

THE CHRISTIAN IN WORLD CRISIS:
REFLECTIONS ON THE MORAL
CLIMATE OF THE 1960's

"We feel it our duty to beseech men, especially those who have the responsibility of public affairs, to spare no pain or effort until world events follow a course in keeping with man's destiny and dignity . . . Nevertheless, unfortunately the law of fear still reigns among peoples . . . There is reason to hope, however, that by meeting and negotiating men may come to discover that one of the most profound requirements of their nature is this: between them and their respective peoples it is not fear that should reign, but love—a love that tends to express itself in collaboration." }

JOHN XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*.

I. CAN WE CHOOSE PEACE?

A man is said to be "responsible" in so far as he is able to give a rational and humanly satis-

factory answer, or "response," concerning his acts and the motives behind them. Cain, for instance, after the murder of Abel, was asked where Abel was—a question of primordial and typological importance. Cain's answer was not clear.

In discussing the fateful problems of violence, hatred and power politics in terms of Christian responsibility, we must first discover what question is being asked of us, and by whom. If we are willing to face the question along with the questioner, we may eventually become able to give a true and clear answer.

The question is not merely, "Where is our violent and overstimulated culture leading us?" or "Can total war be avoided?" or "Will the Communists take over the West?" or "Will the West win the cold war?" or "Will the survivors of a nuclear war envy the dead?" From the standpoint of the present essay, such questions are irrelevant. Not that the issues they raise may not be vitally important, but the surmises and conjectures which might be offered as answers to such questions are really not answers to anything. They are beguiling guesses which seek to allay anxiety and which may well threaten to misdirect our best efforts if not to justify actions of which we ought to be ashamed.

The more important question is not "What is going to happen to us?" but "What are we going

to do?" or more cogently, "*What are our real intentions?*" This last question is probably seldom asked with sufficient seriousness. Let us suppose it is not simply something we ask ourselves. Let us hear it as a question that is proposed to us by the Lord and Judge of life and death. Let us bear in mind another such question: "Friend, whereto art thou come?" (Matthew 26:50.) Judas, somewhat subtler and far unhappier than Cain, having learned some fundamental truths, happened to know that the acceptable answer to such crucial questions had something to do with love. So he kissed Christ. But his kiss was a sign of betrayal.

We are being asked the very same question, if not directly and openly by Christ, at least by history of which we, as Christians, believe Him to be the Lord. I do not say that our love of Christ, desperate and confused as it is, is little more than a gesture of betrayal. But let us be sincere about facing the question, and hope, through God's grace, to answer it better than Judas.

Quite apart from what the Communists may or may not do, what are we, the dwindling and confused Christian minority in the West, going to do? Or at least, what do we *really want to do*? Do we intend to settle our problems peacefully or by force? Have we anything left to say about it at all? Have not the decisions been taken, to a great extent, out of our hands? Not yet. Among

our leaders, some are Christians. Others cling to humanitarian principles which should be relevant here. These leaders will (we hope) take kindly to suggestions and to pleas that are based on Christian ethical norms. We have been very close to nuclear war, more than once, in the past five years. Has disaster been avoided merely by a healthy fear of the bomb, or have more humane and rational motives come to our aid?

The Christian is not only bound to avoid certain evils, but he is responsible for very great goods. This is often forgotten. The doctrine of the Incarnation leaves the Christian obligated at once to God and to man. If God has become man, then no Christian is ever allowed to be indifferent to man's fate. Whoever believes that Christ is the Word made flesh believes that every man must in some sense be regarded as Christ. For all are at least potentially members of the Mystical Christ. Who can say with absolute certainty of any other man that Christ does not live in him? Consequently in all our dealings with other men we must realize ourselves to be often, if not always, facing the questions that were asked of Cain and Judas.

If we are disciples of Christ we are necessarily our brother's keepers. And the question that is being asked of us concerns all men. It concerns, at the present moment, the entire human race.

We cannot ignore this question. We cannot give an irresponsible and unchristian consent to the demonic use of power for the destruction of a whole nation, a whole continent, or possibly even the whole human race. Or can we? The question is now being asked.

This is the question that forms the subject of the present essay.

In this most critical moment of history we have a twofold task. It is a task in which the whole race is to some degree involved. But the greatest responsibility of all rests upon the citizens of the great power blocs which hold the fate of other nations in their hands.

On one hand we have to defend and foster the highest human values: the right of man to live freely and develop his life in a way worthy of his moral greatness. On the other hand we have to protect man against the criminal abuse of the enormous destructive power which he has acquired. To the American and Western European, this twofold task seems reducible in practice to a struggle against totalitarian dictatorship and against war.

Our very first obligation is to interpret the situation accurately, and this means resisting the temptation to oversimplify and generalize. The struggle against totalitarianism is directed not only against an external enemy—Communism, but

also against our own hidden tendencies towards fascist or totalist aberrations. The struggle against war is directed not only against the bellicosity of the Communist powers, but against our own violence, fanaticism and greed. Of course, this kind of thinking will not be popular in the tensions of the cold war. No one is encouraged to be too clear-sighted, because conscience can make cowards, by diluting the strong conviction that our side is fully right and the other side is fully wrong. Yet the Christian responsibility is not to one side or to the other in the power struggle: it is to God and truth, and to the whole of mankind.

This is not a political study. But the moral options of our times are necessarily involved in various interpretations of political reality. The different views of the situation prevailing in the West react upon each other, and all together they combine to create extreme difficulties and complexities. The question arises then whether man is really capable of choosing peace rather than nuclear war, whether the choices are ineluctably made for him by the interplay of social forces. The answer to this question must depend on many factors beyond the control of any individual or any one group. But the fact remains that we cannot face the moral issue as free and rational beings unless we can still assume that our freedom and rationality have a meaning. If we are not able to choose to sur-

vive, then all discussion of the present crisis is pointless. If we are still free, then this essay can be considered as a very imperfect contribution to the work of moral renewal which is absolutely necessary if we are to make significant use of our freedom.

Freedom does not operate in a void. It is guided, or should be guided, by the light of intelligence. It should conform to a rational estimate of reality. It should not be simply an arbitrary exercise of choice. Blind affirmation of will is irrational and tends to destroy freedom. In any case, however, whether rational or not, freedom depends necessarily on man's concept of himself and of the situation in which he finds himself. If he is able to grasp clearly and realistically the truth of his plight, even though that plight may be desperate or extremely perilous, he can make good use of his freedom and can transcend even the most tragic injustices and be more truly a man because of them. He can turn defeat into victory. On the other hand, the will that is obsessed with power can refuse to see and to assess vitally important realities. It can remain obdurate and closed in the presence of human facts that contradict its obsessions. It is often precisely the will to power that is most stubborn in refusing to accept evidence of goodness and of hope. The blind drive to self-

Freedom

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assertion rejects indications that love might be more meaningful and more powerful than force.

One of our most important tasks today is to clear the atmosphere so that men can understand their plight without hatred, without fury, without desperation, and with the minimum of good will. A humble and objective seriousness is necessary for the long task of restoring mutual confidence and preparing the way for the necessary work of collaboration in building world peace. This restoration of a climate of relative sanity is perhaps more important than specific decisions regarding the morality of this or that strategy, this or that pragmatic policy.

