

# And The Weak Suffer What They Must

Notes on Nursing: What It Is, and What It Is Not/Chapter VI

*For weak patients have generally feverish nights and, in the morning, dry mouths; and, if they could eat with those dry mouths, it would be the worse*

Notes on Nursing: What It Is, and What It Is Not/Chapter VIII

*pillows. Every weak patient, be his illness what it may, suffers more or less from difficulty in breathing. To take the weight of the body off the poor chest*

A Course in Miracles/Workbook for Students/What Is the Ego?

*strength is weak and love is fearful, life is really death, and what opposes God alone is true. The ego is insane. In fear it stands beyond the Everywhere*

Observations on the Collapse of the Hitler Regime in Germany and the Weak Points of the Stalin Regime in the Soviet Union

*Observations on the Collapse of the Hitler Regime in Germany and the Weak Points of the Stalin Regime in the Soviet Union (1948) by Gustav Hilger 2739447Observations*

Germany Must Perish!

*of the German nation for conquest and mass murder. This war is being waged by the German People. It is they who are responsible. It is they who must be*

Toleration and other essays/We Must Take Sides; or, The Principal of Action

*Toleration and other essays by Voltaire, translated by Joseph McCabe We Must Take Sides; or, The Principal of Action 2031503Toleration and other essays*

The Czechoslovak Review/Volume 1/What We Have to Contend With

*unconscious for the most part, reminds me of people who have a bad tooth; they suffer a great deal, but they imagine that if it were pulled out, they would miss*

What I Believe (Tolstoy, Popoff)/Chapter 1

*suffer, and submit; but never resist evil.' What could be clearer, more intelligible, and more indubitable than this? As soon as I understood the exact*

I have endeavored to explain the reason why I had not properly understood the doctrine of Christ in my two works, A Criticism on Dogmatic Theology and A New Translation and Comparison of the Four Gospels, with a commentary. In these works I examine all that conceals the truth from the eyes of men, and also retranslate and compare the four gospels verse by verse.

I have been engaged for some six years upon this work. Every year, every month, I find new solutions and suggestions, and I am enabled to correct the defects that creep in through haste or impulse. My life will perhaps end before the work is complete, but I am sure that it is a much needed labor I have imposed on myself, and therefore I shall do what I can while my life lasts.

This is my outward work on the theology of the gospel. But the inner working of my soul, which I wish to speak of here, was not the result of a methodical investigation of doctrinal theology, or of the actual texts of the gospel; it was a sudden removal of all that hid the true meaning of the Christian doctrine – a momentary flash of light, which made everything clear to me. It was something like that which might happen to a man who, after vainly attempting, by a false plan, to build up a statue out of a confused heap of small pieces of marble, suddenly guesses at the figure they are intended to form by the shape of the largest piece; and then, on beginning to set up the statue, finds his guess confirmed by the harmonious joining in of the various pieces.

I wish to tell in this work how I found the key to the doctrine of Christ, by the help of which the truth was disclosed to me so clearly and convincingly.

I made the discovery in the following manner. Almost from the first years of my childhood, when I began to read the gospel for myself, the doctrine that teaches love, humility, meekness, self-denial, and returning good for evil was the doctrine that touched me most. I always considered it as the basic teaching of Christianity and loved it as such; but it was only after a long period of unbelief that its full meaning flashed upon me, that I understood 'life' as our unlettered working classes understand it, and accepted the same creed that they profess, the creed of the Greek Orthodox Church. But I soon observed that I should not find in the teaching of the Church the confirmation of my idea that love, humility, meekness, and self-denial were the essential principles of Christianity. I saw that this, which I regarded as the basis of Christianity, did not form the main point in the public teaching of the Church. At first I did not attach much importance to this. 'The Church,' I said to myself, 'acknowledges, besides the doctrine of love, humility, and self-denial, a dogmatic and ritualistic doctrine. This estranges my heart; it is even repulsive to me, but there is no harm in it.'

While, however, submitting to the teaching of the Church, I began to see more and more clearly that this peculiarity was not as unimportant as I had at first regarded it. I was drawn away from the Church by various singularities in its dogmas; by its approval of persecution, capital punishment, and war; and also by its intolerance of all other forms of worship than its own; but my faith in the teaching of the Church was shaken still more by its indifference to what seemed to me the very basis of the teaching of Christ, and by its evident partiality for what I could not consider an essential part of that doctrine. I felt that there was something wrong, but I could not make out distinctly what it was, because the Church did not deny what seemed to me the main point in the doctrine of Christ, though it failed to give it its proper position and influence.

