Conversion & Physical Force

by Bill Crews

How does the Father in heaven draw men who are lost unto His Son that they might be saved? The answer given by the Son is this: *"It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God* (Isaiah 54:13, BC). *Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned cometh unto me"* (John 6:45). Search the New Testament and see that neither Jesus in His ministry nor His apostles under His great commission tried to make believers or disciples of anyone, tried to get the lost to accept and be saved by the gospel, ***by resorting to physical force***.

People were taught. They were reasoned with and appealed to. They were beseeched, urged, admonished, exhorted, but *they were never pressured or forced*. No one was ever arrested, imprisoned, tortured, or stripped of his possessions as a way of converting and saving his soul. No soul can thus be converted and saved. On the contrary, Christians became the objects and victims of such treatment, and at the hands of evil unbelievers who were the willing tools of Satan. And the design of this vile treatment was to force them to deny Christ and forsake Him.

To the apostles Jesus said, *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel* (good news, BC) *to the whole creation"* (Mark 16:15). It is said of Peter at Jerusalem, *"And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation"* (Acts 2:40). It is said of Paul at Corinth, *"And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks"* (Acts 18:4). And at Ephesus, *"And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God"* (Acts 19:8). Those who were made free from sin had **obeyed from the heart** (Romans 6:17). They understood that in Christ it was *"faith working by love"* that availed (Galatians 5:6).

Only evil people, or those serving the cause of evil, knowing the power of truth over error, or of good over evil, resort to strong-arm tactics that only force people to say or do things they want them to say or do, call it "conversion," and derive some sort of sick satisfaction from it.

History is replete with instances of such inhumanity. Communist governments, police states, cruel dictators, evil monarchs, and conquering empires have resorted to such. Many pagan religions have been forced upon people who were unwilling to die or unable to bear torture. With the lips and the hands new "converts" were forced to pay homage to "the gods." The Allah and the Koran of Muslimism have been forced upon millions by the threat of death. In past centuries the Roman Catholic religion was forced upon untold numbers in numerous nations and upon several continents, and some Protestant religions were forced upon not a few, by threats of imprisonment or death and by the use of all kinds of physical torture. But please mark it down that ***nobody ever did or ever could in the name of the Lord Jesus make a Christian out of even one soul by the use of such physical force***.

God loves all men (John 3:16); Christ died for all men (1 John 2:2); salvation is offered unto all men (Titus 2:11); God would have all men to be saved and wishes none to perish (1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9). But lost souls must be persuaded and allowed to choose to become saved individuals. No one can be compelled to be.

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