

instincts of nature, that of self-preservation, that we are apt to view it in the light of our inclinations. Did Christ mean this absolutely, or, is it limited by other teachings? Is a man to leave himself open to every imaginable injury, or is this compatible with prudent self-defence? Count Leo Tolstoi whose book and life are among the most notable comments on the passage, claims that it must be taken absolutely. It is the central doctrine of Christianity. It is trifling with sacred truth to try to modify it; it is twisting Scripture to suit our inclinations to limit it by other passages. Yet one is surprised, as he reads on, to find this candid interpreter distorting other passages to preserve this one in its literal force. Nevertheless he lives up to his belief. He does not believe in resisting evil; therefore he has left the army. He does not believe in a Christian going to law; therefore he has resigned his judgeship. To us it is interesting to remember that the Doukhobors, who have lately come to Canada were persecuted out of Russia because, among other departures from the Greek faith, they did not believe in war, and would not serve in the army.

Now Christ's own example gives the best illustration of his meaning.

He never used violence in his own defence. James and John came in for a scathing rebuke for wishing to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans who rejected their Lord. He states as His reason for refusing one of the ground principles of His life, "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." When Peter drew the sword in His defence, Christ forbade him, and healed the wound he inflicted, adding the significant remark: "All they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword." When, during his trial before Caiaphas, one of the officers struck him, Jesus calmly answered: "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" It is suggestive to compare with this Paul's hot retort when the high priest commanded one to smite him on the mouth; "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten