



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 in Everyday Life

Our message looks at a Bible doctrine that we are all very familiar with. It also suggests to us that there is a practical application to the Bible doctrine that we live out and we engage in everyday life — nonresistance in everyday life. We would like to address primarily the practical side of nonresistance — how it works out in our lives. We tend to think of the doctrine of nonresistance as a war time doctrine —

as our position against not going to war. It is important that we understand that nonresistance is not simply a doctrine that we hold in relation to engaging in carnal warfare. It is not simply claiming CO status during a time of war. I think we all understand that the doctrine of nonresistance is that which goes much deeper and it affects every aspect of our lives.

It is especially important for

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our young people to understand that a nonresistance which makes the claim of not engaging in carnal warfare is a nonresistance that is lived out. It is a nonresistance that affects life. I say that from the standpoint that we are in a generation when we are not faced with needing to stand in relation to not engaging in carnal warfare, and for you young boys who are sitting here, I am of that same generation. I have never faced a draft in my life. I am

young enough that it was my father's generation. We tend to have the focus in life that this is really all that nonresistance is about, or we can have that focus, I might say. We do not need to have that focus, but we can. It is important that we think clear on the issue of nonresistance, not because at some time in the future we may face the draft. Yes that is true, and sometime young men you may need to take a stand and say that you will not take up

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arms and fight.

However, more important than that, nonresistance is that which every individual has an opportunity to work out in their lifetime, whether or not the nation would call an individual to take up arms. Nonresistance is practical. It works itself off in our lives. Every individual has an opportunity to show what we really mean about nonresistance. We will show that as we move throughout the message.

I did think, as we consider the message, we should lay the ground work a little bit for our doctrine of nonresistance to know a little bit what we are talking about. The Garden City Confession of Faith, which is printed in the front of our discipline reads this way. (I will simply take the time to read it). We have a whole article in our discipline on nonresistance and that would take a little time to read. I would encourage you to go home and read that, and read the Scriptures that are associated with those points under our discipline in relation to nonresistance. Those Scriptures indicate what practical is and how nonresistance works itself out. Here is what the Garden City Confession of Faith says:

“ARTICLE XIII
OF RESTRICTIONS

We believe that all Christians should honor, pray for, pay tribute to, and obey in all things those who are in authority in state and nation, provided however, that should instances arise in which such obedience would violate the higher law of God ‘we ought to obey God rather than man,’ that church and state are separate, and while believers are to be subject to, they are not a part of the civil, administrative powers; that it is contrary to the teachings of Christ and the apostles to engage in carnal warfare . . .”

Then, the article continues with speaking about a few more of the practical areas that relate to nonresistance in the sense of swearing of oaths and secret orders and life insurance. Those are areas that all have a relationship to the doctrine of nonresistance.

I invite your attention to Matthew 5. We will spend some time here in Matthew 5 and think a little bit about some of the outworking of nonresistance and how it shows itself in our life. Now you will quickly recognize that Matthew 5 is the Sermon on the Mount. I think all of us here are familiar with Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, and what Jesus was saying on the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus was expounding

the Kingdom of God. He was telling men what the Kingdom of God is to be like. The Sermon on the Mount is not some sort of idealism. It is not some sort of thing that people think about and they say, "Well, yes it is great ideas and it is good things to be said, but it simply does not work." Jesus was saying that this is the way the child of God is to live. The Sermon on the Mount is not for another dispensation. It is for New Testament believers. Jesus talks about nonresistance in the Sermon on the Mount, and right here is where we would base the doctrine of nonresistance. Therefore, when Jesus talks about it here He outlines for us what He means in relation to nonresistance in everyday life.

I would like to look at the message in three areas. I) The principle of nonresistance. We will not spend a lot of time there. II) The practice of nonresistance in everyday life, III) Finally, the perfection. I would like to start reading in Matthew 5:38-48. I would like to read to the end of the chapter.

I) *The principle of nonresistance.* It is good that we keep clear in our minds in relation to the principle of nonresistance, that the doctrine of nonresistance is a New Testament teaching. Jesus lays that out very clearly

here in the Sermon on the Mount. He says in verse 39, "But I say unto you." What was Jesus saying here? Jesus was introducing to His disciples (which is who He was talking to here, the individuals who were following Him) that here was the call of God to them. It is essential that we understand that the doctrine of nonresistance is a New Testament doctrine.

In the Old Testament we have God clearly commanding His people to resist evil. God led the children of Israel in a theocracy. God told the children of Israel that they were to go out and destroy their enemies at His command. What did God do whenever they failed to do that? God destroyed them, or God punished them we might say. He did not destroy them completely. In the Old Testament God commanded that His people would act as His government in the world. They were His acting agents in spreading the truth and in curbing evil. It was through God's people.

When God's people failed to do that it brought God's wrath upon them. Jesus was saying here that he was not simply taking the Old Testament a step further. It was not that God really intended in the Old Testament that His people were nonresistant and that they did not fight the

nations. That was not what Jesus was saying. Jesus was saying here that He was bringing in a new kingdom. He was introducing a new thought. It is essential that we understand the doctrine of nonresistance as a New Testament doctrine.

One of the mistakes of modern Christendom and Fundamentalism is the confusion that is brought about by mixing the Old and New Testaments especially in relation to the doctrine of nonresistance. It can be a very confusing issue for an individual if they mix the Testaments. Jesus clearly was laying out His plan here in Matthew 5–7. He was laying His plan for the New Testament saint. It is essential that we understand that.

We need to build on the principle that the doctrine of nonresistance is a New Testament doctrine. I think it is also necessary that we understand that the doctrine of nonresistance requires a clear separation of Church and State. If we move through the New Testament, we understand that the Church and State are completely separate. The state does have responsibilities. We recognize that and various times in the Scriptures we read what those responsibilities are. Romans 13 is an example of the

responsibilities of the state to curb evil, crime, and that type of thing. Nevertheless, let us keep clear that the call of the New Testament is that the Christian has a very distinctly different call in the world — a very distinctly different vocation we might say. Therefore, we appreciate our government. We are thankful for our government but as Christians we understand that the Christian and the government are to be separate — a complete separation of Church and State. If we try to bring the Church and State together, we can never make Matthew 5:38–48 work. It simply does not work. It is only on the principle of the separation of Church and State. Only as we keep that principle clear can we be truly nonresistant. That is one of the reasons.

A few practical applications in relation to the separation of Church and State. As Christian individuals we should be very careful in relation to how we talk and speak about the State. Remember, we are citizens of this country, but we are citizens of a different country. The New Testament refers to the Christian as an “ambassador.” In other words, he is an individual that is representing another country within this country. Whom is a Christian representing? He rep-

represents the kingdom of God. He represents the kingdom that Jesus laid out here in Matthew 5. That is whom he represents. Therefore, we should be very careful how we refer to the country we live in. If we become accustomed to calling this nation "our nation" and talking about, and becoming vocal in political issues and things of that nature, it automatically begins to cross our thinking in relation to separation of Church and State.

During times of elections we have an opportunity to give a testimony in relation to our position in relation to the separation of Church and State. One brother was asked rather pointedly by a neighbour man, "Now what do you think of the war in Iraq?" That brother, could have likely said a lot of things, because he probably had some opinions maybe in his mind. (I do not think that is necessarily wrong for us to have some ideas in relation to national events and to know what is happening in the world). However, that brother responded in this way. "Well, I think I will leave that to Mr. Bush." There is a sense in which that gave a real testimony to the fact that really, from a Christian standpoint, we do not enter into the affairs of the State. Therefore, we should not be indi-

viduals who find themselves becoming vocal on things that are happening in the world.

It is not wrong, like I said, to know what is happening in the world. However, to respond in a way like "This is the way we would want it to be done," causes us to break down our thinking in relation to the separation of Church and State. You see, from the standpoint of the Christian we know that the Bible teaches that we are to "resist not evil," (Matthew 5:39) and to "Love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44). That is our place in the world and our call. It is not our call to decide what the government should do. We leave that rest with them. Therefore, whenever the Christian decides that it is his place to influence the government and to put pressure on the government it clouds the issue and the Bible principle of separation of Church and State.

Always keep in mind whenever we think of the separation of Church and State sometimes those who profess Christendom say, "Yes, but if the Christian would simply go out and influence the government would it not help the government to go right?" We know it does not work that way. What happens? Does the government become Christian? No. The Christian becomes part

of the government, right? Is that not the way it works? The two are totally incompatible. They do not work together.

Building on that principle as well, there is another principle that I think is clearly laid out here in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

The principle of nonresistance is founded in a new birth experience. Keep it clear that the foundation of a nonresistant experience in our life is that of a changed heart. Jesus was not speaking of simply a reformation here in these verses. He was not telling us, "Somehow, if you work yourself hard enough you can generate this kind of love for your enemies and this kind of goodwill for those who would do you harm." No, that is not what Jesus was saying.

Jesus was saying that it is only as an individual is born again. It is only as he is born of God. It is only as he has his citizenship in heaven. Only then can he truly exercise this call to nonresistance. For the individual who does not understand what God is able to do in the life of a person who believes in God and has faith in God, to read Matthew 5 and read these verse here in relation to nonresistance, it does not make sense. It does not look like it would work. It seems like it would be a merry-go-round, and

that it would be impossible. However, we know that it can work as an individual has a new life within and a changed heart. Then, it is able to work. Therefore, the principle of nonresistance, the doctrine of nonresistance is founded in a new birth experience. For this reason we understand that nonresistance is not simply whenever someone does us wrong and we just grit our teeth and grin and bear it, so to speak. That is not nonresistance.

Nonresistance is active on the part of being ready to reach out to the individual and to respond in a loving manner. That is nonresistance. That is why people do not understand. They cannot figure out why individuals can do this. That is why our forefathers were misunderstood in relation to their position on nonresistance. Our forefathers were told, "If everyone would act like you, then the heathen would simply overrun us." Again, it is a misunderstanding of what God is able to do when individuals apply themselves to the Word, and are ready to be born again and to follow the teachings of the Scripture.

Now, we would like to build on the practice of nonresistance in everyday life. I would simply like to keep our attention right here in Matthew 5. It is very

interesting here as we read these verses, Jesus makes some very practical applications does He not? He says we are not to resist evil. Okay, well what does that mean? Well, he says, "The man who smites you on the right cheek, you turn to him the other also. If a man sues you at law you let him have thy cloak as well as thy coat. If a man wants you to go one mile with him and says you must go a mile with him, you go two miles with him." Those were practical applications that Jesus was making here. I would like to simply enlarge on those in helping us to understand the practice of nonresistance in everyday life.

The illustrations that Jesus used here in Matthew 5 were things that the disciples understood. They knew what Jesus was talking about. *In verse 39 I see first of all that the practice of nonresistance is a willingness to bear insults.* As I would understand what verse 39 is saying the smiting on the cheek was that which was an insult in Bible times. It was not so much that the slap was that which hurt, but it was that which insulted the individual. We can think of different times in the New Testament where Jesus was slapped. The apostle Paul was slapped on the cheek before the

council one time. Why was he slapped? It was because there were some individuals who wanted to insult him. If you read the account there that is what it was.

Smiting an individual on the cheek was a calculated insult. This may also carry the understanding of scorning. What would the natural man say when an individual was insulted like this? The natural man would say, "Now, wait a minute. I am in charge here." The natural man says, "I am worth something. You cannot talk about me like that."

Let us remember, insulting someone does not necessarily need to happen with a slap on the cheek. It can happen with the tongue or a look. We have probably all experienced insults and what that is like to be insulted. However, the Christian, Jesus says, is ready to turn the other cheek. What does that mean? That simply means the Christian is ready to bear insults.

You know the tendency that we have within ourselves when someone insults us or we face that kind of disdain or hatred or scorning at the hands of another. Our tendency is to prove that we really are someone or try to prove that. We know it does not work, but that is our tendency. The

Christian is one who says, "I am willing to bear more insult." That is practical nonresistance. Therefore, we could raise the question, "Are we ready, or able to allow people to talk about us, reflect against us, and misrepresent us? Are we willing to bear that without our carnal nature wanting to rise up and prove to that individual that we really are worth something and that we really are someone?"

It is probably unlikely that you will ever be slapped on the cheek, but it may happen. However, whenever someone says something about us that demeans us or whenever someone acts as though they are scorning us, what is our response? I think we know what it should be. Jesus says here, "Turn the other cheek." In other words, be ready to bear more and be ready to accept more. We could raise the question, "Are we able to respond by loving someone who has intentionally done us wrong?" If they have intentionally insulted us, are we able to love them? What would we do if we have an opportunity to maybe get even or maybe to run that other person down? What is our response? I think that indicates whether or not we are really practicing nonresistance.

It is interesting what the Bible

reveals about the life of the Christian. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4:12b, 13, (and I am breaking into the middle of a sentence) "being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." None of us like to be in that position, but really that is what the Scripture says the life of the Christian is. We can expect insult and we need to be ready to turn the other cheek.

The story is told during the Civil War, of an account where General Whitting (who was a general in the Southern army) had a fairly high dislike for Robert E. Lee. He did not care for Robert E. Lee. He made that quite clear in the way he talked about General Robert E. Lee. One time in a conference with a Jefferson Davis (who was the Southern President at that time) Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis were having this conference and Jefferson Davis asked Robert E. Lee, what he thought of General Whitting. Robert E. Lee told Jefferson Davis that he thought that General Whitting was a fairly capable officer in the army.

A little later one of his fellow officers pulled Robert E. Lee off

to the side and said, “Why did you tell Jefferson Davis that when you know how unkind General Whitting has talked about you?” It was interesting the response that Robert E. Lee is reported to have given, which is a remarkable response for a secular man. He said, “Remember, President Davis asked what I thought of General Whitting and not what General Whitting thought of me.”

