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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 19th-Century Christian Anarchists, and the Rhetorical Strategy for Advocating Nonviolent Praxis

When people think of "anarchism" and "Christianity" in the United States, they tend to compartmentalize these terms to the opposite side of the political spectrum, with images of Molotov-cocktail throwing anarchists rioting against the police and Evangelical Christians protesting *Roe v. Wade* at abortion clinics tending to arise in the minds of the public. However, Christianity and anarchism do not need to be mutually exclusive: in fact, Christian anarchism is not only a valid ideology, but it also has a long history in the United States and across the world. For example, the 19th-century American Christian anarchist movement and civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. may not, at first, seem to have any ideological similarities, but there are abundant and substantial agreements between King and this 1800s New England political movement that are worth exploring. The two most prolific writers on nonviolent praxis and the principles of Christian anarchism were Adin Ballou (1803-1890) and William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879). Christian anarchism, as understood by Ballou and Garrison, is an ideology that opposes established Christian dogma and adheres only to the ethics as discussed in scripture and in the life and teachings of Christ. Christian anarchists reject the belief in the inherent legitimacy of "human governments," as such governments can only sustain their power through coercion and

oppression of the most marginalized in society. The monopolization of violence by mortal governments, as Christian anarchists argue, is the disembodiment of the "Kingdom of Heaven" and intrinsically evil. The greatest evil in society, in context of 19th-century United States, was the institution of slavery: therefore, the main area of struggle for 19th-century American Christian anarchists was abolitionism and figuring out how to peacefully liberate enslaved people. Christian anarchists were also pacificists, as they saw Christ as the embodiment of "passive nonresistance" or nonviolent praxis against the state, so they did not advocate for violent struggle against southern slave owners but a "revolution of ethics" through moral suasion.[1] Through education and consistent and public rebukes of slavery and its supporters (from slave owners to indifferent northerners), 19th-century Christian anarchists like Ballou and Garrison hoped to gain overwhelming public support for abolitionism without the need for civil war.

Like Ballou and Garrison, King was raised on the teachings of the Baptist church. The black southern Baptist tradition can be seen as being similar to Christian anarchism, as there is no centralized "Baptist church" or dogma to adhere to, making Baptist churches relatively autonomous to each other, and inherently in opposition to the United States government and especially Jim Crow laws. Since there is no dogma, each Baptist church has its own culture and

[1] "Africans in America/Part 4/Margaret Washington on Moral Suasion." PBS. Public Broadcasting Service. Accessed April 4, 2021. https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4i2981.html.

Margaret Washington, Associate Professor of History at Cornell University, describes moral suasion "as an argument to end slavery, because the abolitionists felt that thinking people who were basically good people in America could be persuaded by argument that slavery was wrong; that it was wrong for moral reasons; that it was wrong for religious reasons; that the ideals on which the nation was founded were perverted by the institution of enslavement. What the abolitionists didn't realize was how deeply embedded in the social, economic, and political structure slavery was. They didn't realize how powerful the slaveocracy was. And they didn't realize how much racism had embedded the fabric of American life."

individual beliefs – but what binds them together is their close-reading of scripture and the long history of slave religion. Absent of religious text and the ability to read such texts anyway, enslaved preachers were able to produce captivating sermons that instilled hope and the promise of liberation in generations of enslaved people.[2] Slave sermons empowered black enslaved Americans to recognize their intrinsic worth as human beings and as God's children, despite the dogma of the white supremacist state. Preachers instilled in black enslaved Americans their power to emotionally and psychology reject the label of "slave," as although other humans have the power to break their body and torment their spirit, they do not have the Divine power to deny their humanity. It can be argued that slave religion is inherently a black Christian anarchist ideology, as it was a decentralized movement that did not recognize the legitimacy of the United States government. Also consistent with Christian anarchist thought, slave sermons did not advocate vengeance or retaliatory violence against white slave owners. Preachers instead called for enslaved people's patience for the day God delivers them from bondage, drawing on the Old Testament and Moses' liberation of the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery for inspiration.[3] Slave religion extended to the 19th-century too, where their impact on the lives of enslaved black Americans was particularly poignant in the backdrop of the abolitionist movement and, inevitably, the Civil War and Emancipation Proclamation. Even after the Civil War, black folk preachers continued to advocate for black socio-economic liberation, despite the passage of the 13th amendment in 1865, as black southerners were still suffering under state violence and white supremacy.

King's father, son of two sharecroppers, was in direct lineage of the Slave religion tradition and was also a life-long Baptist preacher. From his father and the southern Baptist church

[2] Miller, *Voice of Deliverance: The Language of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Its Sources,* 18.
[3] Miller, *Voice of Deliverance: The Language of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Its Sources,* 19.

community, King learned the essentials of black Christian anarchism through the oral history of Slave religion. Although I am not arguing that King was himself a Christian anarchist, I am arguing that there are innate black Christian anarchist rhetorical and ideological tendencies in the black southern Christian tradition that he adopted in his own sermons. What binds the previously mentioned tradition and the 19th-century American Christian anarchist movement is their commitment to biblicism and Christian ethics as revealed by scripture – hence their similar conclusion that Christ is on the side of black enslaved people and yearns for their liberation from state oppression. And while this paper focuses on white Christian anarchists like Ballou and Garrison, the black southern Christian tradition had an immeasurable effect on King and, thus, deserves primary recognition for its influence on his ideology.[4] But the main takeaway from this discussion is to that Christian anarchism and King are not ideologically contradictory but especially compatible.

Ballou's and Garrison's political ideas lost their radical edge over time, which explains why they are seldom associated with black revoluationary thought. Garrison's ideology evolved away from Christian anarchism as the Civil War intensified. He eventually supported the Lincoln presidency, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Union army, a far cry from his early writings on "no-governmentism" and the evilness of warfare. Nonetheless, his advocation of the immediate abolition of slavery – without compensation for slave owners – through nonviolent means garnered a significant number of supporters, or "Garrisonians," prior to the Civil War. Ballou remained a life-long advocate of Christian anarchism, creating in 1841 one of the most successful self-sufficient commune of the period – the Hopedale Community – for fifteen years until its eventual bankruptcy. He remained in opposition to the Civil War and armed struggle for black liberation,

[4] See*: Breaking White Supremacy: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Black Social Gospel* by Gary Dorrien

fearing the retaliation of former white slave owners and racists on freed black Americans. Christian anarchism, because of its advocation of nonviolence, became unpopular at the outbreak of the Civil War and eventually lost its relevancy in American discourse. Nevertheless, Ballou and Garrison's texts had an immeasurable impact on global Christian anarchist thought and praxis: as I will reveal in this paper, these two men's texts travelled to Russia and India, where they finally made it back to America through King's rhetoric.

Christian Anarchist Influences on King

King is sometimes referred to as the "American Gandhi," as he was one of the most vocal and committed advocates of nonviolent praxis for black liberation in the United States. One of his closet comrade, Bayard Rustin, and two of King's most impactful graduate studies mentors, Benjamin Mays and Howard Thurman, are said to have influenced his embrace of Gandhi's ideology of nonviolent direct action.[5] He even made a pilgrimage to India in 1959 to meet with Gandhi's remaining disciples to learn from their experience resisting British colonialism.[6] Gandhi himself was partly influenced by Russian Christian anarchist Leo Tolstoy and American transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau, having first read Tolstoy's "A Letter to a Hindu" in 1908 and later Thoreau's essay "Civil Disobedience" (1849) as a young lawyer in South Africa – inspiring him to devote the rest of his life to nonviolent direct action. The contents of "A Letter to a Hindu" include Tolstoy's theory of praxis, where he explains that oppressed people, such as the Indians under British colonial rule, can only utilize nonviolent direct action for liberation. Per the teachings of Jesus and the early Christians, violence only escalates into more violence; since the

