



The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)
So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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Nonresistance: Civilian Experiences in World War I

Angry mobs, vandalized property, lonely trees with ominous ropes, prison cells — these are things that Mennonites, who were soldiers of the cross, needed to face when the people of God faced the winds of war, and faced the war crazed society that the United States had become in 1917. War is hard. When you study war, you realize that a lot of innocent people are caught in

the cross winds and that many people suffer many things.

World War I was especially a test for civilian Mennonites, perhaps more than any other war. Maybe the Civil War would be excepted in that but, as far as people being tested at home they were not soldiers, they were at home and they were tested there, I think World War I was a special test. We could raise a question,

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“What were those circumstances that made World War I and the circumstances thereof a special test for civilian Mennonites and nonresistant people?”

We would like to think of the aspects of this subject in three areas. I) *We will think of the Winds of War* (quoting the title of a book by that name), II) *The issues of war*, and III) *The aftermath of war*. I) Let us make sure you understand the circumstances. World War I broke out

in 1914 in Europe. The United States did their best to stay out of that conflict. However, circumstances did draw the United States into that war by 1917 because of a number of things. Thus, the United States seemed like it could hardly stay out of the war. I believe that would be general history so I do not intend to spend a lot of time on that to focus on the subject. I want to think more about what were some things that made the feel-

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ings about this war so intense that it brought these struggles that we will be looking at.

Nationalism. There was a spirit of nationalism that had been building up for decades prior to World War I. That can be seen in, for example, the Spanish American War in 1898 where there was a cry for war to conquer more territory. There was a feeling that war is good and glorious. There was that feeling in the world, not only in the United States but in Europe as well. There was a militaristic nationalism that was in the nations at that time.

Another thing that, I believe, was more important was what we could call the progressive movement or "progressivism." The progressive movement had come on the scene around the turn of the 20th century. In the progressive movement a number of reformers tried to reshape America. As they looked around and observed society, they noticed a lot of things about American life which they thought were less than ideal. Their idea was to fix all the problems and solve all the ills of the nation by reforming. There were a number of ways in which this reform was to be brought about. One was that it was to be done by "Christianizing" the nation.

There was an emphasis on making everyone Christian. The other thing was that education was to be another answer to fix the ills.

However, I think their number one goal was to try and use the force of government to change what was wrong with the nation. The goal of the progressives was to wield the power of government in order to change the nation. You could think of the years of "Teddy" Roosevelt as President and how during his time there were the "muck rakers" who would stir up problems in society. They would try and get these things changed. One of the things that is outstanding, for example, is that they would attack certain industries, like maybe the oil trusts, maybe the meat packing industry or various industries, like that which they considered were abusing the populous or their workers. They would try and fix those problems by passing laws and government reform.

These progressives, by the time World War I came around, in order to support the war effort began to fit the war into their progressive themes. They saw World War I as a way to bring about a better world. They "hitched their wagon" to this star that the war would be the answer

now. The slogans that were used to promote war were things like “This is the war to end all wars.” If you help fight in this war, then there will not need to be any more wars because this one will solve all the problems. Another slogan that was more common perhaps was, “This war will make this world safe for democracy.” In this way, the progressives utilized the power of government to promote this war as a good one, as one that would reshape this world in a better image. Therefore, this war effort was a total war effort which was promoted and forced by the government, and yet supported by the people.

One of the aspects of the war that can demonstrate that fact was that of the three-and-a-half million men raised, about three-quarters of them were conscripted. Nothing like that was seen in the Civil War, because the people were volunteers more. In contrast, most of the soldiers were conscripted through the draft. That indicates that the government was enforcing its powers in order to promote this war, and that the people apparently did not oppose that at all.

From the progressives’ perspective if you did not support the war effort, you were nothing but an obstacle. You were some-

one who was standing in the way of progress. You were holding back this effort of the war to make the world safe for democracy. Therefore, you were simply a stumbling block and what needed to be done was that your mind needed to be changed. Something needed to be different about you, not them. That is the way they looked at it. It was a matter that they viewed people like the Mennonites as backward. They were simply not understanding things right. They were still back in the 19th century. They did not get into the 20th century yet. That was their approach. In their idealism (we could say) the progressives clashed with the firm conviction of the nonresistant people. That is what happened in World War I. The progressives then attempted to coerce the peaceful Mennonites into supporting this war.

One thing we might introduce or interject here is that at the end of war, the aftermath of this war showed how wrong the progressives were. At the end of a World War I there was a turning inward of American society because most Americans realized that this war had been nothing but another war and had brought death and destruction. In fact, people became quite bitter and cynical

about this war because it became apparent that this war did nothing but enrich European tyrants and the death merchants as they were called — people who profited from the war. Also, as we look back now, we can easily see that the events that surrounded World War I led directly to World War II. Therefore, the fact that this war did not end all wars, and did not have anything to do with making the world safe for democracy shows how hollow those slogans were, how empty that promise was, and that fierce patriotism that went along there.

Due to these things then, there was a mass hysteria that went along with this war. It seems to me that there has perhaps never been an hysteria associated with a war the United States has been involved in other than this war. In World War I there was a mass hysteria, intense patriotism, and an idealism about this thing. Propaganda was promoted. The Germans, for example, were shown as monsters. You heard stories that people could hardly believe. They said, “Were the Germans really doing these things?” There were all kinds of stories that were promoted, which may or may not have been true. I am sure that some were not true, but those kinds of things stirred up a mass fervour for this

war. This war spirit flattened everything that opposed it, and especially it generated an anti-German sentiment in the minds of many people.