You know, we tend to sometimes maybe get that process in reverse a little bit. Whenever someone does not think well of us then we think it is our obligation to not think well of them either. It does not need to be that way. In fact, the child of God should really live above that. We need to be those who are ready to bear insults.

The nonresistant person also is ready to suffer injustice. In verse 40 Jesus said, “And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.” Nonresistance not only bears an insult as is brought out in verse 39. Notice that the illustration which Jesus gives deals with an individual who had something that was rightfully his and another comes and claims it. He is to give away even more.

I am told that in Jewish custom that it was against the law for a

Jew to take away the cloak of another Jew. They could take their coat at times if they needed a payment for something. I should not say it was against the law to take their cloak, it was against the law to hold their cloak overnight. In fact, Exodus 22:26 says it this way, “If thou at all take thy neighbour’s raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down.” This would refer to the cloak or the outer garment. In other words they were not to hold it overnight.

The reason was because the Palestinian nights were very cold nights and the Jewish people needed their outer coat as protection. Therefore, the law of the Jews was that they could not take that outer cloak. Really, what Jesus was saying in verse 40 is that when a man sues thee at law and takes away thy coat (takes away thy inner garment) give him the outer also even though he cannot legitimately claim it. Be ready to respond to the injustice of him taking your coat and give him your cloak as well.

It is also interesting here in verse 40 that Jesus said, “if any man will sue thee at the law.” It seems to imply that we are to be ready to do this before an individual takes one to law. In other words, we need to be ready to act

before we are forced. Again, we could simply, turn over to Romans 12. The principle of dealing with injustice comes out very much in Romans 12. I think we know what the principle is. We need to be ready to respond rightly to those who would do us wrong — respond rightly to injustice. It is practical nonresistance.

Romans 12:17–21 says, “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.” Be ready to suffer injustice and be ready to do good in the face of injustice.

I would like to enlarge a little bit on this point. What does it mean that we are to be ready to give our cloak whenever someone wants to take our coat? What is Jesus telling us? I think simply, we need to be careful in our response when another takes advantage of us. It is true that I

do not think there is anyone in this audience who likes to be taken advantage of. We like to look out for ourselves. However, we can be certain that if we live very long in life, somewhere along the line, someone will take advantage of us. Someone will exploit us.

Sometimes individuals will do that because they know what we believe. They know what our response will be. They know that we profess to be nonresistant individuals. They know what our response should be (if they do not know what it will be they know what it should be). Therefore, there are times, and there are some things that as Christians we will not do when others take advantage of us. I do not believe it is wrong to appeal to an individual when another takes advantage of us, but there are some things that we will not do as nonresistant Christians.

One of the things that we will not do is that we will not threaten another. We will not threaten to take someone to law. We will not make the threat that if you do not make these things right I will do this or this or this. Maybe we would say, “Well, I never really intended to do that.” However, we will not even say that we were thinking about doing it. We will be convinced that there is a spirit

that needs to be ready to endure and to suffer when others are taking advantage of us. I believe that is what is brought out in Romans 12. We are to heap coals of fire and live peaceably with our fellow men. We will not use the law to force our demands on another. We will not press charges. I think it is important that we understand some of these points.

I do not believe it is wrong as a godly people to report crime and to let law officials know when a crime has been committed. Then, let us keep clear that we are not the individuals who press the charges, especially if something has been done against us. There have been times in the past (and this happened a number of years ago in our home community) where there was a group of knowledgeable enough thieves who knew that the Mennonites go to church on Sunday morning, and they were not at home on Sunday morning. They are doing something else. It is interesting that one article in the newspaper said, related to this situation, "While the Mennonites pray the thieves prey." It was a very interesting analogy.

They made it their practice to go around to Mennonite homes on Sunday morning. They removed anything that they

might be able to get their hands on. The challenge is that we respond rightly in situations like that. We need to love our enemies and be ready to endure injustice. Yes, it was the law's responsibility to do some work there. Those crimes were reported, but then as nonresistant Christians, we do not press charges. We need to keep clear in relation to that. We need to be ready to suffer injustice and to not make claims when others have done us wrong. I think we should think right in those areas.

Another area where we need to keep clear in relation to dealing with injustice is sometimes in our dealings with others where we may need to use a third party, possibly a law official. It is very important that we clearly communicate in issues where we are dealing with others and settling issues maybe in a law suit or something of that nature. We need to make clear our desire to settle things in a Gospel way. Perhaps we do not do the actual writing out of something on paper, but if we have another acting in our behalf then really we become responsible and we need to keep that principle clear as well. We need to be careful that we are living out our nonresistance even in those type of areas.

