural goodness of man, but I think most of us realise, from living in community, what this means. It is not natural to love one's enemies, to turn the other cheek, to give double when asked, to relinquish freely when things are taken from one. It is always argued that the Sermon on the Mount contains counsels, not precepts, yet our Lord said: 'A new precept I have given you, that you love others as I have loved you'. And he loved us to the shedding of blood, to the laying down of his life for us. The only measure of love is to love without measure. We have not yet resisted the spirit of the world unto blood, as St Paul said. We have not yet begun, most of us.

Most of these priest friends of ours would rather give retreats, which contain the whole plan of God for peace. They preach the folly of the Cross. 'Unless the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it will bear no fruit.'

Unless the vine is pruned, the grapes will be small and puny. Unless the tree is pruned, the apples are meagre, all pulp and pips. The examples of this are all around us in the natural order. It is the order of God, too.

One of the Popes said that the same principles applied to nations as applied to individuals. He was speaking of principles of morality, and justice in the natural order. Our Lord was speaking to the New Man, and was speaking of supernatural justice. There should be no conflict.

When we consider the Benedictine abbeys, whose motto was *Pax*, and how they preserved a synthesis of cult, culture and cultivation through pursuing their ways of peace in spite of the invasions by the Goths and Huns and Mongols, one can see how the conquered often overcame the conqueror. I am well acquainted with the fact that St Bernard preached crusades, and that though men of God laid down their arms they did not expect others, the laity, to do so, and that too often peace and the sword went together.

These are some of the problems we should discuss in peace conferences. What about St Bernard, St Catherine, these saints who preached crusades? What about the saints of the sixteenth century, St Teresa of Avila, for instance, whose brothers went to the new world to reap their fortunes and to baptise the infidel? Greed and zeal of God's glory so often went together. And Christ's message was so different. He was meek and lowly of heart. He was born in a stable and never tried for power and glory.

There, too, is another problem. How square the poverty of Christ with the glory of St Peter's and the Vatican, the fine vestments, the jewelled chalices, the processions? These are questions always brought up by our non-Catholic brothers, among whom we are thrown by our very love for peace—Quakers, Brethren, Mennonites, the Brothers in Paraguay and England, our eastern brothers of the uniate and schismatic churches, the Protestants, all these believers who love God and their brother and yet are torn with dissensions and wars.

When we stress voluntary poverty as a requisite for peace, we are first of all thinking of ourselves. To be very practical, all who are holding jobs, earning a living for their families,

are faced with the fact that if they follow their conscience they will have to refuse some jobs, they will lose others, perhaps be evicted from their homes, or their property will be confiscated, their bank accounts raided, and all in the name of collecting an income tax, eighty per cent of which goes for preparation for war, for the making of atom bombs and hydrogen bombs.

It is hard to see how we can take up the issue of peace without discussing taxes. I have a friend who argues that just as we are expected to give alms without question, to all who ask, regardless of what use they make of the money, to buy drink, to gamble, or for some other evil purpose, and we are not partakers of the blame, so we should pay income tax, too. Give to him who asks, she says; if the State asks for your coat, give your cloak, too.

This is the type of reasoning we get nowadays. When poverty and chastity are discussed, we should also consider obedience since it is in the name of obedience that my friend thinks we should pay taxes. I maintain that we must be obedient to God rather than to man. That when the State says, Register, be drafted into the army or go to jail, we are obedient when we go to jail. We are offered an alternative. We take it. We can be free men in jail. All history shows this.

It is fear of jail and fear of the loss of income for the family that causes so much hesitancy in this search for peace.

It would be good to read a lot of prison literature, to learn how political prisoners used their time and endured their hardships in order to prepare for what was to come. How many priests, monks, brothers, nuns—clergy and laity—have been imprisoned this last decade all over the world. We are living in a time of persecution.

When we justify ourselves for our possessions and point to the corporal wealth of the Church, I'd like to point out two things. First is that the main reason for the pomp and ceremony and the gold and the frankincense offered up, is because men realise their own inadequacy to give honour, praise and worship to God. It is a recognition of God's power, his transcendence, expressed in visible form, recognising that man is made up of the body and its senses ^{is}

well as the soul and its interior senses. Just as music and the singing of hymns appeal to the ear, the vestment appeals to the eye, the incense to the nose, the kneeling and rising expressing in bodily attitudes reverence, contrition, appeal, worship. We worship by prostrating ourselves, by kneeling, by standing with arms outstretched. And just as we are self-conscious about love and expressing love for each other, so we are self-conscious about expressing love for God. To sign ourselves with the sign of the cross is to show that we also wish to bear this ignominy of the cross. (But do we mean it?) Reading of the building of the temple in Solomon's time shows the transcendence.

The other thing I'd like to call attention to is that over and over again through history, the Church has relinquished her wealth which has been confiscated by barbarians or by the State. Individuals, the human element which makes up the Church, may rebel to see the work of their lives wiped out in the way of schools, hospitals, orphanages—means for the works of mercy—but they accept it. They groan, they tear their hair, rend their garments and write in the *Brooklyn Tablet* about the 'fiends', no longer *man*, mind you, no longer made up of body and soul, temples of the Holy Spirit, but the demons who are communists who are despoiling and ravishing and seizing the persons of bishops and the possessions of the Church, and they do all they can to build up the war spirit in the name of God and the State; *but* in spite of such outcry, which has always been made from time immemorial and which it is 'only human' to make, we still have a Bishop Ford who prays, 'Grant us, Lord, to be the doorstep by which the multitudes may come to worship thee. And if, in the saving of their souls, we are ground underfoot and spat upon, and worn out, at least we shall have served thee in some small way in helping pagan souls; we shall have become the King's Highway in pathless China.'