[5] Miller, *Voice of Deliverance: The Language of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Its Sources,* 93-4.
[6] "India Trip," The Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute, August 4, 2020, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/india-trip.

state has the monopoly on violence, oppressed people must adopt creative and nonviolent direct-action campaigns (such as boycotting, protests, strikes, occupying private property, etc.) to create a successful competing hegemonic force against the status quo. "A Letter to a Hindu," along with Tolstoy's 1894 book *The Kingdom of God is Within You,* greatly contributed to Gandhi's nonviolent ideology, and the two peace advocates corresponded with each other for a year before Tolstoy's death in 1910.

What do Gandhi and Tolstoy have to do with Ballou, Garrison, and King? In *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, Tolstoy talks in-depth about Ballou and Garrison's texts and activism for abolitionism through nonviolent direct action.[7] He first discusses Ballou's tract, "The Catechism of Non-Resistance" (1839), which is a condensed explanation of the ideology of Christian anarchism and nonresistance against the state. Tolstoy then examines Garrison's Christian anarchist arguments for opposing the government and immediate abolitionism of slavery, as published in his abolitionist magazine, *The Liberator*. Tolstoy was immensely inspired by Ballou and Garrison's interpretation of the Bible, passion for abolitionism, and commitment towards nonresistance, cementing Tolstoy's own Christian anarchist beliefs that he was exploring privately for years. Thus, Ballou and Garrison had a particular imprint on Tolstoy's ideology and theory of praxis and his writings — undoubtedly impacting Gandhi's ideology, too.

Given that one of King's biggest source of his nonviolent praxis was Gandhi — and that Gandhi was influenced by Tolstoy and his Christian anarchist ideology, bolstered by his readings of Ballou and Garrison — is it possible that King also read Ballou and Garrison's text, adopting some of their rhetorical strategies into his sermons and publications? Scholars on this topic have not directly related King to Ballou and Garrison: the only explicit connection between the three

[7] "Kingdom of God Is Within You - The Anarchist Library." Accessed April 5, 2021. https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/leo-tolstoy-the-kingdom-of-god-is-within-you.pdf.

men are in Lewis Perry's book, *Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought,* where he mentions in the footnotes:

> After World War II, when Martin Luther King [sic] began his pilgrimage to nonviolence, though not of course to anarchism, he read widely and was inspired by Gandhi and possibly by Tolstoy, but he seems to have been unaware of [Ballou and Garrison's works].[8]

In another book, *American Nonviolence: The History of an Idea* by Ira Chernus, he discusses the history of nonviolent praxis thought in the United States, beginning at the arrival of British colonists and ending with King.[9] While he discusses Ballou, Garrison, and King, Chernus does not directly relate King to the abolitionists, as he discusses the various nonviolence movements and major figures in isolation of each other. There is a recent article, "Love as a Practice of Peace: The Political Theologies of Tolstoy, Gandhi and King" by Liane Hartnett, that discusses Tolstoy in relation to King and Gandhi; however the author does not mention Christian anarchism or the Ballou and Garrison connection.[10] Additionally, scholarship about Ballou and Garrison has decreased remarkably since the 1970's, with Perry's book being the last major piece dedicated to their period.[11] It is worth mentioning that a significant bulk of scholarship on Ballou and Garrison was written in the 1960s. This short-lived revived interest in 19th-century Christian anarchism was most likely inspired by the huge nonviolent protests and marches of the day –many of which were led by King and his comrades. As exhibited in Perry's footnote, then, scholars are aware of an abstract connection between King, Ballou, and Garrison, but a wary to make a direct claim.

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[8] Perry, Lewis. "Radical Abolitionism ; Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought," March 23, 2020. https://archive.org/details/radicalabolition0000perr.