The question is often raised,

“What do we do when individuals are completely unreasonable?” What is our response to be? Again, from the Scriptures, our response must be one of love. We must be ready to go beyond what the law requires. We must be ready to go beyond in satisfying things. We need to be ready to fulfill the command of Scripture. We need to be ready to suffer injustice. Romans 12:18 says, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you,” or as far as it depends on you, “live peaceably with all men.” Live at peace with your fellow man. Live at peace with others.

Finally, we need to remember that we will not answer for others but we will give account of our own actions. There are times we understand that it may be nearly impossible to make the other person to understand right. We need to make sure that our actions are right. Then, we do need to answer for others.

In verse 41 we need to be ready to comply with demands put upon us whether they are inconvenient or humiliating. Jesus says if a man, “shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.” What was Jesus talking about? We could make a number of applications here. It is very obvious that what Jesus was referring to here in verse 41 was

the law that required the Jews to carry the Roman’s baggage for a mile. This custom in verse 41 started with the Persians. They had a relay that they would go through in carrying mail. They would give the mail to one person who would carry it so far. They, in turn, would give it to another who would carry it so far. It was like a relay, somewhat like the pony express you might say, except it was on foot.

The Romans carried this a step further and they took their subjects, those whom they had rule over, and made them carry their baggage. They would compel them to go a mile. Therefore, if a Roman soldier came along and you were out working in your field, and you were seeding the field, the Roman soldier could walk up to you and say, “Here is my baggage you carry it with me for the next mile.” The Jew had absolutely no choice in the matter. That was his responsibility to carry that for a mile. He did not need to carry it any further than a mile, but he was obligated to carry it for a mile. It was very inconvenient. It was very much a trial for the Jews, especially because they did not like the Romans or Roman rule very well. It was very humiliating service. Jesus was saying how to relate to that. What do you do

when one compels you to go a mile? Jesus says, “Go with him twain.”

We could ask, “What was the principle here? What was Jesus talking about? Simply, Jesus was telling his disciples that they need to be ready to comply with the demands that were put upon them even though it was inconvenient and humiliating. They were to comply and be willing to go further. They were to especially comply with the demands that the authority, the government placed upon them.

This verse has a real, practical application to right where we live. We appreciate the nation we live in. We live in a nation that has a history of enacting (maybe we might say) some “odd laws” sometimes, especially as it relates to some of our Mennonite practices and things like that — things that we were accustomed to in the past. We can come to the place where we say, “Really, do we need to do all this? Is this really what is required of us?” The burden of what Jesus was saying here was that we respond in a nonresistant way to the demands that are placed upon us. Let us always keep it clear.

I read at the beginning in relation to our article of faith that where the laws of the land conflict with the law of God then we

will clearly obey God. Right? There is no question there. I think we understand that. Jesus very clearly commanded His disciples to follow Him. His kingdom was not of this world. They were called to obey God. His disciples very clearly understood that because that is what they said in Acts whenever they were challenged by the authorities. They said, “Really, our call was to obey God first of all.” They understood that principle.

Sometimes I think that maybe we get a little “off edge” in relation to our responsibility to the government. If we will be a truly nonresistant people, then the Scriptures would teach us that we need to be willing to obey even whenever the demands that are placed upon us seem to be demands that are inconvenient and maybe even humiliating at times. The simple practical application of verse 41 is whenever governments compel us to pay our taxes, what do we do? Are we ready to pay them or do we grumble about it? Do we try to find ways to get around it? I think that is the question.

Young men, your driving habits, your obedience to government, your obedience to laws of the road are an indication of your level of commitment to the doctrine of nonresistance. That is

right where it comes down to. We need to be careful about how we talk about our law makers, and the way that the laws are made. Finally, if we are the individuals who speak out against the laws that are made and the lawmaker that made them and we criticize and criticize, is that non-resistance? Is that doing what Jesus says here when a man “compel[s] thee to go a mile, go with him twain?” There are individuals who, whenever a local issue arises (and this happened one time) where a Mennonite man wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper in relation to a local issue. Is that a violation of the principle of nonresistance? I think personally it is. Finally, we do not become involved to that extent with the demands that government may place upon us.

Again, we could ask, “Does this mean that we will go along with wrongdoing?” I think we know the answer to that. We will as Christian individuals uncompromisingly stand for truth and right. Remember, whenever we do need to say, “This is what the Bible says, we will obey the Bible,” We do it in the spirit of meekness and with the principle of nonresistance. It is the only way. It is the only Scriptural way. Our Anabaptist forefathers whenever they were faced with

the call of surrender to the Church/State with the call of taking up arms they said, “No, we will not do it.” How did they say that no? Did they say no in a way that emphasized the fact that we are above the authorities? No, they said no in a way that showed that they were meek and humble and they were simply following what God had required them to follow. That is the spirit of non-resistance.