And so this essay will concern itself with the climate of opinion and thought in the years of crisis in which we live. Public opinion is intimately concerned with the decisions of authority, decisions which may affect the life and death of millions of people. It is therefore in the general climate of thought (or of thoughtlessness) that moral and sociological epidemics—of panic, hatred, destruction—take their origin. There are certain "climates" of opinion which make it practically impossible to solve civil or international problems except by resort to violence. When such a climate exists, certainly the fact ought to be recognized and something ought to be done about it. And that explains Pope John's encyclical *Pacem*

in Terris. In a document devoted to the question of war and peace in the nuclear age, relatively little is said about war itself. The greater part of the encyclical concentrates on basic principles: the dignity of the human person and the primacy of the universal common good over the particular good of the political unit. Above all, Pope John realized that his main job was one of "clearing the air" morally, psychologically and spiritually. To a world lost in a pea-soup fog of exhausting and half comprehended technicalities about law, economics, politics, weaponry, technology etc., the Pope did not offer a series of casuistic solutions to complex and detailed questions. He recalled the minds of men to the fundamental ideas on which peace among nations and races must always depend. In other words, he tried to recreate for them the climate of thought in which they could see their objectives in a human and even a hopeful light, and he invited them at least for a moment to emerge from the obscurity and smog of arguments that are without issue. The world was grateful for this moment of fresh air, and in political life, especially on the international level, the smallest gestures and advances toward peace should be accepted with gratitude. Many such gestures followed the publication of *Pacem in Terris* on Holy Thursday of 1963. So many in fact that there has

been a significant relaxation of tensions, at least between the U.S. and the USSR.

Without flattering ourselves that we are on the way to a quick solution of our problems, or even that the world at large has fully committed itself to implementing Pope John's Encyclical of Peace, we can at least recognize that such things are possible. We are not utterly condemned to think our way into an impasse from which the only issue is destructive violence. Human and reasonable solutions are still open to us. But they depend on our climate of thought, that is to say, on our ability to hope in peaceful solutions.

A weather map is necessarily very superficial. The storm areas in thought and opinion are not all concentrated on one side or the other of the iron curtain. On both sides extremists, characterized by negativism, distrust of the other side, suspicion, fear, hate and the willingness to resort to force, are very outspoken and have access to the mass media so that their opinions often take on the appearance of quasi-dogmatic finality and are uncritically accepted, with a few unspoken reservations, perhaps, by the majority of the population. Not that most men want war, or even willingly face the possibility that certain trends might lead suddenly to war, but they assume, in a guarded and more or less resigned silence, that the most menacing voices are probably right and that what

is printed in most of the papers and shouted from most of the house-tops must quite probably represent a more or less coherent interpretation of political reality. They know that total war is always possible, yet they blindly and confusedly hope that what they refuse to think about is so "unthinkable" that it will never occur, and so they busy themselves with the absorbing rush of life and unconsciously withdraw from any kind of dissenting commitment that would leave them exposed to ostracism. They submit and conform, and trust to the protective coloring that conformity provides in a mass society. }

The current moral climate is one of more or less resigned compliance with the world-view popularized by the mass media.

Apart from a very small minority who demand uncompromising unilateral initiatives toward peace, the necessity of force and military strength seems unquestionable to the majority. But there are of course considerable differences of attitude, and many gradations in the opinions of statesmen, strategists and dictators of opinion. Indeed, reflection on strategy in the nuclear age has at times assumed the appearance of an esoteric cult to which only the expert with access to a computer can really consider himself initiated. There is unquestionably a sincere desire for peace, or at least an earnest desire to avoid total war, in the minds

of most policy-makers. But the legacy of recent history and the frustrating ambiguities of the international situation seem to make really effective steps toward peace impossible. In the minds of the world leaders a continued stalemate is accepted, in practice, as "peace," and the power struggle continues under the constant menace of accidental global war.

Therefore, though there are many good minds earnestly concerned with the technical problem of peace, and many plans have been proposed and even initiated, the details of this peace-thinking do not reach and illuminate the mind of the common man. For him there remains only the confused apprehension of a perilous situation in which force or the threat of force is a practical necessity, war a proximate danger, and peace at best a fond hope.

Pope John reflects on this climate of confusion and practical despair. "How strongly does the turmoil of individual men and peoples contrast with the perfect order of the universe! *It is as if the relationships which bind them together could only be controlled by force!*" (*Pacem in Terris*, n.4) And he adds: "*The fickleness of opinion often produces this error, that many think that the relationships between men and states can be governed by the same laws as the forces and irrational elements of the universe.*" (n.6)

While praising and fully accepting science, Pope John protests against the common opinion which deifies pseudo-science and leaves man's freedom subject to a vague determinism of laws and forces, thus failing to see that man's freedom and intelligence are the instruments by which he elevates himself above his material surroundings and controls his own destiny by living according to truth, justice and love.

Pope John's message of freedom calls man, first of all, to liberate himself from the climate of confusion and desperation in which he finds himself because he passively accepts and follows a mindless determinism.

Though there are significant differences in ideology in the different power blocs, nevertheless the stratification of opinion is more or less the same everywhere. The extremists on both sides are mirror images of each other.

The thought that is obsessed with war puts aside other considerations and concentrates on the fact that one is threatened with attack, indeed with destruction. This type of thinker is convinced that only the strongest measures are of any use. He distrusts negotiation because he is sure that the adversary is an arch deceiver, and because he is so sure of this he thinks that he himself has to resort to deception whenever possible, so as not to be deceived. He is convinced that the

enemy will attack him violently as soon as he thinks he can get away with it. In this climate of thought, strategy tends to work around to the idea of "hitting the enemy before he hits me first."

The crude simplicity of this view tends to recommend it to the average man who does not have time to do a great deal of thinking and who, in any case, does not have access to the more selective and thoughtful sources of information which might enable him to form a more sophisticated judgement. It is clear, and its sweeping ruthlessness gives it an appearance of realism. But unfortunately it maintains a moral and political atmosphere of fear and hatred in which it is more difficult even for "experts" to view things with objective detachment. Who is to say to what extent the statesmen themselves are influenced, in practice, by the horrendous mythology of the mass man? The leaders help to make a myth by their own pronouncements and slogans, and because the myth is so willingly believed by the common man they themselves assume that this is a kind of divine ratification. *Vox populi vox Dei.*

That there are large numbers of Christians who live somewhat easily in this climate of opinion is clear from the popular religious press. This is not surprising if we reflect that most Christians belong to the rank and file of common humanity and that the Catholic press has a tendency to follow ac-

cepted and prevalent opinions in matters of world politics. It is also possible that a certain negativism and pessimism which has been widespread in both Catholic and Protestant spirituality since the Renaissance and the Reformation may account for the willingness with which believers accept the idea of a crusade against nations that can quite easily be caricatured as essentially wicked and perverse: made up of beings hardly human, never deserving of trust, always worthy of being destroyed.

This was what prompted Pope John to speak out against the abuse of the mass media, both in *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*. A falsely informed public with a distorted view of political reality and an oversimplified, negative attitude toward other races and peoples, cannot be expected to react in any other way than with irrational and violent responses. Therefore the Pope condemned the dissemination of prejudice and hate by the mass media and said: "Truth demands that the various media of social communication . . . be used with serene objectivity . . . Methods of information which fall short of the truth and by that very token impair the reputation of this or that people, must be discarded." (*Pacem in Terris*, n.90)

An important element in *Pacem in Terris* is Pope John's repeated insistence that one of the basic rights of free man is "the right to be in-

formed truthfully about public events" (n.12), along with the right both to basic and higher education (n.13), the right to form associations to defend their just aims (n.s 23,24), and to take an active (not passive) part in public affairs (n.25).