[9] Chernus, Ira. "American Nonviolence: the History of an Idea." Internet Archive. Orbis Books, March 13, 2020. https://archive.org/details/americannonviole0000cher.

[10] Hartnett L. (2020) Love as a Practice of Peace: The Political Theologies of Tolstoy, Gandhi and King. In: Paipais V. (eds) Theology and World Politics. International Political Theory. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-37602-4_11

[11] See: Brock, Peter. "Pacifism in the United States: From the Colonial Era to the First World War," August 24, 2013. https://archive.org/details/pacifisminunited00broc.

However, I argue that there is more than enough evidence that directly connects King to Ballou and Garrison. It appears that scholars fail to relate King with the 19th-century Christian anarchists because King never explicitly cite Ballou and Garrison as some of his rhetorical influences. But Keith D. Miller, in his book V*oice of Deliverance: The Language of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Its Sources*, states that King regularly failed to cite his influences.[12] For example, in his 1958 essay "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," King fails to cite his black Baptist church community, Slave religion, or his father as influences on his spiritual development. Instead, he cites various famous white theologians like Reinhold Niebuhr and Walter Rauschenbusch as major influences on his ideology, suggesting that King is an unreliable narrator of his own intellectual history. Therefore, scholars should not solely rely on King's account of who his major influences were and must read between the lines of his texts to discover his uncited sources.

Additionally, it seems very unlikely that King never came across Ballou and Garrison's texts, given his own intellectual curiosity and the company he kept around him. His mentors, like King, were avid scholars of Gandhi and helped guide his studies on nonviolent praxis. They were also a part of their university's Gandhian Society and regularly talked about their various pilgrimages to India and their studies of pacifist literature. As eager scholars of Gandhi, they had to know Tolstoy's tremendous influence on Gandhi's praxis, as Gandhi was not shy about his admiration for his mentor.[13] Since *The Kingdom of God is Within You* is cited by Gandhi as one of most formative texts on his theory of praxis, it is reasonable to assume that such scholars would

[12] Miller, *Voice of Deliverance:the Language of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Its Sources,* 5-7.
[13] In 1910, Gandhi set up a nonviolence "monastery" in South Africa called the "Tolstoy Farm," serving as his main headquarters of his activist campaign against Indian discrimination in the country.
Source: Nichols L.T. (2014) Modern Roots of the Sociology of Love: Tolstoy, Addams, Gandhi, and Sorokin. In: Jeffries V. (eds) The Palgrave Handbook of Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity. Palgrave Macmillan, New York. https://doi-org.proxy.wexler.hunter.cuny.edu/10.1057/9781137391865_7

have also read this text.[14] Ballou and Garrison are two of the three writers Tolstoy quotes most frequently in his Christian anarchist writing era[15] and, as previously mentioned, *The Kingdom of God is Within You* discusses Ballou and Garrison's works considerably. Thus, it seems improbable that scholars of Gandhi would be uninformed of Ballou and Garrison's relevance to their studies Also, King's graduate studies mentors and other professors in the Gandhian Society would have been in graduate school in the early 1900s — where Garrison especially was still culturally relevant. Besides Garrison's daughter Fanny Garrison Villard and son Oswald Garrison Villard publishing select writings of their father in 1924 (along with a foreword by Leo Tolstoy), Oswald was not an unimportant civil rights figure, as he was one of the original founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Garrison's name and legacy carried on with his children but especially with Oswald. All these points suggest that King's graduate school mentor's complete ignorance of Ballou, and especially Garrison, was very unlikely.