One of the areas where this animosity toward the Germans was displayed was in a hatred for all things German whether foods, language, or whatever. For example, many German names were changed. You would not call sauerkraut, “sauerkraut.” They called it “liberty cabbage.” You would not call it a hamburger. Instead you called it “liberty steak.” There was that kind of feeling against the German language. Street names were changed. I read of street names even locally in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania that had German names, and then were changed during the war, and later on they changed them back again. You might be familiar with the city of Kitchener, Ontario. That city used to be called Berlin, but during the time of war they changed its name. That one never had its name changed back again because of anti-German feeling.

Mennonites were US citizens but they had German names, and many still spoke German, read German newspapers, and German books. Some spoke German in their churches and so they were already suspect. On

top of that these German peoples would not fight, and so they were doubly suspect. To their neighbours' way of thinking they were actually helping the Kaiser in Germany. These social circumstances made it very difficult for Mennonites during this time.

II) *What were some of the issues of the war?* 1) *Relating to the draft.* We are talking about civilian nonresistance experiences not the young men who went to the army camps. Yet, the folks at home needed to relate to that. In May 1917 President Wilson signed a Conscription Act into law. That conscription act made no provision for Conscientious Objectors. The only thing it said was that it allowed for noncombatant service for those who would object, but it did not define what that was. No one really knew what non combatant service was. Would that be acceptable or would it not?

Mennonites had intended to influence the legislation but they were not very successful in that at all. When that conscription law was passed one of the things Mennonites needed to decide was, "What do we tell our young men? Are they supposed to register or not?" Today it is still being done right. When a youth turns eighteen they must register

their name. I remember when that came in. I was a young man when it started. I remember going to a meeting when the church leaders told us they think it is all right for us to register and to get our names in there. That was the position that the Mennonites took during World War I. Most did register their names. That way when the draft came up they had the names there to pick from. That is the idea. The pool of names is already there.

Mennonites also did go to Washington to try have noncombatant service defined. What did they mean? Also, they sought gain exemption from the war totally. As far as direction, one of the biggest meetings was held in August 1917 at the Yellow Creek meeting house in Indiana. That meeting formulated an advice for young men. The advice was that if your name was called, you would register. If your name was called, you were drafted and you could go. However, you needed to go to the army camps. They were to refuse all forms of service, both combatant and noncombatant. This is what I am saying is one of the things the church needed to relate to, "What will you do about the draft?"

The other thing they did there at that Yellow Creek meeting in

August 1917, was that they formed a War Problems Committee. That committee was to relate between the government and the Church, especially the young men — the draftees. A man who was involved in that work Aaron Loucks, became quite influential in that work.

Can you try and picture this a little bit how it would be in 1917. If you were a young man who was drafted, you needed to leave your family at home and go to an army camp, and you did not know what experiences waited for you there. Very little direction was given. You might be somewhat confused at what you would be doing when you got there, where you needed to take your stand exactly, and the family, of course, knew that they would be losing a loved one to who knows what for the next period of time. You can get the picture a little bit of the heart searching and heart-rending feelings that would have been present there in those kinds of times. Congregations would hold farewell services for young men who were drafted. I am sure it was quite a moving thing to know that your brother or your son was going to go into these camps. We know that during this time some of them suffered rather severely for the cause

there. That is what I am saying. It was a stress that congregations and families needed to relate to.

Ministers also had extra work. They had not only members of their flock at church but they had members out there in the camps. Those men received little enough support but to go there and to try to counsel them and encourage them. There, the young men were in the camp and they were being told to “Put on the uniform. Your friends are doing it. They are doing it too, and you can also. There is nothing wrong. Surely you can at least put the uniform on.” They hardly knew what to do sometimes. The ministers many times travelled to the camps and would try and encourage them, and help them to stand firm for their faith. Aaron Loucks, it is said, travelled thousands of miles and interceded with many authorities for that and encouraged men in the camps to stand firm. It is said that according to a colleague of Loucks, “His task was nerve racking without rest but even at home his colleague observed that Loucks could not rest because he too was faced with much correspondence and was constantly needing to plan his next trip.” “Loucks was a strong man,” he says, “but he often came home with his stomach and nervous

system all out of working order.” I think that gives a little bit of idea of the pressure that was upon this man. It is an example now of what a leader faced in trying to encourage his young men in the camps.

These men faced opposition. For example, Loucks was accused of violations of a law that had been passed — *The Espionage and Sedition Act* which outlawed criticism of the government of the war effort. He was even investigated by the department of justice for his activities in relation to the war camps. His accusers called him a “German agent.” They called him an “oily hypocrite” and other unsavoury titles. These are the kind of things they needed to bear for their stand.

Thus, you can understand that these Mennonite leaders needed to be extremely careful what they said. What you said to a young man in the camp might be considered treasonous. If it was perceived as in opposition to the war effort, you could be fined, or even jailed for it. I understand that even a man like Aaron Loucks later needed to tone down a little bit as we will see. Thus, it was time of testing in relation to the draft. Perhaps the church was a little weak in their preparation of young men in this

time for going into the draft. Also, perhaps, it was a little too late and a little too little what they did give at times. However, but I think they probably did the best they could under the circumstances.

