

Christianity vs. War

It is possible to understand the warlike spirit of those who deny the divinity of Christ, and look upon His teachings as weakness, but how can professing followers of the meek and lowly Nazarene espouse the doctrines upon which war rests? Compare the boastful, brutal swagger of the militarist with the calm confidence of those who, taking Jesus at his word and trusting the truth of his teachings, rely upon love to conquer anger—upon good to overcome evil?

I recently heard of a case in point: Two friends fell out and one wrote a bitter letter announcing that friendly relations were at an end. A reply in the same spirit would have made them enemies for life. But instead of sending such a reply, the other answered: "My religion does not permit me to share your feelings; I prefer to remember you as I have known you in the past—as a friend." In a few days another letter passed from the first party to the second, and friendly relations were restored, proving anew that "a soft answer turneth away wrath."

This is the Christian way among friends. Why not apply it among nations? Is it more manly to thrust out the sword in anger than to extend the hand in friendship? If it is Christian-like to go upon the battlefield and care for the wounded, would it not be Christian-like to avoid the war and thus make relief unnecessary?

Is not this the day for which the ages have been waiting? For nineteen centuries the gospel of the Prince of Peace has been making its majestic march around the world, and the philosophy of the Sermon on the Mount has become more and more the rule of daily life. It only remains for it to be lifted from the level of individual relations and made real in the law of nations, and is not our nation the one best fitted to lead the way to the larger and the brighter day? Can it be that in the presence of this supreme opportunity the nation will give its endorsement to the policy of frenzied preparedness and devote its energies to getting ready for war? Will it put its trust in the weapons of physical force and commit itself to the fatal folly that has driven Europe into this unprecedented conflict? With an ocean rolling on either side, and a patriotic people able to resist any possible attack, surely we are in a position to test the power of truth and justice against the policy of force and violence. We can not afford to commit the nation's destiny into the hands of the professional soldier or the army contractor.

W. J. BRYAN.

A THOUGHT ON THINKING

The Memphis Commercial Appeal, in commenting on the speech recently delivered there by Mr. Bryan, says:

"Mr. Bryan is a great talker, but he has never learned how to think."

Thanks. Sweet are the wounds of a friend even when they expose one's frailties to the public gaze. It has been evident for some twenty years that something was lacking—else why has the Commercial Appeal withheld its affections? And why did it not announce its discovery earlier, while there was yet time to learn?

Mr. Bryan has tried to commend himself to thoughtful people, and he had even indulged the hope that he had succeeded to a degree. Three presidential nominations might seem to raise a presumption in his favor, and the receipt of nearly six and a half million votes three times would strengthen the presumption—but it must be a delusion.

How mortified these voters will feel when they read the Commercial Appeal and find that the one for whom they voted "has never learned how to think!" But maybe they have never learned how to think, either—certainly not in the same way as the C. A.—and possibly for the same reason. What a comfort it must be for an editor to feel that he has a monopoly on thought—and what a responsibility. W. J. BRYAN.

There is philosophy in the conclusion of the mountain feudist, "There aint nothing in it, no-how. When you kill a man you can't hurt him any more, and then there's somebody after you." And so it is with war—it is linked murder long drawn out.

A pistol toting nation is about as certain to get into trouble as a pistol toting person.

MR. BRYAN AND HIS CRITICS

Mr. Bryan still finds it hard to please everyone. He recently made a trip through the south, visiting eleven states: Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas and Tennessee. As is usual, he addressed public meetings at some places—at Nashville, Hot springs, Jackson (Miss.), Houston, Galveston—and lectured at other places. When he spoke at public meetings one of his critics asked:

"Why should Mr. Bryan favor us with a free lecture at this time?"

When he lectured, his critics enquired: "Why does he charge for his speeches?"

Now, the only way to please all critics would be to stay at home and not talk at all. But Mr. Bryan is not trying to please his enemies: he is trying to serve his country and, incidentally, to please his friends. More people hear him at the public meetings than hear him at lectures, but he could not afford to travel and speak at public meetings if he did not deliver the lectures—they furnish the funds for travel.

Mr. Bryan's real sin is that he is self-supporting; he can continue indefinitely the discussion of public questions, and will continue to discuss them while his strength lasts. Those who attend his meetings and lectures do so voluntarily and Mr. Bryan keeps in touch with the masses. Is it any wonder that editors who ARE PAID FOR ALL THEY WRITE, are indignant that he should give so many a chance to hear him without cost? But what are these critics going to do about it? Mr. Bryan continues to expose them, and the people continue to listen and applaud.