If it is reasonable to assume that King's graduate studies mentors read Ballou's and Garrison's works, then it is also reasonable to assume that King read their works. King throughout his graduate studies was looking for the ideal nonviolent theory of praxis to not only apply to his activist work, but to also help form his rhetorical strategy in his future sermons. He had to choose his words carefully so to convey his message of nonviolence to his congregates — keeping in mind that he has to, first, quell the initial vehement disagreement that he expected in his audience, as it seems woefully unfair to urge black Americans to "turn the other cheek" to white terrorism after centuries of doing so. Ballou and Garrison, too, had a similar struggle: many white abolitionists

[14] Nichols, "Modern Roots of the Sociology of Love: Tolstoy, Addams, Gandhi, and Sorokin," *The Palgrave Handbook of Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity,* 158-61.
[15] The second writer being Emerson.
Source: Tulecke, Kari. M. Hum., "Adin Ballou, Teacher of Peace." Wright State University, 1994.

were divided on the issue of Christian pacifism, as it seemed unfair to them to have enslaved black Americans wait for freedom while abolitionists try to appeal to the morals of slave owners. Both audiences in both periods thought that nonviolent resistance meant powerlessness, and initially found militant violence a more appealing option.

To counter this perception, Ballou, Garrison, and King had to redefine what "power" meant, as the accepted definition of power usually has violent and authoritarian connotations. Therefore, they had to find a way to prove to their audience that nonviolence is a more powerful tool for meaningful social change. Garrison's two famous early speeches at a peace and anti-slavery convention (1833 and 1838)[16] and Ballou's book *Christian Non-Resistance* (1846) and *Practical Christianity* (1856) fully express this redefining and transcendence of power. They assert in their texts that nonresistance is not cowardice but, instead, requires self-discipline over the carnal desires of one's ego and the courage to embrace the possibility of death in the struggle for black liberation. I argue that King's early sermons, "Palm Sunday Sermon on Mohandas K. Gandhi" (1958) and "Loving Your Enemies" (1962), and his essay, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence" (1959), contain the same rhetorical strategies utilized by Ballou and Garrison; by the end of this paper, I will have shown how King seemingly synthesized Ballou and Garrison's abolitionist argument for Christian anarchism for a mid-20th-century anti-segregationist audience.

Before I discuss my main arguments, it is worth first clarifying key terms I will be using throughout my paper – starting with "anarchism." Anarchism tends to be greatly misunderstood by the public, as the term "anarchy" is derived from the ancient Greek word "anarchos" and it

[16] Garrison, William. "William Lloyd Garrison and the Fight against Slavery: Selections from The Liberator." Internet Archive, October 1, 2021.

originally meant the "absence of a leader."[17] Therefore, the word "anarchy" can mean "without rule, authority, or sovereignty"[18] and also denote "a condition of disorder and chaos."[19] However, anarchism, as a school of thought, is a broad field, containing numerous branches of political theory that can contradict and oppose each other. The one consistent principle of anarchism is the "view that there should be no coercive state, nor other coercive forms of authority."[20] Most anarchists tend to be "social anarchists" who want to transform society into a more egalitarian and just one, where all people are economically liberated and free from oppressive state coercion, rather than removed from and unbothered by society like "individualist anarchists."[21]

It is disputed amongst scholars who the true founder of anarchism is in the western tradition, but it's widely accepted that William Godwin is the premier founder of philosophical anarchism. In his 1793 piece *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, he argues that "governments keep power through misleading and manipulative means, and as people progress in rationality, governments will" diminish and eventually disappear when the state is unable to have authority over people.[22] Since Godwin was a philosophical anarchist and not a revolutionary one, he held the convictions that the state is inherently oppressive and thus illegitimate, but he did not advocate for a violent overthrow of the state. As a philosophical anarchist, he believed in the gradual process of convincing the masses to see their material conditions plainly and to make the collaborative effort to create a second socio-political hegemony, effectively crippling the status quo's authority over society. In short, anarchism can mean different things for different