2) *Relating to patriotism.* As I already indicated there was a propaganda machine in motion here. *The Committee of Public Information* was a quasi government organization, I understand, that tried to “whip up” pro-war sentiment and anti-German feeling. The popular feeling then was directed and conformed to this war machine. If you opposed it, you stood out like a sore thumb. There were various organizations locally then which were organized to promote the war effort to spy on those who were not cooperating. “Organizations like the American Protective League, spied on neighbours, reported suspects to authorities and organized patriotic rallies.” You can see what a climate that would put you in if you knew that your neighbour down the road was watching you like a hawk to see how you would support this thing and that really made for trouble.

Even clergy, the ministers in the non nonresistant churches the so-called (we could say the Protestant churches) would say,

“Now, this is a war in which Jesus would have fought in.” They told this to their congregations. They promoted this war to their men and this kind of feeling was stirred up.

One of the issues that arose in relation to patriotism was that if you were a family whose young men refused to serve in the army, you became branded with the epithet such as “slacker,” “coward,” “yellow,” “scoundrels,” “traitor,” and so on — individuals not worthy of holding American citizenship. These were the kind of charges that were laid against Mennonites whose sons refused to go to war. Do you think you could stand up to that?

3) *Maintaining a peace witness.* How can you promote non-resistance in a war time like this without getting into trouble with the law — with the *Espionage Act* which made it illegal to obstruct the draft or to speak disloyally against the government or even against the flag? How could you maintain a peace witness? Historians tell us that there was a tract entitled, *Nonresistance*. I do not know if it is a similar tract that we have today. The Mennonite publishing house published a tract called *Nonresistance* and this tract was seized by the authorities as interfering with the operation and

success of military and naval forces.

They also tried to indite those leaders who had signed the Yellow Creek statement that I talked about earlier. Since they had signed that statement it looked like, under this law, they were violating this law. We could find other examples. The editor of *The Budget*, Samuel Miller was fined \$500 for printing a letter that advised nonresistance. In Virginia, bishop Lewis Heatwole advised a minister by letter to this. The minister had wondered what he should do and the bishop wrote a letter to the minister. The bishop advised the young men not to fight nor to buy war bonds. Both bishop Heatwole and the minister were fined \$1,000 [see *Allegheny Gospel Trails* for more details] for giving that advice in war time.

4) *The use of German or Pennsylvania Deutch, was another controversy that especially faced the Mennonites.* If you received German periodicals, you were under suspicion. Many of the German papers needed to quit publishing and many churches which used German needed to quit using German in their churches. German schools were shut down. You might recall the story of Pastor John

Franz [see *Coals of Fire*] who was a minister for the General Conference Mennonites in Montana. He had a German newspaper and he was lynched by a mob. They took him out to the countryside and the sheriff was along. They took him out to that lonely tree by the roadside and there they had a rope and he understood what was up. Stories vary a little bit but it is said that he grabbed the rope and tried to prevent this. He saw the sheriff there and the sheriff did agree then to prevent his hanging and they took him back to jail and put him in jail. A little later they had a trial. At the trial the things that were discussed were that he received a German newspaper, they talked German in their churches — you are Germans. He needed to pay a \$3,000 bond which his church raised. He was set free and needed to report something like four times a year to a board to make sure that he was not engaging in anti war activities.

5) *Another issue was relating to the flag.* A number of things happened related to this. I was not aware that there was so much emphasis on flag waving during this time but displaying the flag was a real issue. If you did not display the flag in your home in your churches, you were looked

down upon. There is a story of a Simon Gingerich of a Sugar Creek congregation I believe it was in Iowa (it was not the one in Ohio). Simon Gingerich did not display the flag. I believe he also advised young men in camps about not wearing the uniform. His neighbours were stirred up against him and they came and basically made him hang a flag on his house. A little bit later it got quite windy and blew the flag down. So he picked it up and took it down and hung it in his basement to dry. Of course to his neighbours that looked like he took it down. He said, “No, the wind blew it down,” but they would not believe it. They said, “No, we think you took it down.”

Churches also faced this. There are accounts given where the neighbours would come and would hang the flag over the church doors. One place it is said that some men walked in the church and placed the flag up front and there they put it. There it stayed for quite a while. You could not take it away. If you took it away, you would suffer persecution.

6) *Saluting the flag was another problem.* Some Mennonite families refused to send their children to school because they needed to salute the flag there. There is a story of an Ora Troyer

who was arrested, tried, and sentenced to twenty-five days in jail for refusing to let his nine-year-old daughter pledge allegiance. I am not sure of the exact location. (It may have been in Ohio). Some churches were burned down over these issues like the one in Inola, Oklahoma. Five dollars was offered to an arsonist to burn the church down. The arsonist was only too happy to do it for \$5. On buildings, they would write sometimes, "No more slackers," and on the other side they would write, "No more German preaching," and things like that. Another thing of course was the mob action. We will look at that shortly.

III) *Relating to war finances and production.* The government financed this war largely through private donations rather than through direct taxes. That is where the problem came through people at home. If there had been direct taxes levied on incomes Mennonites would have gladly paid it because that is giving to Caesar what he deserves and he will do with it what he wants to. However, because it was a matter of giving your own money and making a choice to support the war effort deliberately with your money, the Mennonites could not do that. Organizations such as *The Red*

Cross and the *Young Men's Christian Association* — YMCA, supported the war and giving money to those organizations became a serious problem.

Buying Liberty Bonds. The government issued bonds which you would buy and it would be paid back to you in some years with interest, or thrift stamps for those who could not afford Liberty Bonds perhaps even for children. Those things became an issue. Many Mennonites felt they could not do this. However, the Secretary of the Treasury said, "If a person refused to buy Liberty Bonds, he was a friend of Germany," "If you could not lend the government \$1.25 a week you were not entitled to be an American Citizen." This was said by the Secretary of the Treasury.

The problem arose where extra patriotic safety committees and mobs tried to force Mennonites to contribute in this way. Even if you tried to advise someone not to give, that was construed as treason, as in this time. Much of the persecution that civilians faced was related to this issue of refusing to give. There are instances of tarring and feathering, and painting yellow. I want to read at least two of these. "The worst fate befell Walter and George Coopreiter, Daniel A.

Diener and his son Charles and John Schrock.” About these Coopreitors it says, “During the night of April 22, 1918 a mob of about 20 masked men went to Walter’s house. They intended to tar and feather the man for refusing to buy bonds. Because Walter was not in good health the mob agreed to substitute George, the Coopreitor’s son instead. . . The same night the mob drove to the eastern edge of McPherson County [this is in Kansas] and they visited the home of the Diener’s, pastor of the Spring Valley Old Mennonite congregation near Canton. Here they tarred and feathered the elder Diener for his opposition to war bonds and his son for taking down a flag placed in the church building,” and so on.

The incident of John Schrock I think is a very interesting one. He was lynched. A crowd was celebrating the armistice. This was actually at the end of the war and they dragged this Schrock down into the town and went down there and “a mob came around him and demanded that he buy war bonds and salute and carry a flag in a parade. Schrock replied, ‘The flag stood for war.’ He refused to salute it when his tormentors thrust it into his hands and then he dropped it. The crowd grew angry, slapped him

and poured a can of yellow paint over his head. . .” “Schrock did not resist, but turned the other cheek. A witness commented later that ‘he exemplified the life of Christ more than I ever saw in my life.’” In other places if you would not buy war bonds, they would come and confiscate your property. The story is told of a place in Kansas where they came and took four cows from an individual, one heifer, sold the livestock and bought a war bond for the man with the money they used from his livestock. Things like that took place too.

Some Mennonites did buy war bonds however and others did put the money in the bank in lieu of buying a war bond. In other words they knew that putting the money in the bank freed up other money to buy war bonds, but at least they were not buying the war bonds directly. That was done. Of course, Mennonites were always glad to contribute to relief efforts but that still did not satisfy the super patriots. You might wonder what sisters did. I understand even housewives, some of them, had a problem signing a pledge card. You were supposed to sign a pledge card that said you would conserve food. The wording in that card, the way it was worded actually lent support to the war effort.

Therefore, even wives at home had a test there. These issues made civilian life during the war a trial. I think it was especially in areas of intense patriotism. It was not everywhere, it was only localized and kind of “spotty” but this thing did come up numerous places.

In the aftermath of the war these developments had important effects on society. One was the formation of relief organizations. There was *The Mennonite Relief Commission for War Sufferers* which was organized to help the sufferers of famine and war in Russia. Later, the MCC grew out of this. The MCC today continues, but it grew out of a push that resulted out of World War I for more activity and for more outreach and for being busier and doing more things. There was more interdenominational relationships and not so much isolation. It also led, I believe, to a more progressive activism and more acculturation and desire for more education. On the other hand, the Mennonites were confirmed in their belief in the world’s kingdoms as beastly. The Fundamentalist/Modernist conflict came out of the war and the Mennonites reasserted their more “fundamental” Bible beliefs in the Garden City Confession of

Faith in 1921.

It also led to a greater emphasis on a peace witness and nonresistance teaching so that by World War II there was a good bit more nonresistance literature available. There was also the establishment of the CPS system during World War II. Finally, Mennonites and their neighbours needed to experience healing and forgiveness. Some of those who had persecuted the Mennonites came and asked for forgiveness at a later date. Again, I will cite the example here of Pastor John Franz in this connection. I will read here from the story in *Coals of Fire*. “Important lawyers . . . urged [John] to sue the officers and businessmen in court [that had accused him]. . . John always said: ‘It is not my business to get even. The Bible says, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord” [Romans 12:19]. I’ll leave it to Him.’ One day several years later as John and his son Rufus were cutting grain, a car stopped beside the field and the driver came toward them. ‘Do you know me, Mr. Franz?’ the man asked as he approached. “Why, yes, I do. How could I forget you? You were one of the twelve men who tried to hang me!’ ‘Yes,’ he answered soberly. ‘I have come to ask a hard thing of you. Will you forgive me for

the great wrong I did to you and to your family?"

"Suddenly the fields seemed very quiet. John remembered: the two strange cars, a rope, a

lonely tree, bleak walls of a prison cell, a court room. Could he forgive? John reached out his hand with a smile. 'I forgive you from my heart,' he said."