The call to unselfish living. In verse 42 Jesus gives one more way in which the Christian shows that he does not resist evil. “Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.” The principle is that the Christian will live in a totally unselfish manner. That is nonresistance in everyday life — a totally unselfish manner. Our tendency is to think first of all of ourselves. When we endure injustice and insult, and when we endure those inconveniences of demands that may be placed upon us our tendency is to do what? We think, first of all, of ourselves. That is our native tendency. Jesus says here “Do not do that. Reach out to others. See the needs in the lives of others. Help those who are experiencing difficulty even if they may be those who have wronged us in the past. Be ready to help them.”

1 John 3 gives us an exposition of this, when John says in verses 17, 18, “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (18) My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” We respond with action. We respond in a totally unselfish manner whenever we reach out in love and compassion to others.

Peter S. Hartman was the writer of *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, if you have the opportunity sometime, young people especially should take the time to read that. Peter Hartman, in recounting some of the happenings of the Civil War records the holding of some Mennonites. I think there were seventy-two. They were not all Mennonites but some of them were Dunkard brethren and a few other very similar to the Mennonites in relation to their nonresistance principle. They were held in a prison in Virginia because of their nonresistance — they professed nonresistance.

In some way the Confederate Congress decided that they needed to do something with these men. They could not simply keep these men in prison. They did not know what to do with

them. Therefore, the Confederate Congress assembled and somehow they obtained a copy of a Mennonite Confession of Faith. I did not check into this and I could not verify it for certain, but I assume it was the Dortrecht Confession of Faith which the Mennonites had adopted in 1725, which would have been prior to the account here that Peter Hartman was recording. The article on nonresistance, is actually entitled “Article XIV, Defense by Force,” was read before congress. It is a little more lengthy than the Garden City Confession of Faith.

After this article on nonresistance, on revenge was read before the Confederate Congress, the congressman from South Carolina, rose up and said, “Is there anyone in these halls that knows anyone that believes like this? Anyone that is like this?” He said, “Do they live it out?” The congressman from Virginia (who was John Hopkins) at that time rose up and said, “Yes, these people are my next door neighbours and they live it to the letter.” As a result of that, those Mennonites at that time were told if they would pay a \$500 fine they could receive an exemption.

The question that comes to us is, if we would be in a similar situation, would we pass the test in

a similar way? If we had a congressman that lived beside us would he be able to say that we live out our nonresistance to the letter and that we practice it? Do others understand that the principle, the doctrine of nonresistance is not simply something that we call a doctrine that forbids us from becoming involved in war, but it is that which relates to the way we respond to others in everyday life and the way we are ready to give ourselves even when others have wronged us?

The perfection of nonresistance in everyday life. Jesus said that we are to turn the other cheek. We are to give away our cloak. We are to go the second mile. We are to give to those that ask of us, and we are to live unselfishly. How does that happen? How does that come out of lives? How does that show forth? We said earlier that this is only possible through a new birth experience. It is only possible through the work of God in our lives. Notice what Jesus goes on to say in verse 44. This is a very interesting verse. Jesus said in verse 43, that this is what was said in the old times, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 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."

We perfect this principle, this doctrine of nonresistance, in everyday life when we choose to love all men, whether they are friend or foe. Jesus, in verse 44, was talking about a love that was an act of the will. It is a decision on our part to love another that may be acting unlovely toward us or may be doing something wrong to us. It is a choice of the will. It is when we choose to love our enemies, not because they have done something nice to us but because God commands us to love our enemies. We know as Christians, it is our responsibility. Then, that love is able to grow in our lives.

We will not simply wake up some morning and discover "Oh, yes sure enough I love my enemies." It does not work that way. This love for our enemies is that which we will choose to do. It is the kind of love that God had to us. God chose to love us, did He not? God would not have needed to love us. In fact, we were completely unlovely. There was nothing on our part that caused God to want to save us. It was because God loved us that He reached down. That is what Jesus was saying in verse 45, "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."

It is the love that God had to us. Now, for us we choose to love.

Also, in verse 44 we perfect this doctrine of nonresistance whenever we choose to love and then we act that love out. Jesus says, “bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them.” The call here in these verses is that when one loves even when they do not feel like loving, when they choose to love, then they will put that love into action. It is when we put love into action that love reproduces itself and that love will grow. The opposite is also true. If someone had done us wrong and we turn around and do something wrong to them, does that make us love them? Well, no. It will make us dislike them more. That is what will happen. We know the opposite is true. When someone does us wrong and we love them, we respond in love, then our love will grow. It is a spontaneous relationship.