One who merely echoes the opinions in the newspaper is not taking an "active" part in the life of his nation. Hence Pope John's paragraphs on human rights imply not only the privilege but also at times the obligation of dissent from a prevailing and passively accepted viewpoint. And this is extremely important when we consider the context of war and peace, since in a time of crisis and mass-emotionalism the dissenter who maintains his insistence on the rights of peace is easily regarded as a traitor. Nevertheless such dissent may acquire a decisive importance, and it should always be protected by law against arbitrary attack and suppression (n.27). Rights also imply obligations, and the "right to investigate the truth freely (is correlative with) the duty of seeking it ever more completely and profoundly" (n.29). It is unfortunate that the advantages of freedom in a democratic society have been so little appreciated and that men have abdicated their right and neglected their opportunity in order to remain passive, confused and hopeless, not using the sources of information and dissenting opinions to which they might have access.

Cardinal Suenens speaking to the United Nations on May 13, 1963 and explaining the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, compared it to a symphony with the leitmotif: "Peace among all peoples requires: Truth as its foundation, justice as its rule, love as its driving force, liberty as its atmosphere."

But in the moral climate of mass opinion, engineered by publicists, "truth" tends to mean a sensational revelation of some new iniquity on the part of the enemy. And the misfortune is that on both sides there is enough real iniquity around to make the concoction of sensational news items quite easy. Justice, in this climate, operates on a double standard: one for one's own side and another for the enemy, so that what in him is criminal is, in us, simple "realism." Love is assuredly not the driving force of peace policies which are inert and firmly rooted in inveterate distrust. Liberty is not exactly the mark of relationships in which big powers reduce smaller ones to the status of political or economic satellites. Yet, says Cardinal Suenens, these four are "the rules of the road which lead to peace, rules which must be respected in the relations between various political communities."

Perhaps the chief reason why these rules are neglected are that the most basic principles of hu-

man social life are not respected. *Pacem in Terris* reminds us that mankind is one family in which all nations, groups and individuals must cooperate, on the basis of truth, justice, love and liberty in attaining the universal common good which is also at the same time the good of the individual person in his individuality, in his dignity and in his basic rights. If man does not seek, by reasonable collaboration, to attain these ends, there is no alternative but the arbitrary exercise of the will to power, in which case the law of reason, of nature and of God is usurped by the law of the jungle. A theologian commenting on *Pacem in Terris* says:

If owing to antiphilosophic prejudice, universal truths dictated by reason are rejected and only the manifestations of the changing will of nations are revered, whatever these may be, it would be absurd to attempt the construction of a juridical organization of the human race.

(P. Riga, "Peace on Earth," p. 33)

The climate of irrationality, confusion and violence which is characteristic of such times as ours is after all nothing new. The circumstances are different, but in the end we can find in our world much that is analogous to the classic description of Athens after the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides masterfully outlines the political situation of a rich society that is in a crisis of decline and change:

War destroys the comfortable routine of life, trains us in violence and shapes our character according to the new conditions . . . The cause of all these evils was imperialism, whose fundamental motives are ambition and greed, and from which arises the fanaticism of class conflict. The politicians on each side were armed with high sounding slogans . . . Both boasted that they were servants of the community and both made the community the prize of war. The only purpose of their policy was the extermination of their opponents, and to achieve this they stopped at nothing. Even worse were the reprisals which they perpetuated in total disregard of morality or of the common good. The only standard which they recognized was party caprice and so they were prepared, either by the perversion of justice or by revolutionary action, to satisfy the passing passions begotten by the struggle . . . Society was divided into warring camps suspicious of one another. Where no contract or obligation was binding, nothing could heal the conflict, and since security was only to be found in the assumption that nothing was secure, everyone took steps to preserve himself and no one could afford to trust his neighbor. On the whole the baser types survived best. Aware of their own deficiencies and their opponents' abilities, they resorted boldly to violence, before they were defeated in debate, and struck down, by conspiracy, minds more versatile than their own.

(Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, iii, 82)

In such a situation, Plato, who hoped that a return to reason could be brought about by the participation of the philosopher in public life, also recognized that intelligent men would be tempted

to withdraw from a situation they regarded as "hopeless." The lover of justice, Plato wrote, seeing himself as though thrown into a "den of beasts" and unable to change the jungle law around him;

Will remain quietly at his own work like a traveller caught in a storm who retreats behind a wall to shelter from the driving gusts of dust and hail. Seeing the rest of the world full of iniquity, he will be content to keep his own life on earth untainted by wickedness and impious actions, so that he may leave this world with a fair hope of the next, at peace with himself and God.

(*Republic*, 496)

It is perhaps true that sometimes individuals may be forced into this position, but to view it as normal and to accept it as preferable to the risks and conflicts of public life is an admission of defeat, an abdication of responsibility. This secession into individualistic concern with one's own salvation alone may in fact leave the way all the more open for unscrupulous men and groups to gain and wield unjust power.

The example of Taoism in China in the chaotic period of the 3rd to the 1st centuries B.C. is there to show how an other-worldly spiritualism in public life can end in the worst kind of arbitrary tyranny. The intellectual and the spiritual man

cannot therefore justify themselves in abandoning society to the rule of an irrational will to power.

If sheer arbitrary will and brute force are not to take command of everything, reason must seek more solid and more harmonious solutions to problems by arbitration and discussion. Men must collaborate sincerely in solving their difficulties. This is a basic Christian obligation.

But rational collaboration is manifestly impossible without mutual trust and this in turn is out of the question where there is no basis for sure communication. Not only is communication lacking: it is blocked. It is fiercely resisted by groups and nations which close themselves in upon themselves and refuse to communicate with one another except by ultimatums and threats of destruction. Not only that, but esoteric thought systems and complex vocabularies erect barriers that only a specialist can penetrate. Thus the failure of communication between the great powers leads to resentment, distrust and disillusionment among the others.

A pervasive climate of boredom, exasperation and indifference tends to prevail where the grosser moods of bellicism and fanaticism are seen for what they are. A reviewer in *Commentary* summarizing the argument of a book on this subject, gives us in a readable paragraph the picture of

liberal and neo-conservative discontent in Europe and the "emerging nations."

The cold war from being a necessary defensive operation against the armed threat emanating from the USSR in 1948 has turned into an endless struggle for global hegemony: a struggle that neither side can (and perhaps no longer wants to) win. Meanwhile the neutrals are getting restive: Asia, Africa and Latin America want to break out of this straitjacket. Industrialization—whether capitalist or socialist—has become *the* preoccupation of elites who speak for two-thirds of mankind: the hungry two-thirds. Yet all the while Washington and Moscow exchange verbal brickbats amidst growing boredom and indifference, and latterly to the accompaniment of catcalls from Peking . . .

("The Cold War in Perspective," by George Lichtheim, *Commentary*, June 1964, p. 25.)

So, while the policies of force continue to invoke traditional notions of justice, rights, international law, etc., the repetition of these formulas makes them sound more and more hollow and absurd to everyone. This climate of disillusionment and disgust is dangerous because it implies a growing contempt for reason and for the basic human powers without which man cannot organize his life in a free and orderly fashion. This engenders a deeper pessimism, a more tenacious hopelessness, and communication becomes more and more precarious.

Pacem in Terris certainly recognized that Catholics themselves were to a great extent out of contact with the rest of the world, enclosed in their own spiritual and religious ghetto. One of the chief contributions of Pope John's brief pontificate was that he opened the ghetto and told Catholics to go out and talk to other people, to Protestants, to Jews, to Hindus, and even to Communists. He realized that without this climate of openness, the communication which was essential for mutual trust would be out of the question. He insisted on making a "clear distinction between false philosophical teachings . . . and movements which have a direct bearing either on economic or social questions or cultural matters . . ." (*Pacem in Terris*, n.159) It is necessary to communicate with those who hold different ideologies when we are confronting common problems that can only be solved in collaboration. If we speak different languages we must nevertheless attempt to find the essential points of agreement without which there is, as Cardinal Suenens says, a permanent risk of disaster. We must therefore either decide to continue in a fatal rivalry or begin to trust one another in progressive negotiations in which peace may eventually be stabilized and guaranteed.