Nonresistance: Peacetime Nonresistance

The title, "Peacetime Nonresistance," implies that the doctrine of nonresistance goes beyond merely not resisting those that would do us wrong. It is maybe our first understanding of the term peacetime. As we look at the title, the first impression is that we are thinking about the times that our country, or the country which we are citizens, is not engaged in warfare. That is what we are looking at. We want to extend the meaning of peacetime a bit further yet and think about the times when we are not conscious that we have any human enemy. Our response in times when we do realize that we are in conflict with someone or some group, depends a lot upon our thinking or attitudes, our thoughts about ourselves, and also in relation to God, and how we have been thinking when we are not conscious that we have an enemy.

We want to start by looking at the Scriptures that give us the Bible basis for the doctrine of nonresistance. These should be

familiar to us who have been instructed in the way of this great doctrine, but we do want to see again that this is God's plan and the way He has outlined for His people to live. Occasionally, I think even the world recognizes the value of the way of nonresistance. Maybe some of you have read some articles in the news magazines about angry drivers, and how to respond to them. I was surprised at the wisdom of their counsel even if from a human standpoint. They did recognize the value of not retaliating and getting yourself into worse trouble by retaliating to angry drivers.

Matthew 5:38–48 says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: (39) But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil. 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. (40) And if any man will sue thee

at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. (41) And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. (42) Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. (43) Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. (44) But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (45) That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. (46) For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? (47) And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? (48) Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Verses 38 and 39 give the base for the term "nonresistance." I believe the meaning of verse 48 is to be perfect in love as He is perfect.

Turning to the writings of the apostles, I would like to look at Romans 12:14–21, "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and

curse not. (15) Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. (16) Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. (17) Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. (18) If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. (19) Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (20) Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. (21) Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

1 Thessalonians 5:15 says, "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men." 1 Peter 3:8, 9 says, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: (9) Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." 1 Peter 2:17–24 says, "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear

God. Honour the king. (18) Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. (19) For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. (20) For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. (21) For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: (24) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

While we could look at these Scriptures in relation to war time and make many applications, we also see from these Scriptures the doctrine of nonresistance has implications for every phase of the Christian’s life. In personal relationships, the Christian is ever forgiving another. He is not retaliating. He is “preferring one

another” (Romans 12:10). He is not seeking the highest position, but he is thinking humbly about himself. All of that comes through in these verses in the context of these verses of not retaliating to him that is wronged. We have this matter of attitudes behind it — how we are thinking about ourselves. We prefer one another. We are not seeking the highest position, but submitting one to another, doing what is fair and just. That takes precedence, so we are seeking justice for our own selves.

For this reason, there are a number of articles and items under the article of nonresistance in our statement of doctrine and rules and discipline that maybe at first glance we would think are not really directly related to the matter of nonresistance. However, they are when we consider the attitudes that need to fill us to live a nonresistant life. We will take a look at some of these when we get to the practical side of this in a little bit.

Now, there are certain requirements for us to be able to live a nonresistant life even in peacetime. It surely must have taken a super human force for those who faced the opposition that we were hearing about in war time. Nevertheless, the same is true for us to live nonresistant lives in

times of peace. 1) *The first requirement that we need to be able to live is the new birth experience.* We need to surrender to the Prince of Peace. It is not within man alone to live the way Jesus and the apostles have instructed us to in these Scriptures. Therefore, we need to be born again and surrender our lives to the Prince of Peace.

2) *A daily crucifying of the flesh is necessary if we will be nonresistant in all of our lives.* Really, the real enemy is self. It is not the Germans, or the Iraqi's or whomever; our real enemy is ourselves, and we need to crucify self and die daily. We need to be more concerned about doing justly than about being treated justly. This calls for respect and obedience. It is clear from Romans 13 that to live nonresistant lives we need to have right attitudes toward the government. God has established them. They are there by the power of God and we owe them respect and obedience.

3) *We need to build an attitude of voluntary sacrifice for the well-being of mankind.* Jesus is an outstanding example, and our supreme example here. Where do you see Jesus quarrelling or abusing or pressing someone. We do not see it. Yet, on the other hand we see Him always

healing, always comforting, always doing good. That is our model. We need to continue to build an attitude of voluntary sacrifice for the well-being of mankind.

4) *We need continued teaching on this subject.* It is another way we can build the practice of non-resistance in peacetime.

Some practical areas where we are touched with this matter of nonresistance in the time in which we live. I did not particularly choose these in any order. I have them down here more or less in the way they came to me.

1) *We need to be conscious of a need for nonresistance in peacetime in the area of litigation.* We live in a society that is more and more given to litigation. It is taking a person to law to get from them what they want. Maybe sometimes they do sincerely believe they were wronged. I believe maybe at other times they do it because they see that they can, or they think that they can, do it. This brings pressure on us as Christian people. Article 6 in our discipline (the article on non-resistance) number 1 says, "The church does not approve of members taking part in politics or serving in any capacity that is not in harmony with 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 and Romans 13:1-4. The statement I wanted here is

the second one here, “If members sue at law or take the bankruptcy law, they fall under censure.”

I would like to read from 1 Corinthians 6 in relation to this matter of litigation which gives us direction on how we should do in relation to using the law. 1 Corinthians 6:1–10 says, “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? (2) Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? (3) Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? (4) If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. (5) I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? (6) But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. (7) Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? (8) Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. (9) Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not

inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, (10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” He classifies those who would go to law and try to exact from another with these unrighteous who will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Not only do we refrain from taking another to law, but it is also important how we respond to him that would take us to law. The Scripture has some clear direction. It is good for us to have in mind what the Scripture says. What is our duty when we meet someone on a snowy road when there is only one lane and the open lane seems to be on our side and both do what they best can do and there is an accident? He insists that you pay his damages. What do we do when he is about to take us to law? I am using this as an illustration. What is the proper way to respond?