'I am Christ's wheat', St Ignatius had said long before him, 'and I am to be ground by the teeth of beasts that I may become good bread.'

What a spirit this is. And this is what we should be studying because this is the beginning of peace.

At this September conference, Ammon Hennacy, who was

baptised last year on the feast of St Gregory the Wonder Worker, talked of fasting and picketing for peace, and of his life at hard manual labour which enables him to live without paying income tax. He put his two daughters through Northwestern university music school while living this way, so he has a right to talk of its practicability. He may have more physical strength and endurance than most of us, but this business of fasting and hard labour is the beginning of physical strength, too. Most of the saints were of fragile constitution and bore many physical infirmities in their sharing of the suffering of the world. Strength and endurance is very much a matter of the spirit.

A great deal of the talk about peace is on purely the worldly level, and I want to say right now that I think a great deal of this talk is a waste of time and has nothing to do with this conference. Such natural matters as how to earn a living, how to conduct oneself on the job, or in jail, or in the family—this, on the contrary, is very much to the point.

We must see the natural in the light of the supernatural, as baptised Christians who have vowed to war against the world, the flesh and the devil. How our lives square with these vows we have made, whether we really believe, what help we are seeking to keep these vows. These are the important things. I cannot stress this enough. Hard work, penance, and prayer—these are spiritual weapons.

Most people are immediately discouraged because we do not make clear the difference in the order of intention and execution. We must have our intention firmly fixed in mind. We must 'make our intention'. This is clumsy terminology, but carries the implication of creativity. If we are going to California, we order our life and doings to that end. If we are going to get married, everything we do takes that tremendous fact into consideration. Love on the human level and love on the supernatural level makes all things new, as St Paul says. If we could begin to see our mission, the work God wants us to do, our pacifism, as a talent given us by God which we must trade with till he comes! If we begin to get this fresh outlook on the work we have to do, of research, of personal reform, if we could just determine to start out

now, this year, this day, in living like peacemakers, we could say with King David the psalmist, 'Now I have begun, this change is from the hands of the most high'. To begin is everything. To make a determined beginning. One might almost say, 'to *want* to begin'. It goes back as far as that. The trouble is, most of us do not want to set foot on that path, because we feel we are shutting ourselves off from life by such decisions. We want to try all the other remedies first, the remedies which the world has been trying, with all the good will, but without result, because it was without Christ.

We don't want to set foot on that path because we think we are going to fall down a precipice, into an abyss of loneliness and isolation. A good many converts know this fear and horror. I felt it myself when I was forced to give up married life at the age of twenty-nine for the rest of my days. To me it was one of those choices, like Abraham sacrificing Isaac. Everyone has these decisions to make, over and over again. If we refuse to make one, or if we choose the easier way, then God offers it to us again, perhaps in another form. Over and over again he says, as he said three times to St Peter, 'Lovest thou me more than these?' He gives us so many chances. My fear is that if we don't make this choice, once too often we refuse, and then we become, little by little, blind to the promptings of grace, and then, as St Paul said so fearfully, grace is withdrawn from us.

We've all seen this in the tired radical, in those who have ceased to struggle, who talk cynically of the enthusiasm, the idealism of youth.

I know that it is hard. 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'

Caroline Gordon wrote me recently about a friend of hers who was haunted by a sentence of Kierkegaard, 'God is man's worst enemy'. I know what he meant. Kierkegaard also said that Christianity was the most terrible wound inflicted on mankind. St Bonaventure put it, however, in another way, and sometimes I think we must look at it in two ways before we understand it. 'Pierce my innermost heart, dear Jesus, with the sweet wound of thy love.' Well, we know that when the heart is pierced, we die. We ask for so much in our

prayers, but we do not mean it.

Probably what makes it hardest of all is this. Our pacifism seems diametrically opposed to ninety-nine per cent of the Church. There is Fr Ude in Austria, Fr Stratmann in Germany, Fr Pierre Lorson in France, though he writes on conscientious objection, not pacifism. There are the priests I have mentioned.

And then there are saints through the ages. There is a St Francis of Assisi, who, at the time of the Crusades, went personally to the Sultan.

Why don't we take St Francis as our patron and guide for this coming year, and study his life, read as much about him as we can, in the light of the history of his day, in relation to ours? He was obedient to the Pope and yet he seemed to go against many of the prelates of his day. It was his Bishop who took him in when his own father failed him.

Today we too have many friends among the hierarchy even though they seem to stand diametrically opposed to our position on pacifism. Cardinal McIntyre blessed me when I saw him last Christmas Eve and he has told me never to give up this work, this Catholic Worker, which he said was a difficult and delicate work being done in the Church today. People shudder at some of our ideas, our ideas on the State and on war and peace, but when they look at our work as a whole in the Catholic Worker movement, they accept it as a whole. The fact remains that we continue, after twenty years. We stand forth as witnesses to the height and breadth and depth of the Church which is the Body of Christ, and of which we are all members, or potential members. It is a matter of vocation. We are called to be peacemakers, to give up all and take up our cross and follow Christ. May God give us all strength this coming year, to follow.