I only passed from 'Nihilism' to the Church because I felt the impossibility of living without faith – without a knowledge of what is good and evil, resting on something more than my animal instincts. I hoped to find this 'something' in Christianity. But Christianity, as it appeared to me then, was only a certain disposition of mind – a very vague one. I turned to the Church for obligatory precepts of life, but the Church gave me only such as did not draw me nearer to the Christian state of mind I longed for, but rather alienated me from it. I turned away from the Church. For the precepts that were given to me by the Church concerning belief in dogmas, observance of the sacraments, fast-days, and prayers, I did not care; and precepts really founded on the teachings of Christ were wanting.

Moreover, the precepts of the Church weakened, and sometimes even destroyed, that Christian state of mind that alone seemed to me to be the true aim of life.

What perplexed me most of all was that all the evil things that men do, such as condemning private individuals, whole nations, or other religions; and the inevitable results of these condemnations – executions and wars – were justified by the Church. I saw that the doctrine of Christ, which teaches us humility, tolerance, forgiveness, self-denial, and love, was extolled by the Church, but that at the same time she sanctioned what was incompatible with such teachings.

Could the doctrine of Christ be so weak and inconsistent? That I could not believe. Besides, it had always perplexed me to find that the texts upon which the Church has grounded her dogmas are of an obscure

character, whereas those that teach us how to live are the most simple and clear. While the Church specifies the dogmas, and the duties derived from them, in the most forcible manner, the practice of the 'doctrine' is urged only in obscure, dim, and mystical expressions. Is it possible that this was what Christ desired for His teaching? I could only find the solution of my doubts in the perusal of the gospels, and I read them over and over again. Of all the gospels, the Sermon on the Mount was the portion that impressed me most, and I studied it more often than any other part. Nowhere else does Christ speak with such solemnity; nowhere else does He give us so many clear and intelligible moral precepts, which commend themselves to everyone. If there are any clear and definite precepts of Christianity, they must have been expressed in this sermon; and, therefore, in those three chapters of St. Matthew's gospel I sought the solution of my doubts.

Many and many a time I read over the sermon, and every time I felt the same emotion on reading the texts about 'turning my cheek to the one who strikes me,' 'giving up my cloak to him who takes my coat,' 'being at peace with all men,' and 'loving my enemies,' – and yet there remained in me the same feeling of dissatisfaction. The words of God were not as yet clear to me. They seemed to enjoin an impossible self-denial that annulled life itself, and therefore it seemed to me that such self-denial could not be the requirement on which man's salvation depended.

But, then, if that were not the express condition of salvation, there was nothing fixed and clear! I not only read the Sermon on the Mount, but the rest of the gospels, and various commentaries upon them. Our theological explanations tell us that in the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount an indication is given of the perfection after which man must strive; that man, being full of sin, cannot attain this perfection by his own unaided strength, and that the salvation of a man lies in faith, prayer, and the gifts of the grace of God; but these explanations did not satisfy me.

Why should Christ have given to us such clear and good precepts, applicable to us all, if He knew beforehand that the keeping of them was impossible by man in his own unaided strength?

On reading over these precepts, it always seemed that they applied to me, and that I was morally bound to obey them. I even felt convinced that I could, immediately and from that very hour, do all that they enjoined.

I wished and tried to do so, but as soon as any difficulty arose in the way of my keeping them, I involuntarily remembered the teaching of the Church, that 'man is weak, and can do no good thing by himself,' and then I became weak.

I had been told that it was necessary to believe and to pray, but I felt that my faith was weak and that I could not pray. I had been told that it was necessary to pray for faith – for that faith without which prayer is of no avail. I was told that faith comes through prayer and that prayer comes through faith, which, to say the least, was certainly bewildering. Such statements commended themselves neither to reason nor experience.

After much useless study of the works that have been written in proof of the divinity or non-divinity of this doctrine, and after many doubts and much suffering, I was left alone with the mysterious Book, in which the doctrine of Christ is taught. I could not interpret it as others did, I could not abjure the Book, and yet I could not find a new and satisfying interpretation. It was only after losing all faith in the explanations of learned theology and criticism, and after laying them all aside in obedience to the words of Christ (Mark 10:15), that I began to understand what had until then seemed incomprehensible to me. It was not by deep thought, or by skillfully comparing or commenting on the texts of the gospel, that I came to understand the doctrine. On the contrary, all grew clear to me for the very reason that I had ceased to rest on mere interpretations. The text that gave me the key to the truth was the thirty-ninth verse of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew, 'You have heard that it has been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, do not resist evil...' The simple meaning of these words suddenly flashed full upon me; I accepted the fact that Christ meant exactly what He said; and then, though I had found nothing new, all that had hitherto obscured the truth cleared away, and the truth itself arose before me in all its solemn importance.