It is the attitude of openness prescribed by *Pacem in Terris* that must form our thinking as Christians in time of crisis, and not the closed and

fanatical myths of nationalistic or racial paranoia. Only if we remain open, detached, humble in the presence of objective truth and of our fellow man, will we be able to choose peace.

2. THE CHRISTIAN AS PEACEMAKER

Like his predecessor in the papacy, like all deeply religious and indeed all truly rational men, Pope John XXIII deplored the gigantic stockpiles of weapons, the arms race and the cold war. He asked the leaders of the great powers to bring the arms race to an end and come "to an agreement on a fitting program of disarmament, employing mutual and effective controls" (*Pacem in Terris*, n.122). This and other passages of the Peace Encyclical, where Pope John speaks of disarmament and modern warfare, have often been quoted and need not be repeated here. But it is more important to observe that Pope John did not merely call for the reduction of weapons and the easing of international tensions. He asserted that there was really no hope of this being done effectively unless it was prompted by deep inner conviction. Such conviction demands that "everyone sincerely cooper-

ates to banish the fear and anxious expectation of war with which men are oppressed."

Once again we see that Pope John was chiefly concerned with the general climate of thought and the current moral outlook of mankind. It would be of little use for one side or the other, or both, to disarm, if men continued in the same state of confusion, suspicion, hostility and aggressiveness.

Therefore, if a climate favorable to peace is to be produced, Pope John continues, "the fundamental principle upon which our present peace depends must be replaced by another, which declares that the true and solid peace of nations consists not in equality of arms but in mutual trust alone. We believe that this can be brought to pass, and we consider that, since it concerns a matter not only demanded by right reason but also eminently desirable in itself, it will prove the source of many benefits." (n. 113)

But it would be sentimental to ask men to awaken feelings of optimism and trust in their hearts without laying that firm foundation of order which *Pacem in Terris* repeatedly demands as the essential condition for true peace on earth.

"Peace will be an empty sounding word unless it is founded on the order which this present document has outlined in confident hope: an order founded on truth, built according to justice, vivified and integrated by charity, and put into prac-

tice in freedom." (n.168) The duty of working together for peace in this sense binds not only public authority but all those to whom the Encyclical is addressed: that is to say *everybody*. But of course it is a special obligation of the Christian who, as a follower of Christ, must be a peacemaker.

Pope John understood and clearly stated that being a "peacemaker" meant more, not less, than being a "pacifist." It is not only a matter of protesting against the bomb, but also of working tirelessly and constructively at the "most exalted task of bringing about true peace in the order established by God . . . (by establishing) new methods of relationships in human society." (n.163) Pope John publicly and emphatically praises the few who have devoted themselves to this work, and hopes "that their number will increase, especially among those who believe." (n. 164)

Let us reflect on the emphasis with which Pope John called Christians, in the name of Christ their Head, to this work of peace based on truth, justice, love and liberty in human relations. This summons to fight in the ranks of an army of peace is of course traditionally Christian, and yet it is also new because it occurs in a context so new that Cardinal Suenens called it "unprecedented in history."

Pope John's call to peace was based not on dis-

trust of man and denunciation of his wickedness, but on the assertion of man's fundamental goodness. Not only the material world, not only technological society, but even the society built by unbelievers and enemies of the Church with the aim of raising man to a better temporal state, is regarded by Pope John with eyes of friendly concern. Not only does he tolerate the presence of a non-Christian society, but he embraces it in the love of Christ. The context of Christian peacemaking is then something other than that even of so-called Christian pacifism. This must be brought out, because there are certain ambiguities in the term "pacifist" which lay it open to manipulation and misinterpretation by those for whom world peace is not a seriously credible option, except on a basis of overwhelming force.

No need to mention the facile caricature of the "pacifist" as a maladjusted creature lost in impractical ideals, sentimentally hoping that prayer and demonstrations can convert men to the ways of peace. It is routine for the mass media to treat even the most eminent and reasonable defenders of peace, men with a worldwide reputation as scientists, as if they were slightly addled egg-heads as well as communist sympathizers, or indeed undercover agents of Moscow. I refer rather to fundamental religious ambiguities in the term "pacifism." Actually it is often hard to pin these

ambiguities down with precision. They depend in each case on the implicit spiritual bases of the pacifism in question, and these are not easy to find.

Often "pacifism" in the religious sense is rooted in a world-denying and individualistic asceticism, or it is found in the context of a small eschatological community (like that of the Shakers for instance) which also may have other beliefs, rejecting marriage, the use of flesh meat, etc., which in their turn may be justified by a kind of manichaeian theology. In other words a pacifism that regards war as an inevitable and intolerable evil, as intolerable as the unregenerate world from which it cannot be separated, and which the individual believer must renounce, by that very fact tends to rejoin the pessimism of the belligerent crusader who implicitly carries his denial of the world to the point of wishing it to be destroyed.

Probably no one has ever accused *Pacem in Terris* of being "pacifist," and there is good reason not to do so. There is in this document nothing of the world-hating rejection that identifies war with the city of man. Pope John's optimism was really something new in Christian thought because he expressed the unequivocal hope that a world of ordinary men, a world in which many men were not Christians or even believers in God, might still be a world of peace if men would deal

with one another on the basis of their God-given reason and with respect for their inalienable human rights. Note that *Pacem in Terris* is the first encyclical in which the language of human rights has been so clearly espoused.

The religious ambiguities in the term "pacifism" give it implications that are somewhat less than Catholic. I do not here refer to the inaccurate and perverse generalization that "a Catholic cannot be a conscientious objector," but to the fact that "pacifism" tends, as a cause, to take on the air of a quasi-religion, as though it were a kind of faith in its own right. A pacifist is then regarded as one who "believes in peace" so to speak as an article of faith, and hence puts himself in the position of being absolutely unable to countenance any form of war, since for him to accept any war in theory or in practice would be to deny his faith. A Christian pacifist then becomes one who compounds this ambiguity by insisting, or at least by implying, that pacifism is an integral part of Christianity, with the evident conclusion that Christians who are not pacifists have, by that fact, apostatized from Christianity.

This unfortunate emphasis gains support from the way conscientious objection is in fact treated by the selective service laws of the United States. An objector who is a religious "pacifist" is considered as one who for subjective and personal rea-

sons of conscience and belief refuses to go to war, and whose "conscientious objection" is tolerated and even recognized by the government. There is of course something valuable and edifying in this recognition of the personal conscience, but there is also an implication that any minority stand against war on grounds of conscience is ipso facto a kind of deviant and morally eccentric position, to be tolerated only because there are always a few religious half-wits around in any case, and one has to humor them in order to preserve the nation's reputation for respecting individual liberty.

In other words, this sanctions the popular myth that all pacifism is based on religious emotion rather than on reason, and that it has no objective ethical validity, but is allowed to exist because of the possibility of harmless and mystical obsessions with peace on the part of a few enthusiasts. It also sanctions another myth, to which some forms of pacifism give support, that pacifists are people who simply prefer to yield to violence and evil rather than resist it in any way. They are fundamentally indifferent to reasonable, moral or patriotic ideals and prefer to sink into their religious apathy and let the enemy overrun the country unresisted.