Jesus, in Matthew 5, says that when one will take us to law we should make an attempt to agree with him, “whiles thou art in the way with him” (Matthew 5:25); while he is in the process of taking us to law, before it comes to

court, we should make an effort to settle outside of court and maintain the right kind of relationship. In some cases we still will be taken to court, but we must at all times let the party know that we are not hating him for it and we are not angry with him. I think there is a place to appeal to reason, but if he will take away what we have we will gladly do that. I think we will maybe be seeing more of an increase in this in the day we live. We need to have the attitude that these material things cannot be so very close to us. We cannot be tied to them. It may be God's way of purging us from materialism.

In times of war, God's people fled rather than fought and they left all their possessions behind. For us it may be that we need to give to people what they unjustly demand of us. I think we can take that joyfully. Hebrews 10:34 suggests that God's people can take the spoiling of their goods joyfully when we consider that we "have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."

2) *Driving habits.* On the road we may be wronged, and sense that we have been wronged in one way or another. Let us remember to do good to him that does evil and apply the nonresistance teaching in this area.

Recently, a young man told me that on his way to church he pulled out, and soon there was a young man following him, whom he identified as not one of our group, but one of a similar group to us. This person was right on his tail — tailgating. He asked me, "Would it have been wrong for me to hit the brakes and test him a little bit?" Now what is our response to that? Would it have been wrong for him to hit the brakes and test him a little bit? Would that have fit into this teaching and these Scriptures that we were looking at? It certainly does not seem like that would fit into the background that we gave here in looking at these Scriptures.

3) *Speech is another area where we apply the teaching of nonresistance.* We read in Jesus' teaching, "bless them that curse you." Maybe there a few people that really curse us, but what is our response? That word "curse," we could expand a bit. What is our response when someone blames you, or faults you for something that did not go right? Maybe it is on the job and you are blamed. How do we respond? Do we quickly say what the other person failed to do and justify ourselves, or are we ready to bless when we sense that others are accusing us, especially

if we feel like we are being wrongly accused?

The Scripture says, “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger” (Proverbs 15:1). At times like that if there is an accusation that comes we need to humbly admit that maybe we did fail. We did not intend to and we certainly want to do better from here away. In that manner we can apply these teachings to bless rather than to curse — to bless those that curse us.

4) *Unequal yoke relationships.*

At first we might not see the clear relationship here in unequal yoke relationships with nonresistance. I am thinking particularly of the purchasing of stock in large companies. I understand that it is facilitated greatly with the computer and the modem. People can sit in their living room and buy and sell stock in large companies. I have heard that some conservative Mennonite people have done that. In discussing it, sometime recently a young man asked the question, “What is wrong with owning stock in large companies? If you have money to invest, what difference is there between that and putting it into the bank?” Do you see the difference?

What is the difference in owning a share in the large company

— some large international company and having your money in the local bank? The difference is this: you become a partner in that company. You are a participant of that company and you have no control on what methods they use to achieve their ends. If they abuse others and oppress to get where they are going then we become participants with that. We certainly need to avoid that kind of unequal yoke relationship lest we not apply these principles of nonresistance.

5) *Nonparticipation in politics.* Voting is certainly inconsistent with putting into office those that are to punish the evil doer, when Jesus tells us to “resist not evil” (Matthew 5:39). Nor, is it consistent to be clamouring to the government about how we feel that they should govern. People who subscribe to certain political conservative newspapers sometimes receive literature encouraging them to lobby and to send out a loud and clear message to the people in government. They may also receive mail from some Christian voters association. I suppose it is all connected to their passing on of names.

While we may agree with some of what is written by politically conservative people, we cannot do as they are telling us to

do, to let our voice be heard to our representatives and so forth because that would violate the principle of Biblical nonresistance. We may do ourselves more damage than good if we would resort to that.

6) *Serving in jury duty.* We have the example of Jesus here who would not condemn the woman who was taken in adultery (John 8:3–11). He did not condemn her, neither did He arbitrate between the two men in relation to their material possessions (Matthew 12:12, 13). We ought to stay clear. Our discipline has a clear statement that we do that “7. According to Romans 13:3, 4, the government is responsible to suppress evil in the world and to punish the evildoer. Therefore our members shall not vote or serve as jurors.”

7) *Closely related to this is non-involvement in protest demonstrations and in petition signing.* Number 8 under this article on nonresistance says, “Members are not permitted to take part in protest demonstrations or in the so-called peace movement. We uphold the Bible teaching of doing good unto all men.” Along with that would be the petition signing. Sometimes it is for local reasons, maybe interests that we would feel are justifiable. However, I believe

we need to stay clear of putting pressure on the government to move or do as we think they should in relation to these things. The right way is that sometimes there is a need to state our position on issues and request of them consideration, but not to dictate to them how they shall rule.