Just how close the democratic law creating a federal reserve banking board touches the average citizen is shown in the inevitable effect of its recent order forbidding rediscount by reserve banks of paper bearing a higher rate of interest than 6 per cent. This practically bars from participation in the benefits of a large bank of rediscount every bank that practices usury, and means lower interest rates in the smaller towns. Here is an object lesson to show that the democratic party has the interest of the masses at heart in its legislation that should not be overlooked. The republicans promised for years to re-create the banking system of the country, but failed because the republican party is controlled by those elements that a reformed banking system would deprive of profits to which they were not rightfully entitled.

Nebraska is preparing to employ the initiative and referendum upon the question of the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of liquor. In Nebraska every social and political reform worker has found, at every turn of the road, the liquor interests lined up solidly with every other interest that they could dragoon or cajole into alliance with them, and it has been an effective barrier. Having found it impossible to govern themselves because the saloon can not and will not get out of politics, the voters of that state are preparing to put the saloons out of business so that they may resume and perform the tasks laid out for a democracy.

Every time a rumpus is kicked up in a city governed under the commission plan—which naturally happens now and then where the people make mistakes and elect the wrong men to office—every standpatter in the country points to it as proof of the failure of the new system. But ask one of them to give you the name of a city that after having once tried it goes back to the old system, and see him stammer.

The republican congressional committee is determined to find some good reason for smiling. Its experts have been going through the records and find that a change of from 33 to 969 votes in thirty-two districts would have elected a republican congress. This is real cheering for the future, but the melancholy reflection that it did not happen and that it is not likely to happen next year still intrudes.

Those who talk so glibly about going to war should read the record of the past year. Some 20 billions expended DIRECTLY; the cost direct and indirect more than 50 billions! Some of the income taxes now reach 34 per cent.

One of the jingoes says that it makes him "shudder to think of the country's unpreparedness." If he really shudders when he thinks, it is probably because thinking is a new experience for him. The shudder will wear off in time.

Strange Inconsistency

One of the jingo papers which divides its space between preaching preparedness and criticising the allies, contains two editorials on the same page, one urging "get-readiness" and the other finding fault with the floating of the half billion war loan. Why this inconsistency? If we are so daft on war that we must spend our time preparing for it, why not take part in the present war? Loaning to belligerents has something of the excitement of war without its dangers. The spectator at a horse race can not share the delights of the jockey, but he can shout a little louder if he stakes his money on the result. If preparedness is to be the national policy, why deny to its propagandists the pleasure of this partial participation in the risks of war?

If the loans are large enough and preparedness comes quickly enough we may get into this war yet. To be consistent, those who loan should favor preparedness to protect their loans; and those who favor preparedness should not object to loans—they naturally go together.

W. J. BRYAN.

When the next campaign is on and the republicans start in trying to stampede the voters back to the protective tariff doctrine they are likely to run against several large-sized snags. One of these will be the opposition of those far-sighted manufacturers who have found how valuable foreign markets are and who have sense enough to know that they can not be retained if we return to the foolish policy of barring other nations from trading with us by erecting a high tariff wall. Western farmers could not buy eastern manufactures if eastern manufacturers did not buy their farm products, and the world won't buy our stuff unless we are willing to make fair exchange with them.

The new constitution drawn up by the New York convention that has been sitting for months makes provision for the appointment by the governor of eleven administrative officials without any veto power being exercised by the senate. Twenty-five others whom he has power to appoint must be sifted through the senate sieve. At first glance this looks like substantial progress towards short ballot reform, but before giving it cordial approval it might be well to examine whether the eleven are positions the machines care nothing about, while the twenty-five are necessary to their existence.

THE GLORY OF SERVICE
John Greenleaf Whittier

Who, looking backward from his manhood's prime,
Sees not the specter of his misspent time?
And, through the shade
Of funeral cypress planted thick behind,
Hears no reproachful whisper on the wind
From his loved dead?
Yet who, thus looking backward o'er his years,
Feels not his eyelids wet with grateful tears,
If he hath been
Permitted, weak and sinful as he was,
To cheer and aid in some ennobling cause,
His fellow men?
If he hath hidden the outcast, or let in
A ray of sunshine to the cell of sin—
If he had lent
Strength to the weak, and in an hour of need,
Over the suffering, mindless of his creed
Or home, hath bent,
He has not lived in vain, and while he gives
The praise to Him, in whom he moves
and lives,
With thankful heart;
He gazes backward, and with hope before,
Knowing that from his works he never more
Can henceforth part.