To sum it all up in a word, this caricature of pacifism which reduces it to a purely eccentric individualism of conscience, declares that the pacifist

is willing to let everyone be destroyed merely because he himself does not have a taste for war. It is not hard to imagine what capital can be made out of this distortion by copy writers for, say, *Time* magazine or the New York *Daily News*. It is also easy to see how the Catholic clergy might be profoundly suspicious of any kind of conscientious objection to war when myths like these have helped them to form their judgement.

Speaking in the name of Christ and of the Church to all mankind, Pope John was not issuing a pacifist document in this sense. He was not simply saying that if a few cranks did not like the bomb they were free to entertain their opinion. He was saying, on the contrary, that we had reached a point in history where it was clearly no longer reasonable to make use of war in the settlement of international disputes, and that the important thing was not merely protest against the latest war technology, but the construction of permanent world peace on a basis of truth, justice, love and liberty. This is not a matter for a few individual consciences, it urgently binds the conscience of every living man. It is not an individual refinement of spirituality, a luxury of the soul, but a collective obligation of the highest urgency, a universal and immediate need which can no longer be ignored.

He is not saying that a few Christians may and

ought to be pacifists (i.e., to protest against war) but that all Christians and all reasonable men are bound by their very rationality to work to establish a real and lasting peace.

Already in his first encyclical, *Ad Petri Cathedram*, Pope John had said that Christians were obliged to strive "with all the means at their disposal" for peace. Yet he warned that peace cannot compromise with error or make concessions to injustice. Passive acquiescence in injustice, submission to brute force are not the way to genuine peace. There is some truth in Machiavelli's contention that mere weakness and confusion lead in the long run to greater disasters than a firm and even intransigent policy. But the Christian program for peace does not depend on human astuteness, ruthlessness or force. Power can never be the keystone of a Christian policy. Yet our work for peace must be energetic, enlightened and fully purposeful. Its purpose is defined by our religious belief that God has called us "to the service of His merciful designs" (John XXIII, Christmas Message, 1958). If we are now in possession of atomic power, we have the moral obligation to make a good and peaceful use of it, rather than turning it to our own destruction. But we will not be able to do this without an interior revolution that abandons the quest for brute power and submits to the wisdom of love and of the Cross.

It must however be stated quite clearly and without compromise that the duty of the Christian as a peacemaker is not to be confused with a kind of quietistic inertia that is indifferent to injustice, accepts any kind of disorder, compromises with error and with evil, and gives in to every pressure in order to maintain "peace at any price." The Christian knows well, or should know well, that peace is not possible on such terms. Peace demands the most heroic labor and the most difficult sacrifice. It demands greater heroism than war. It demands greater fidelity to the truth and a much more perfect purity of conscience. The Christian fight for peace is not to be confused with defeatism.

What is the traditional attitude of the Christian peacemaker? Let us glance back over a few sources and briefly examine some traditional witnesses to the Christian concern for peace on earth.

Christians believe that Christ came into this world as a Prince of Peace. We believe that Christ Himself is our peace (Eph. 2:14). We believe that God has chosen for Himself, in the Mystical Body of Christ, an elect people, regenerated by the Blood of the Savior, and committed by their baptismal promise to wage war upon the evil and hatred that are in man, and help to establish the Kingdom of God and of peace, in truth and love.

Indeed for centuries the Old Testament pro-

phets had been looking forward to the coming of the Messiah as the "Prince of Peace" (Isaias 9:6). The Messianic Kingdom was to be a kingdom of peace because first of all man would be completely reconciled with God and with the hostile forces of nature (Osee 2:18-20) the whole world would be full of the manifest knowledge of the divine mercy (Isaias 11:9) and hence men, the sons of God and objects of His mercy, would live at peace with one another (Isaias 54:13). The early Christians were filled with the conviction that since the Risen Christ had received Lordship over the whole cosmos and sent His Spirit to dwell in men (Acts 2:17) the kingdom of peace was already established in the Church.

This meant a recognition that human nature, identical in all men, was assumed by the Logos in the Incarnation, and that Christ died out of love for all men, in order to live in all men. All were henceforth "one in Christ" (Gal. 3:28) and Christ Himself was their peace, since His Spirit kept them united in supernatural love (Eph. 4:3). The Christian therefore has the obligation to treat every other man as Christ Himself, respecting his neighbor's life as if it were the life of Christ, his rights as if they were the rights of Christ. Even if that neighbor shows himself to be unjust, wicked and odious to us, the Christian cannot take upon himself a final and definitive judgement in

his case. The Christian still has an obligation to be patient, and to seek his enemy's highest spiritual interests and indeed his temporal good in so far as that may be compatible with the universal common good of man.

The Christian commandment to love our enemies was not regarded by the first Christians merely as a summons to higher moral perfection than was possible under the Old Law. The New Law did not compete with the Old, but on the contrary fulfilled it, at the same time abolishing the conflicts between various forms of obligation and perfection. The love of enemies was not therefore the expression of a Christian moral ideal, in contrast with Stoic, Epicurean or Jewish ideals. It was much more an expression of eschatological faith in the realization of the messianic promises and hence a witness to an entirely new dimension in man's life.

Christian peace was therefore not considered at first to be simply a religious and spiritual consecration of the Pax Romana. It was an eschatological gift of the Risen Christ. (John 20:19) It could not be achieved by any ethical or political program. It was given with the supreme gift of the Holy Spirit, making men spiritual and uniting them to the "mystical" Body of Christ. Christian peace is in fact a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and a sign of the Divine Presence in the world.

Division, conflict, strife, schism, hatreds and wars are then evidence of the "old life," the unregenerate sinful existence that has not been transformed in the mystery of Christ (I Cor. 1:10; James 3:16). When Christ told Peter to "put away his sword" (John 18:11) and warned him that those who struck with the sword would perish by it, He was not simply forbidding war. War was neither blessed nor forbidden by Christ. He simply stated that war belonged to the world outside the Kingdom, the world outside the mystery and the Spirit of Christ and that therefore for one who was seriously living in Christ, war belonged to a realm that no longer had a decisive meaning, for though the Christian was "in the world" he was not "of the world." He could not avoid implication in its concerns, but he belonged to a kingdom of peace "that was not of this world" (John 18:36).

The Christian is and must be by his very adoption as a son of God, In Christ, a peacemaker (Matt. 5:9). He is bound to imitate the Savior who, instead of defending Himself with twelve legions of angels (Matt. 26:55), allowed Himself to be nailed to the Cross and died praying for His executioners. The Christian is one whose life has sprung from a particular spiritual seed: the blood of the martyrs who, without offering forcible resistance, laid down their lives rather than sub-

mit to the unjust laws that demanded an official religious cult of the Emperor as God. One verse in St. John's account of the Passion of Christ makes clear the underlying principles of war and peace in the Gospel (John 18:36). Questioned by Pilate as to whether He is a King, Jesus replies "My Kingdom is not of this world" and explains that if he were a worldly king his followers would be fighting for him. In other words, the Christian attitude to war and peace is fundamentally eschatological. The Christian does not need to fight and indeed it is better that he should not fight, for in so far as he imitates his Lord and Master, he proclaims that the Messianic kingdom has come and bears witness to the presence of the *Kyrios Pantocrator* in mystery, even in the midst of the conflicts and turmoil of the world. The book of the New Testament that definitely canonizes this eschatological view of peace in the midst of spiritual combat is the Apocalypse, which sets forth in mysterious and symbolic language the critical struggle of the nascent Church with the powers of the world, as typified by the Roman Empire.

This struggle, which is definitive and marks the last age of the world, is the final preparation for the manifestation of Christ as Lord of the Universe (the *Parousia*) (Apocalypse 11:15-18). The Kingdom is already present in the world, since Christ has overcome the world and risen

from the dead. But the Kingdom is still not fully manifested and remains outwardly powerless. It is a kingdom of saints and martyrs, priests and witnesses, whose main function is to bide their time in faith, loving one another and the truth, suffering persecution in the furious cataclysm which marks the final testing of earthly society. They will take no direct part in the struggles of earthly kingdoms. Their life is one of faith, gentleness, meekness, patience, purity. They depend on no power other than the power of God, and it is God they obey rather than the state, which tends to usurp the powers of God and to blaspheme Him, setting itself up in His stead as an idol and drawing to itself the adoration and worship that are due to Him alone (Apoc. 13:3-9).

The Apocalypse describes the final stage of the history of the world as a total and ruthless power struggle in which all the Kings of the earth are engaged, but which has an inner, spiritual dimension these kings are incapable of seeing and understanding. The wars, cataclysms and plagues which convulse worldly society are in reality the outward projection and manifestation of a hidden, spiritual battle. Two dimensions, spiritual and material, cut across one another. To be consciously and willingly committed to the worldly power struggle, in politics, business and war, is to founder in darkness, confusion, and sin. The saints are

"in the world" and doubtless suffer from its murderous conflicts like everybody else. Indeed they seem at first to be defeated and destroyed (13:7). But they see the inner meaning of these struggles and are patient. They trust in God to work out their destiny and rescue them from the final destruction, the accidents of which are not subject to their control. Hence they pay no attention to the details of the power struggle as such and do not try to influence it or to engage in it, one way or another, even for their own apparent benefit and survival. For they realize that their survival has nothing to do with the exercise of force or ingenuity.

The ever recurrent theme of the Apocalypse is then that the typical power-structured empire of Babylon (Rome) cannot but be "drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (17:6) and that therefore the saints must "go out from her" and break off all relations with her and her sinful concerns (18:4 ff) for "in one hour" is her judgment decided and the smoke of the disaster "shall go up forever and ever" (19:3). Yet the author of the Apocalypse does not counsel flight, as there is no geographical escape from Babylon: the one escape is into a spiritual realm by martyrdom, to lay down one's life in fidelity to God and in protest against the impurity, the magic, the fictitious-

ness and the murderous fury of the city whose god is force (21:4-8).

What is the place of war in all this? War is the "rider of the red horse" who is sent to prepare the destruction of the power-structure (6:4) for "he has received power to take away peace from the earth and to make them all kill one another, and he has received a great sword." The four horsemen (war, hunger, death and pestilence) are sent as signs and precursors of the final consummation of history. Those who have led the saints captive will themselves be made captive, those who have killed the saints will themselves be killed in war: and the saints in their time will be rescued from the cataclysm by their patience (13:10).

Translated into historical terms, these mysterious symbols of the Apocalypse show us the early Christian attitude toward war, injustice and the persecutions of the Roman empire, even though that empire was clearly understood to possess a demonic power. The battle was non-violent and spiritual, and its success depended on the clear understanding of the totally new and unexpected dimensions in which it was to be fought. On the other hand, there is no indication whatever in the Apocalypse that the Christian would be willing to fight and die to maintain the "power of the beast," in other words to engage in a power-struggle for the benefit of the Emperor and of his power.

Nevertheless, it must not be stated without qualification that all the early Christians were purely and simply pacifists and that they had a clear, systematic policy of pacifism which obliged them to refuse military service whenever it was demanded of them. This would be too sweeping an assertion. There were Christians in the armies of Rome, but they were doubtless exceptional. Many of them had been converted while they were soldiers and remained in "the state in which they had been called" (I Cor. 7:10). They were free to do so because the Imperial army was considered as a police force, maintaining the *Pax Romana*, and the peace of the empire as Origen said (*Contra Celsum* II, 30) was something the early Church was able to appreciate as in some sense providential. However, the military life was not considered ideal for a Christian. The problem of official idolatry was inescapable. Many Christian soldiers suffered martyrdom for refusing to participate in the sacrifices. Nevertheless, some soldiers, like St Maximilian, were martyred explicitly for refusal to serve in the army. Others, like St Martin of Tours, remained in service until they were called upon to kill in battle, and then refused to do so. Martin, according to the office in the monastic Breviary, declared that "because he was a soldier of Christ it was not licit for him

to kill." Christians were the first to lay down their lives rather than fight in war.

The early Christian apologists tend to condemn military service. Clement of Alexandria again takes up the theme of the Christian as a "soldier of peace" whose only weapons are the word of God and the Christian virtues (*Protreptic* XI, 116). Justin Martyr declares in his *Apology* (I, 39), "We who formerly murdered one another (he is a convert from paganism) now not only do not make war upon our enemies, but that we may not lie or deceive our judges, we gladly die confessing Christ." St Cyprian remarked shrewdly that while the killing of one individual by another was recognized as a crime, when homicide is carried out publicly on a large scale by the state it turns into a virtue! (*Ad Donatum*, VI, 10). Tertullian declared that when Christ took away Peter's sword, "he disarmed every soldier" (*De Idololatria*, XIX).

3. WAR IN ORIGEN AND ST AUGUSTINE

It is interesting to examine in some detail the attack on Christianity written by a pagan traditionalist, Celsus, who is refuted in Origen's *Contra*

Celsus. (3rd century A.D.) Celsus is a conservative who is deeply disturbed by the decay of the Roman Empire, and he agrees with many of his contemporaries in ascribing that decay to the nefarious revolutionary influence of the secret society called Christians. The anxiety which Celsus, a cultivated pagan, feels over the imminent downfall of the society to which he belongs, discharges itself in a mixture of contempt and hatred upon Jews and above all the new sect of Jews who worship Christ. For though he despises the Jews, Celsus can tolerate them because their worship and customs are "at least traditional." But Christianity is completely subversive of the old religious and social order which Celsus conceives to be more or less universal and cosmopolitan. His chief grievance against the Christians is their claim to exclusiveness, to the possession of a special revealed truth which forms no part of the socio-religious heritage of the various nations, but contradicts all known religions, rejecting them along with the traditional norms of culture and civilization. Abandoning the reasonable and universal norms of polytheism, Christianity, he says, worships a crucified Jew. Christians are rebels who deliberately cut themselves off from the rest of mankind. They are undermining the whole fabric of society with their insidious doctrines. Above all, they are irresponsible and selfish, indeed anti-social. In-

stead of returning to the customs of their fathers and living content like the rest of men with the *status quo*, they refuse to take part in public life, they do not carry out their duties as citizens, and in particular they *refuse to fight in the army*. In a word, they remain callously indifferent to the service of the threatened empire, and have no concern with peace and order, or with the common good. It is the familiar condemnation of the pacifist: "Just because he perversely refuses to fight, everyone else is threatened with destruction!"

In a word, Celsus reflects the profound insecurity of one who is totally attached to decaying social forms, and who thinks he beholds in some of his contemporaries a complete indifference towards the survival of all that is meaningful to him. Christians, it seemed, not only believed that Celsus' Roman world was meaningless, but that it was under judgement and doomed to destruction. He interpreted the other-worldly Christian spirit as a concrete, immediate physical threat. There was doubtless no other way in which he was capable of understanding it.

Origen replies first of all by vigorously denying that the Christians are violent revolutionaries, or that they have any intention of preparing the overthrow of the empire by force. He says:

Christians have been taught not to defend themselves against their enemies; and because they have kept the laws which command gentleness and love to man, on this account they have received from God that which they would not have succeeded in doing if they had been given the right to make war, even though they may have been quite able to do so. He always fought for them and from time to time stopped the opponents of the Christians and the people who wanted to kill them. (*Contra Celsum*, III, Chadwick, translation, p. 133)

After this Origen takes issue with the basic contention of Celsus that there have to be wars, because men cannot live together in unity. Origen announces the Christian claim that a time will come for all men to be united in the Logos, though this fulfillment is most probably eschatological (realized only after the end and fulfillment of world history). Nevertheless, Christians are *not totally unconcerned* with the peace, fortunes and survival of the Empire. Origen does not take the categorically unwordly view of the Apocalypse. He has a great respect for Greek and Roman civilization at least in its more spiritual and humane aspects. The unified Roman world is the providentially appointed scene for the Gospel *kerygma*.

Origen as a matter of fact was far from anti-social, still less anti-intellectual. A man who united in himself profound learning, philosophical

culture and Christian holiness, Origen took an urbane, optimistic view of classical thought and of Greco-Roman civilization. Indeed his arguments against Celsus are drawn in large measure from Classical philosophy and demonstrate, by implication, that a Christian was not necessarily an illiterate boor. The chief value of Origen's apologetic lay in his capacity to meet Celsus on the common ground of classical learning.

Notice that Origen and Celsus have radically different notions of society. For Celsus, the social life of men is a complex of accepted traditions and customs which are "given" by the gods of the various nations and have simply to be accepted, for, as Pindar said, "Custom is the king of all." Indeed it is impious to question them or to try to change them. The cults of the gods, the rites and practices associated with those cults, are all good in their own ways, and must be preserved. The Christians who discard all this are plainly subversive and dangerous.

Origen on the other hand sees that human society has been racially transformed by the Incarnation of the Logos. The presence in the world of the Risen Savior, in and through His Church, has destroyed the seeing validity of all that was in reality arbitrary, tyrannical or absurd in the fictions of social life. He has introduced worship

and communal life of an entirely new kind, "in spirit and in truth."

The opening lines of the *Contra Celsum* openly declare that it is not only right but obligatory to disobey human laws and ignore human customs when these are contrary to the law of God:

Suppose that a man were living among the Scythians (cannibals) whose laws are contrary to the Divine law, who had no opportunity to go elsewhere and was compelled to live among them; such a man for the sake of the true law, though illegal among the Scythians, would rightly form associations with like-minded people contrary to the laws of the Scythians . . . It is not wrong to form associations against the errors for the sake of truth.

(*Contra Celsum*, I, 1)

But among other things, the Christians are united against war, in obedience to Christ. This is one of their chief differences with the rest of society.

No longer do we take the sword against any nations nor do we learn war any more since we have become the sons of peace through Jesus who is our author instead of following the traditional customs by which we were strangers to the covenant. (*Ibid.*, V, 33)

Origen argues, then, that if Christians refuse military service it does not mean that they do not

bear their fair share in the common life and responsibilities. They play their part in the life of the *Polis*. But this role is spiritual and transcendent. Christians help the Emperor by their prayers, not by force of arms. "The more pious a man is the more effective he is in helping the emperors—more so than the soldiers who go out into the lines and kill all the enemy troops that they can." (III, 73, Chadwick, p. 509.)

This should not be totally unfamiliar to Celsus. After all pagan priests were officially exempted from military service so that they might be able to offer sacrifices "with hands unstained from blood and pure from murders." Christians both laity and clergy were a "royal priesthood," and did more by their prayers to preserve peace than the army could do by threats of force.

"We who by our prayers destroy all demons which stir up wars, violate oaths and disturb the peace, are of more help to the Emperors than those who seem to be doing the fighting." (*Ibid.*, p. 509).

If at first Origen's claim that the Christians "helped the Emperor" by their prayers may have seemed naive, we see here more clearly what he is driving at. He does not mean that the prayers of the Church enable the Emperor to pursue successfully some policy or other of worldly ambition and power. He does not claim for the prayers of

the Church a magic efficacy. He means that prayers are weapons in a more hidden and yet more crucial type of warfare, and one in which the peace of the Empire more truly and certainly depends. In a word, if peace is the objective, spiritual weapons will preserve it more effectively than those which kill the enemy in battle. For the weapon of prayer is not directed against other men, but against the evil forces which divide men into warring camps. If these evil forces are overcome by prayer, then both sides are benefitted, war is avoided and all are united in peace. In other words, the Christian does not help the war effort of one particular nation, but he fights against war itself with spiritual weapons.

This basic principle, that love, or the desire of the good of all men, must underlie all Christian action, reappears even more forcefully in St Augustine. But now we find it incorporated into a defense of the "just war," and the perspective has been completely altered.

Roughly two-hundred years separate the two greatest apologetic works of early Christians against the classical world: Origen's *Contra Celsum* and St Augustine's *City of God*. During these two-hundred years a crucially important change has taken place in the Christian attitude to war. Origen took for granted that the Christian is a peacemaker and does not indulge in war-

fare. Augustine, on the contrary, pleads with the soldier, Boniface, not to retire to the monastery but to remain in the army and do his duty, defending the North African cities menaced by barbarian hordes.

In these two-hundred years, there have been two events of outstanding importance: the Battle of Milvian bridge in 312, leading to the conversion of Constantine and his official recognition of Christianity and then, in 411, the fall of Rome before the onslaught of Alaric the Goth. When Augustine laid the foundation for Christian theories of the "just war," the barbarians were at the gates of the city of Hippo, where he was bishop.

This is not the place to go into the crucially important question of St Augustine's ideas of the human commonwealth, the earthly City, and its relations with the City of God. Suffice it to say that the question had become far more complex for him than it had ever been for the tranquil and optimistic Origen.

For Augustine, the essence of all society is union in common love for a common end. There are two kinds of love in man—an earthly and selfish love (*amor concupiscentiae*) and a heavenly, spiritual, disinterested love (*caritas*). Hence there are two "cities" based on these two kinds of love. The earthly city of selfish and tem-

poral love for power and gain, and the heavenly city of spiritual charity. It will be seen at once that this distinction throws the followers of Augustine's theology of war in contemporary America into a radically ambivalent position, for the pessimistic Augustinian concept of society directly contradicts the optimistic American ethos. Indeed, the current American concept is that love of earthly and temporal ends is automatically self-regulating and leads to progress and happiness. Our city is frankly built on *concupiscentia*.

Every society, according to Augustine, seeks peace, and if it wages war, it does so for the sake of peace. Peace is the "tranquillity of order." But the notion of order in any given society depends on the love which keeps that society together. The earthly society, in its common pursuit of power and gain, has only an apparent order—it is the order of a band of robbers, cooperating for evil ends. Yet in so far as it is an order at all, it is good. It is better than complete disorder. And yet it is fundamentally a disorder, and the peace of the wicked city is not true peace at all.

Cain is the founder of the earthly city (Genesis 4:17). Abel founded no city at all, but lived on earth as a pilgrim, a member of the only true city, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of true peace. For Augustine, as for the Apocalypse and Origen, all

history tends towards the definitive victory of the heavenly city of peace. Yet on earth, citizens of heaven live *among* the citizens of earth, though not *like* them.

This creates a problem. In so far as the Christian lives in the earthly city and participates in its benefits, he is bound to share its responsibilities though they are quite different from those of the heavenly city. Hence he may possess property, he marries and brings up children although in heaven "no one marries or is given in marriage." (Luke 20:34) *And also he participates in the just wars of the earthly city*, unless he is exempted by dedication to a completely spiritual life in the priestly or monastic state.