8) *Paying taxes is another practical area of peacetime non-resistance.* It is here in number 5 in the article on nonresistance. “We believe that tax monies belong to the government. According to Matthew 17:24–27, Matthew 22:21, and Romans 13:6–8 we are required to pay our taxes. We further believe that the government is solely responsible for the use of its monies.” We do live in a society that is demanding more and more of government. The result of that is that there will be higher taxation. This taxation may seem unfair and unreasonable, but this too is a part of peacetime nonresistance. We need to keep good records so that we can substantiate our tax report. Along with that, let us be thankful for the privileges that we do have in this land. There are many countries that do not enjoy the provisions, protection, and privileges that we do in North America.

9) *The economic relationships*

between buyer and seller, between management and labour. Again, we remember we are not to be seeking our own good but rather in honour preferring one another. We avoid participation in labour unions. We could read the Scriptures in Colossians 3 in relation to this. “Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men” (Colossians 3:22). Then masters are addressed in chapter 4:1, “Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.”

Wherever we find ourselves, whether on the management end, there is instruction to not oppress but to give what is fair and just to those who work for us or if we are on the servant end (the employee end). That Scripture we read in 1 Peter told us that we are to “be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the

froward” (1 Peter 2:18). Rather, than using force and labour unions to get our ends, and our goals, we commit that to God and simply let Him direct in that. I think there is a place for us to look for other employment sometimes if the conditions are such that we cannot work with that. However, we should not use the force that the world uses in labour.

In conclusion, I would like to look at Romans 16:20, “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.” We have an enemy and the enemy approaches us in various ways. If he can get next to us by taking away our goods and by oppressing us and persecuting us, or by simply having us retaliate and become angry at someone who wrongs us, he will have gained the victory. This Scripture is one of comfort to us. “The God of peace,” is one who gives peace and we do have His grace today to live victoriously in this matter of nonresistance.

“And [Isaac] removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.” — Genesis 26:22

Scripture References

	Proverbs	12:10	40	3:22	46
15:1	44	12:14–21	39	4:1	46
	Matthew	12:19	37	1 Thessalonians	
5:25	42	13:1–4	41	5:15	39
5:38–48	38	13:3, 4	45	Hebrews	
5:39	44	13:6–8	45	10:34	43
12:12, 13	45	16:20	46	1 Peter	
17:24–27	45	1 Corinthians		2:17–24	39
22:21	45	6:1–10	42	2:18	46
	John	2 Corinthians		3:8, 9	39
8:3–11	45	6:14–18	41		
	Romans	Colossians			

From the Previous Issue:

Thought Patterns That Gave Rise to Liberalism and Pietism

From a message by Isaac Sensenig

Sunday, May 28, 1995

Centerville Mennonite Church

Heaven

Daniel J. Stutzman

Preached at a Ministers' Meeting March 2003

Book Reprint (Continued)

One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study

LESSON 38.

Ordinances. — Salutation with the Holy Kiss.

I. Whose command.

1. The leading apostle to the Jews. — 1 Peter 5:14.

2. God's chosen apostle to the Gentiles. — Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26.

NOTE. — As these apostles are the chosen vessels of God to bear His name before the world, we accept without question their teaching as authority.

II. Meaning of the ordinance. — The symbol of love.

III. When to be observed.

1. Often enough to keep the fact established that we recognize it as a command.

2. Never when not prompted by Christian love.

Every important Christian principle is symbolized in some way in ceremonial worship. The kiss is the natural way of showing affection. The husband thus shows his affection for his wife, the mother for her child, the Christian for his fellow-Christian. It is but natural, therefore, that the apostles should frequently exhort their followers and co-laborers to “greet one another with an holy kiss.”

ANOINTING WITH OIL.

I. The teaching of James. — James 5:14, 15.

II. Meaning of the ordinance. — Symbol of God’s grace manifested in healing power.

III. The reference is to literal oil. — Man cannot anoint with the “oil of grace.”

IV. When the anointing should be resorted to.

1. In cases of extreme illness.

2. It should be accompanied with full faith that “the prayer of faith shall save the sick.”

3. It should not be considered an unction for the soul to be administered in dying moments.

MARRIAGE.

I. Definition. — A solemn covenant between one man and one woman as long as both shall live. Two things are necessary to constitute real marriage: (1) mutual consent between the contracting parties; (2) solemnization according to the laws of God and the country.

II. Marriage instituted. — Genesis 2:23, 24.

III. Marriage under the Old Testament dispensation.

1. No recorded restrictions before the Levitical law.

2. Laws governing marriage. — Leviticus 18:6–18; Deuteronomy 7:8; Joshua 23:12; Ezra 10:10, 11; Nehemiah 13:23–25.

IV. Marriage under the New Testament dispensation.

1. Marriage laws reformed by Christ. — Matthew 19:3–9.
2. Marrying one that is divorced forbidden. — Matthew 5:31, 32; 19:9; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18.
3. Plural marriage and divorce unScriptural — 1 Corinthians 7:2, 10, 11; Matthew 19:5–8.
4. Duties of husband and wife.
 - a. Of the husband to his wife. — Ephesians 5:28, 29; Colossians 3:19.
 - b. Of the wife to her husband. — Ephesians 5:22, 23; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:4, 5; 1 Peter 3:1, 2.
5. Lawful marriage.
 - a. As a civil institution. — When the laws of the country are complied with.
 - b. As a religious institution. — When the laws of the country are complied with, and the marriage is “only in the Lord.” — 1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14.