I had often read the passage, but these words had never until now arrested my attention: 'I say to you, do not resist evil.'

In my conversations since with many Christian people, who know the gospels well, I have observed the same indifference to the force of this text that I had felt. Nobody specially remembered the words; and, while conversing with persons upon the text, I have known them to take up the New Testament in order to assure themselves that the words were really there.

The words, 'Whoever shall strike you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also,' had always presented themselves to me as requiring endurance and self-mastery such as human nature is hardly capable of. They touched me. I felt that to act thus would be to attain moral perfection; but I felt, too, that I should never be able to obey them if they entailed nothing but suffering. I said to myself, 'Well, I will turn my cheek – I will let myself be struck again. I will give up my coat – they shall take my all. They shall even take away my life. Yet, life is given to me. Why should I thus lose it? This cannot be what Christ requires of us.' Then I said to myself, 'Perhaps in these words Christ only purposes to extol suffering and self-denial, and in doing so He speaks exaggeratingly and His expressions are therefore to be regarded as illustrations rather than precise requirements.' But as soon as I comprehended the meaning of the words, 'do not resist evil,' it became clear to me that Christ does not exaggerate, that He does not require suffering for the mere sake of suffering, and that He only expresses clearly and definitely what He means. He says, 'Do not resist evil,' and if you do not resist evil, you may meet with some who, having struck you on one cheek, and meeting with no resistance, will strike you on the other; after having taken away your coat, will take away your cloak also; having profited by your work, will oblige you to work on; will take, and will never give back. 'Nevertheless, I say to you, do not resist evil. Still do good to those who even strike and abuse you.'

Now I understood that the whole force of the teaching lay in the words 'do not resist evil,' and that the entire context was but an application of that great precept. I saw that Christ does not require us to turn the other cheek, and to give away our cloak, in order to make us suffer; but He teaches us not to resist evil, and warns us that doing so may involve personal suffering. Does a father, on seeing his son set out on a long journey, tell him to pass sleepless nights, to eat little, to get wet through, or to freeze? Will he not rather say to him, 'Go, and if on the road you are cold or hungry, do not be discouraged but go on'? Christ does not say 'Let a man strike your cheek, and suffer,' but He says, 'Do not resist evil. Whatever men may do to you, do not resist evil.' These words, 'do not resist evil' (the wicked man), thus apprehended, were the clue that made all clear to me, and I was surprised that I could have hitherto treated them in such a different way. Christ meant to say, 'Whatever men may do to you, bear, suffer, and submit; but never resist evil.' What could be clearer, more intelligible, and more indubitable than this? As soon as I understood the exact meaning of these simple words, all that had appeared confused to me in the doctrine of Christ grew intelligible; what had seemed contradictory now became consistent, and what I had deemed superfluous became indispensable. All united in one whole, one part fitting into and supporting the other, like the pieces of a broken statue put together again in their proper places.

This doctrine of 'non-resistance' is commended again and again in the gospels. In the Sermon on the Mount Christ represents His followers – i.e., those who follow this law of non-resistance – as liable to be persecuted, stoned, and reduced to beggary. Elsewhere He tells us that the disciple who does not take up his cross, who is not willing to renounce all, cannot be His follower, and He thus describes the man who is ready to bear the consequences that may result from the practice of the doctrine of non-resistance. Christ says to His disciples, 'Be poor, be ready to bear persecution, suffering, and even death, without resisting evil.' He prepared for suffering and death Himself without resisting evil; He reproved Peter, who grieved over Him because He proposed to yield in this way; and He died, forbidding others to resist evil, remaining true to His own doctrine and His own example. All His first disciples obeyed the same law of the non-resistance of evil, and passed their lives in disability and persecution.

We may bring forward, as an objection, the difficulty of always obeying such a law; we may even say, as unbelievers do, that it is a foolish doctrine, that Christ was a dreamer, an idealist who gave precepts that are

impossible to follow. But, whatever our objections may be, we cannot deny that Christ expresses His meaning most clearly and distinctly; and His meaning is that man must not resist evil; he who fully accepts His teaching cannot resist evil.

#### Notes on Nursing: What It Is, and What It Is Not/Chapter V

*old patient, the degree would be quite inconceivable to which the nerves of the sick suffer from seeing the same walls, the same ceiling, the same surroundings*

#### What to Do?/On Labor and Luxury

*they must cease to deceive, they must repent, they must acknowledge that labor is not a curse, but the glad business of life. "But what will be the result*

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