We need to choose to love, but then as we choose and act that love out then it will be that which will grow. Jesus said here that we are to pray for those who would do us wrong. If we are willing to pray for those who have done us wrong then it may not change the individual that did us wrong, but it will change us. It is impossible for us to go on

praying for someone without loving him. We will not be able to pray for someone without them becoming the objects of our conscious love. Therefore, the challenge is that we would be ready to put our love into action in the practice of nonresistance.

I would like to close here with what Jesus says in verses 47, and 48. “If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?” The question I would like to leave with us is “What is the more in your life?” Jesus says, “If ye salute your brethren only what do ye more than others?” What was Jesus referring to here? Jesus was simply saying that the more — “what do ye more than others?” — is a distinctive quality of the Christian’s love. It is whenever our love is put into action.

Jesus was saying here in verses 46, and verses 47 that the publicans have a love that can be explained in natural terms. This love that they have is a love for those that love them. It is not hard for us to explain a love like that. That is an easy love. That is a natural love. We love the individuals that love us. However, the Christian’s love goes beyond that, it is something unique, special, and cannot really be explained. It is something that needs to be experienced. It is

when we have that kind of love that we can truly be the individuals in verse 48 that Jesus says, “Be ye therefore perfect.” May we be challenged as we practice nonresistance in our everyday

life, as we are ready to endure injustice, as we are ready to love even those who may do us wrong. May we be convinced that it is then that we will become more like our heavenly Father.

Scripture References

Exodus	5:41	173	12:17–21	171
22:26	170	5:42		
		5:44	1 Corinthians	
Matthew	5:46	166, 178	4:12b, 13	169
5:38–48	164	5:47, 48		
5:39	166, 168, 170		1 John	
5:40	170	Romans	3:17, 18	176

From the Previous Issue:

Why We Do Not Accept the Radio and Television in Our Homes

From a message by Wayne J. Wenger

July 31, August 1, 1993

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Balance For the Breadwinner

From a message by Daniel Coblentz

Tennessee/Kentucky Life Conference Meetings May, 2004

Held at

Mt. Carmel Bible Fellowship

Flemingsburg, KY

Book Reprint *(continued)*

The Seven Laws of Teaching

CHAPTER I *(continued)*

THE LAWS OF TEACHING

The Laws Stated as Rules

9. These definitions and statements are perhaps so simple and obvious as to need no argument or proof; but their force

as fundamental laws may be more clearly seen if they are stated as rules for teaching. Addressed to the teacher, they may read as follows:

I. Know thoroughly and familiarly the lesson you wish to teach, — teach from a full mind and a clear understanding.

II. Gain and keep the attention and interest of the pupils upon the lesson. Do not try to teach without attention.

III. Use words understood in the same way by the pupils and yourself — language clear and vivid to both.

IV. Begin with what is already well known to the pupil upon the subject and with what he has himself experienced, — and proceed to the new material by single, easy, and natural steps, letting the known explain the unknown.

V. Stimulate the pupil's own mind to action. Keep his thoughts as much as possible ahead of your expression, placing him in the attitude of a discoverer, an anticipator.

VI. Require the pupil to reproduce in thought the lesson he is learning — thinking it out in its various phases and applications till he can express it in his own language.

VII. Review, *review*,

REVIEW, reproducing the old, deepening its impression with new thought, linking it with added meanings, finding new applications, correcting any false views, and completing the true.

Essentials of Successful Teaching

10. These rules, and the laws upon which they are based, underlie and govern all successful teaching. If taken in their broadest significance, nothing need be added to them or taken away. No one who thoroughly masters and uses them need fail as a teacher, if he also has qualities that enable him properly to maintain the good order necessary to give them free and undisturbed action. Disorder, noise, and confusion may hinder and prevent the results desired, just as the constant disturbance of some chemical elements forbids the formation of the compounds which the laws of chemistry would otherwise produce. But good teaching, in itself, will often bring about good order.

11. Like all the great laws of nature, these laws of teaching seem clear and obvious; but like other fundamental truths, their simplicity is more apparent than real. Each law varies in its applications with varying minds

and persons, although remaining constant in itself; and each stands related to other laws and facts till it reaches the outermost limits of the art of teaching. In the succeeding chapters we shall proceed to a careful study of these seven laws, reaching in our discussion many valuable principles in education and many practical rules which can be of use in the teacher's work.

12. These laws and rules apply to the teaching of all subjects in all grades, since they are the fundamental conditions on which ideas may pass from one mind to another. They are as valid and useful for the instructor in the university as for the teacher in the elementary school, and for the teaching of a law in logic as for instruction in arithmetic.

