

but is there no conceivable case in which a great nation may prefer the risk of war and even of honourable death to a shameful acquiescence? Is evil never to be resisted? Not even in defence of others? Again, good and evil do not always stand alone: it has often happened, and will in a more complex state of the world happen more often still, that both parties to a dispute have much right on their side. Neither will accept an adverse decision: if not force, what is to be the ultimate sanction? Human justice without an executive power is an absurdity.

But we have not yet touched bottom. It is suggested, and we may grant for the sake of argument, that a kind of international public opinion might come into existence of so overpowering a kind that no people, however self-willed or convinced of right, could resist it. A compulsion of this kind—if it were possible—seems to us more detestable than any exhibition of physical force. That the spirit of man, so nearly freed by centuries of heroic struggle against superstition and priestcraft, should fall under the meaner and less natural dominion of the collective human mind with all its blind passions and fierce prejudices—this is indeed the apotheosis of brutality. In the dungeons of the Inquisition man was more free than under such a power. Among the greatest dangers of the century before us, which have been a subject of recent discussion, we should place any serious increase in the power of hypnotic suggestion and any spreading of its practice. But a far greater, and, we believe, a far more improbable, evil would be the weakening of a nation's will-power and belief in a good cause. To superior physical force the strongest may yield, often—though perhaps not always—without disgrace; but the nightmare position here suggested is that of a bird before a boa-constrictor—free wings at the mercy of a reptile monster.

And how, it may be asked, is Christianity here involved? In this way. War, they say to us, is your only alternative to our arbitration, and war must be, and is, the antithesis of love