A pagan, Volusianus, confronted Augustine with the same objection Celsus proposed to Origen. If Christians did not help defend the state, they were anti-social. Augustine replied not that they simply pray for the earthly city, but that they do in all truth participate in its defense by military action, but the war must be a just war and its conduct must be just. In a word, for the earthly city war is sometimes an unavoidable necessity. Christians may participate in the war, or may abstain from participation. But their *motives* will be different from the motives of the pagan soldier. They are not really defending the earthly city, they are waging war to establish

peace, since peace is willed by God. So now the attention of the Christian is focused on the interior motive which justifies war: the love of peace to be safeguarded by force.

It is no accident that the Protestant thinkers of our own day who rate as nuclear "realists" and defend war as a practical and unavoidable necessity owe much to Augustine. But this is not a distinction belonging to Protestants alone. All Catholics who defend the just war theory are implicitly following Augustine. *St Augustine is, for better or for worse, the Father of all modern Christian thought on war.*

Can we not say that if there are to be significant new developments in Christian thought on nuclear war, it may well be that these developments will depend on our ability to get free from the overpowering influence of Augustinian assumptions and take a new view of man, of society and of war itself? This may perhaps be attained by a renewed emphasis on the earlier, more mystical and more eschatological doctrine of the New Testament and the early Fathers, though not necessarily a return to an imaginary ideal of pure primitive pacifism. It will also require a more optimistic view of man. Certainly Pope John XXIII has done more than anyone else to give us a new perspective.

What are the basic assumptions underlying Augustine's thought on war? First of all, there is

one which Celsus the pagan proposed, and Origen rejected: that it is impossible for man to live without getting into violent conflict with other men. Augustine agrees with Celsus. Universal peace in practice is inconceivable. In the early days of the Church this principle might perhaps have been accepted as logical, but then discarded as irrelevant. The eschatological perspectives of the early Church were real, literal and immediate. The end was believed to be very near. There would not be time for an indefinite series of future wars.

But Augustine saw the shattered and collapsing Empire attacked on all sides by barbarian armies. War could not be avoided. The question was, then, to find out some way to fight that did not violate the Law of Love. And in order to reconcile war with Christian love, Augustine had recourse to pre-Christian, Classical notions of justice. His ideas on the conduct of the just war were drawn to a considerable extent from Cicero.

How does Augustine justify the use of force, even for a just cause? The external act may be one of violence. War is regrettable indeed. But if one's interior motive is purely directed to a just cause and to love of the enemy, then the use of force is not unjust. This distinction between the external act and the interior intention is entirely characteristic of Augustine. "Love" he says, "does

not exclude wars of mercy waged by the good." (Letter 138.)

But here we come upon a further, most significant development in Augustine's thought. The Christian may join the non-Christian in fighting to preserve peace in the earthly city. But suppose that the earthly city itself is almost totally made up of Christians. Then cooperation between the "two cities" takes on a new aspect, and we arrive at the conclusion that a "secular arm" of military force can be called into action against heretics, to preserve not only civil peace but the purity of faith. Thus Augustine becomes also the remote forefather of the Crusades and of the Inquisition.

"Love does not exclude wars of mercy waged by the good!" The history of the Middle Ages, of the Crusades, of the religious wars has taught us what strange consequences can flow from this noble principle. Augustine, for all his pessimism about human nature, did not foresee the logical results of his thought, and in the original context, his "wars of mercy" to defend civilized order make a certain amount of sense. Always his idea is that the Church and the Christians, whatever they may do, are aiming at ultimate peace. The deficiency of Augustinian thought lies therefore not in the good intentions it prescribes but in an excessive naiveté with regard to the good that can be attained by violent means which cannot help

but call forth all that is worst in man. And so, alas, for centuries we have heard kings, princes, bishops, priests, ministers, and the Lord alone knows what variety of unctuous beadies and sacrists, earnestly urging all men to take up arms out of love and mercifully slay their enemies (including other Christians) without omitting to purify their interior intention.

Of course when we read Augustine himself, and when we see that he imposes such limits upon the Christian soldier and traces out such a strict line of conduct for him, we can see that the theory of the just war was not altogether absurd, and that it was capable of working in ages less destructive than our own. But one wonders at the modern Augustinians and at their desperate manoeuvres to preserve the doctrine of the just war from the museum or the junk pile. In the name of "realism" (preserving, that is to say, a suitable dash of Augustinian pessimism about fallen man) they plunge into ambivalence from which Augustine was fortunately preserved by the technological ignorance of his dark age.

Augustine kept a place in his doctrine for a certain vestige of the eschatological tradition. There were some Christians who would not be permitted to fight: these were the monks, first of all, the men who had totally left the world and abandoned its concerns to live in the Kingdom of

God, and then the clergy who preached the Gospel of Peace—or at least the Gospel of the merciful war. Yet as Christianity spread over Europe and the ancient Roman strain was vivified and restored by the addition of vigorous barbarian blood from the north, even monks and clerics were sometimes hard to restrain from rushing to arms and loving exuberantly with the sword. Do we not read that when a Frankish ship loaded with Crusaders ran into the Byzantine fleet in the first Crusade, the Byzantines were shocked at a Latin priest who stood on the stern covered with blood and furiously discharged arrows at them, clad in vestments, too: and he even went on shooting after the declaration of a truce.*

Still, there were recognized limits. Councils sternly restricted warfare. In 10th century England a forty-day fast was prescribed as penance for anyone who killed an enemy in war—even in a just war. Killing was regarded as an evil to be atoned for even if it could not be avoided (see Migne, P.L., vol. 79, col. 407). However, later theologians of the Middle Ages (see Migne, P.L., vol. 125, col. 841) made clear that killing in a just war was not a sin and intimated that the soldier who did this required no penance, as

* This was in the First Crusade. Quoted from the *Alexiad* of Anna Comnena, in Bainton, R.H., *Christian Attitudes to War and Peace*, New York and Nashville, 1960, p. 114.

he had done a work pleasing to God. We were then close to the time of the Crusades. But even then, especially in wars among Christians themselves, severe limitations were prescribed. War might be virtuous under certain conditions, but in any case, good or bad, one must sometimes abstain from it at any cost. The truce of God in the 10th century forbade fighting on holy days and in holy seasons. The hesitation and ambivalence of the Christian warrior are reflected in a curious oath of Robert the Pious (10th century) who wrote: "I will not take a mule or a horse . . . in pasture from any man from the kalends of March to the Feast of All Saints, unless to recover a debt. I will not burn houses or destroy them unless there is a knight inside. I will not root up vines. I will not attack noble ladies traveling without husband, nor their maids, nor widows or nuns unless it is their fault. From the beginning of Lent to the end of Easter, I will not attack an armed knight."*

It is easy to find texts like these which bring out the ridiculous inner inconsistencies that are inseparable from this view of war and the constant temptation to evade and rationalize the demands of the just war theory. The twofold weakness of the Augustinian theory is its stress on a subjective purity of intention which can be doctored and

* Quoted in Bainton, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

manipulated with apparent "sincerity" and the tendency to pessimism about human nature and the world, now used as a *justification* for recourse to violence. Robert the Pious is characteristically naive when he blandly assumes that traveling nuns might at any moment be "at fault" and give a knight such utterly intolerable provocation that he would "have to attack them"—with full justice. Expanded to the megatonic scale, and viewing as licit the destruction of whole cities which are suddenly wicked and "at fault," this reasoning is no longer amusing.

We are told that Hitler, viewing the terrible conflagration of Warsaw when it had been bombed by the Luftwaffe, wept and said: "How wicked those people were to make me do this to them!"