13. There may be many successful teachers who never heard of these laws, and who do not consciously follow them; just as there are people who walk safely without any theoretical knowledge of gravitation, and talk intelligibly without studying grammar. Like the singer who sings "by ear," these "natural" teachers have learned from practice the laws of teaching, and obey them from habit. It is none the less true that their success comes from obeying law, and not

in spite of law.

Skill and Enthusiasm

14. Let no one fear that a study of the laws of teaching will tend to substitute a cold, mechanical sort of work for the warm-hearted, enthusiastic teaching so much to be desired, and so much admired and praised. True skill kindles and keeps alive enthusiasm by giving it success where it would otherwise be discouraged by defeat. The true worker's love for his work grows with his ability to do it well. Enthusiasm will accomplish all the more when guided by intelligence and armed with skill.

15. Unreflecting superintendents and school boards often prefer enthusiastic teachers to those who are simply well educated or experienced. They believe, not without reason, that enthusiasm will accomplish more with inadequate learning and little skill than the best-trained and most erudite teacher wholly lacking in zeal. But why choose either the ignorant enthusiast or the educated sluggard? Enthusiasm is not confined to the unskilled and the ignorant, nor are all calm, cool men idlers. There is an enthusiasm born of skill — a joy in doing what one can do well — that is far more

effective, where art is involved, than the enthusiasm born of vivid feeling. The steady advance of veterans is more powerful than the mad rush of raw recruits. The world's best work, in the schools as in the shops, is done by the calm, steady, and persistent efforts of skilled workmen who know how to keep their tools sharp, and to make every effort reach its mark.

16. The most serious objection to systematic teaching, based on the laws of teaching, has sometimes come from pastors, Sunday-school teachers, and others, who have assumed that the principal aim of the Sunday school is to impress rather than to instruct; and that skilful teaching, if desirable at all, is much less important than warm appeals to the feelings and earnest exhortations on the proper occasions. But what exhortation will have such permanent power as that which is heralded by some clear truth? If the choice must be between the warmhearted teacher who makes gushing appeals, and the cold-hearted one who stifles all feeling by his indifference, the former is perhaps to be preferred; but why either? Is there no healthful mean between steam and ice for the water of life? The teacher whose own mind glows with the truth, and who skilfully

leads his pupils to a clear understanding of the same truth, will not fail in inspirational power.

17. These questions may be left to call forth their own inevitable answers. They will have served their purpose if they repel the disposition to discredit the need of true *teaching* in Sunday schools as well as in day schools; and if they convince Sunday-school leaders that the laws of teaching are the laws of mind, which must be followed as faithfully in studying the Word of God as in studying his works.

A Word to Teachers

18. Leaving to other chapters the full discussion of the meaning and philosophy of these seven laws, we here urge the teacher, especially the Sunday-school teacher, to give them the most serious attention. While facing your pupils, how often have you wished for the power to look into their minds, and to plant there with sure hand some truth of science or some belief of the gospel? No key will ever open to you the doors of those chambers in which live your pupils' souls; no glass will ever enable you to penetrate their mysterious gloom. But in the great laws of your common nature lie the lines of communi-

cation by which you may send the thought fresh from your mind, and awaken the other to receive and embrace it.

19. In the discussion of these laws there will necessarily occur some seeming repetitions. They are like seven hilltops of different height scattered over a common territory. As we climb each in succession, many points in the landscapes seen from their summits will be found included

in different views, but always in a new light and with a fresh horizon. New groupings will show new relations and bring to light, for the careful student, new aspects and uses. The repetitions themselves will not be useless, as they will serve to emphasize the most important features of the art of teaching, and will impress upon teachers those principles which demand the most frequent attention.

Youth Book Reprint

Andrew Dunn: An Irish Story *continued*

Absolution.

Andrew. "You tell your flock, sir, that you have a right to require of them to confess their sins in your ear and to put penance upon them, and then to give them absolution."

Father D. "To be sure we do; what good Christian ever doubted it?"

Andrew. "I should thank you, sir, to show me anything in the New Testament which supports this pretension?"

Father D. "I can do it very easily. 'Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.'" (John 20:23).

Andrew. "Are you sure, sir, that you understand those words

rightly? And can you believe, that, by authority of this word, every parish priest may require his flock to confess, appoint them penance, and give them absolution? Where is the confession in the ear of a priest spoken of?"

Father D. "St. James 5:16 says, 'Confess your faults.'" [The Catholic Bible says 'sins']

Andrew. "I am much surprised, sir, that you should pretend that this is anything to the purpose. If you would take the rest of the words you would see the apostle's meaning: 'Confess your faults one to another, brethren;' from which it is plain that St. James did not mean anything like confession to a priest. And where is the right to appoint penance given you in the Testament?"



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