Marriage, next to regeneration, is the most important step in life. Upon the selection of a life companion depends, (1) happiness and usefulness during the remainder of this life, (2) the character of posterity, (3) oftentimes the destiny in eternity. The lightness with which this important question is held, is painfully evident in many a household. Many a bright prospect has been blighted because marriage is made a subject for jesting rather than prayer. Parents, instruct your children in time. It may be the means of saving them from the mistakes which many of you or your companions have made.

1. Name a number of things that tend to discourage the use of the holy kiss. What are the merits of these hindrances?
2. Is there any relation between the anointing with oil and water baptism?
3. Should conversion precede marriage?
4. Is there any truth in the saying, “Love is blind”?
5. Name some evil results of a union in marriage between believers and unbelievers.

LESSON 39.

Restrictions. — Nonconformity to the World.

I. Teaching of the Bible. — Romans 12:2; 1 John 2:15; 1 Peter 2:9; James 1:27; 4:4.

NOTE. — Summing up these references, they amount to this: The children of God are a peculiar people, entirely removed from the sins of the world, having their affection set “on things above, not on things on the earth,” being kept free from sin, and showing by their lives that there is a reality in the religion of Jesus Christ. The complete separation from the world constitutes a power which Satan cannot withstand. The cause of Christ is invincible until weakened by the worldliness of His supposed followers.

II. Worldly spots (James 1:27). — (Ways in which God’s supposed followers may conform to the world.)

1. Pride. — Proverbs. 16: 28; 29: 23; James. 4:6.
2. Intemperance. — Proverbs 23:29-35; Galatians 5:21; 1. Corinthians 9:25.
3. Licentiousness. — Ephesians 5:5; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Hebrews 13: 4; Revelation 22:15.
4. Covetousness. — Exodus 20:17; Proverbs 20:10, 14; Colossians 3:5.
5. Unholy conversation. — Proverbs 15:2, 18:7; Ephesians 4:29; 2 Timothy 2:16.
6. Worldly amusements. — Titus 2:12; 1 Peter 4:3, 4.
7. Fashionable, attire. —
 - a. Contrary to Romans 12:2, 1 John 2:15, James 4:4, 1 Peter 2:9, and James 1:27.
 - b. Gaudy display of attire forbidden. — 1 Peter 3:3, 4; 1 Timothy 2:9, 10; Isaiah 3:16-26.

NOTE. — It will be seen from the above references that there are two restrictions applicable to the apparel: (1) against pattering after, the world; (2) against dressing for adornment’s sake. Heed these two restrictions, and you are in a position to heed the following advice: Dress comfortably. Dress neatly. Dress economically. Avoid superfluities. Ignore fashion plates. Dress as men and women professing godliness.

III. Why oppose fashions?

1. They are unScriptural.
2. They foster pride.
3. They are expensive.
4. They cause waste of time.
5. They are destructive to spiritual life.
6. They drive the poor from the church.
7. They violate laws of health.
8. They promote caste in society.
9. They excite lust.

1. Does conforming to the world in anything ever influence worldly people to a better life?

2. Is it wise to have church entertainments as expedients in awakening an interest in church affairs?

3. How does carnal pleasure interfere with spiritual growth?

4. To what extent would the money spent for alcohol, tobacco, pleasure, and jewelry relieve the natural wants of the poor, and the spiritual wants of the unsaved, in the world?

5. What in your opinion is the most practical way to effect a reform in the line of worldly conformity?

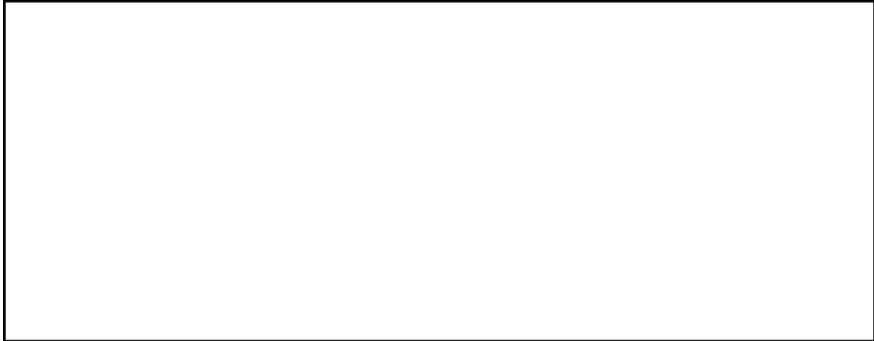
FIFTY FUNDAMENTAL FACTS

48. **“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.”**

Here, is another great event of the future that is just as certain as is the other event noticed in the preceding paragraph. Whatever may be our views as to the details connected with the judgment, the certainty of it is the sobering thought which should appeal to all people. And another thought that should appeal to us is the fact that we will be judged by a righteous Judge according to the law and the evidence. Christ says, “I

came not to judge the world, but to save the world,. . . the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:47, 48). From this declaration we get two thoughts: (1) Christ’s first coming into the world was to save the world. (2) When He comes again it will be to bring the world to judgment, when every man shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body. Paul makes a significant expression when he says, “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (1

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Corinthians 11:31). In other words, if we, according to the Word, get right with God in time, God's judgment upon the wicked will not apply to us. When we

shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, therefore, it will mean condemnation for the sinner, commendation for the righteous.

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