[17] Kurian, George T. "Anarchism." In *The Encyclopedia of Political Science*, edited by Kurian, George Thomas. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2011. http://dx.doi.org.proxy.wexler.hunter.cuny.edu/10.4135/9781608712434.n48.
[18] Michael Minch, "Encyclopedia of Global Justice," in *Encyclopedia of Global Justice*, ed. Deen K. Chatterjee (Springer, Dordrecht, n.d.). https://doi-org.proxy.wexler.hunter.cuny.edu/10.1007/978-1-4020-9160-5_112.
[19] Kurian, "Anarchism," *The Encyclopedia of Political Science*.
[20] Minch, "Anarchy," *Encyclopedia of Global Justice.*
[21] Minch, "Anarchy," *Encyclopedia of Global Justice.*
[22] Minch, "Anarchy," *Encyclopedia of Global Justice.*

movements, but the overarching theme is the belief that there is no inherent justification for citizens to uncritically obey "human governments" — especially if they oppress individual and the collective's natural rights.

This leads me to my next term: Christian anarchism. Alexandre Christoyannopoulous in his 2011 book, *Christian Anarchism: A Political Commentary on the Gospel*, writes that "Jesus' teachings implies a critique of the state" and that a "honest and consistent application of Christianity" would conclude that a stateless and socialist society is ideal for promoting universal wellbeing for humanity.[23] Christian anarchists believe that the bible and the religious and historical life of Jesus is inherently political and radical. Much like Godwin, Christian anarchists follow the philosophical strain of anarchism: they are opposed to revolutionary violence against the state, as per the Gospel of Matthew, verse 26:52, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword."[24] Christians anarchists, instead, center their intentions for socio-political revolution on Christian love, or cultivating compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation towards others, while also participating in active and consistent nonviolent resistance against the state — along with loudly airing their dissent — in efforts to help the masses see the reality of their material condition and liberate themselves from the status quo's coercive authority.

Christian anarchism can be interpreted as starting with Jesus and his disciples, moving on to the early Christians who were persecuted by the Romans for centuries thereafter until the conversion of Constantine in the 300s A.D. From there, the Christian church was made the established church of the Roman empire, marking the beginning of German theologian Dorothee Soelle's term of "Christo-fascism."[25] In this new dawn of Christo-fascism, "The *Pax Romana*

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[23] Christoyannopoulos, Alexandre. *Christian Anarchism: A Political Commentary on the Gospel (Abridged Edition)*. Luton, Bedfordshire: Andrews UK Ltd., 2011. Accessed March 9, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.
[24] Christoyannopoulous, *Christian Anarchism : A Political Commentary on the Gospel (Abridged Edition).*
[25] Soelle, Dorothee. *Beyond Mere Obedience*. New York, NY: The Pilgrim Press, 1982.

ensured the security" of the Roman empire and the church, with St. Augustine (354–430) cementing this new inversion of Christianity by permitting "the use of limited warfare was a legitimate means of defending" the Roman empire.[26] Where Jesus and his disciples emphasized to Christians that violence should never be used under any circumstances, St. Augustine offered an excuse for violence under "certain" circumstances that evolved into indiscriminate violence under the disguise of protecting Christendom.[27] In reference to the origins of 19th-century American Christian anarchism, there were a number of peace churches in 18th and 19th-century New England that preached Christian pacifism and were fairly decentralized and autonomous, such as the Quakers and the Mennonites. Such Christians have their origins in the Protestant reformation and English Dissenters (particularly the Anabaptists) of 17th-century, who all separated from and opposed the dominance of Church of England.[28] These Protestant Christians surely fit the definition of Christian Anarchism (including the Diggers, who are seen as the forerunners to anarchism), but modern Christian Anarchism really stems from Ballou and Garrison uniquely.

Anarchist Scripture in Action

In this next section, I argue that by close-reading King's two sermons "Palm Sunday Sermon on Mohandas K. Gandhi" and "Loving Your Enemies" and his essay "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," we can see a strong connection between his rhetoric on nonviolent praxis and the arguments of Ballou and Garrison on such topics. King first adopts Ballou and Garrison's attempts to redefine the term "strength" by arguing that the nature of violence is primitive and inherently

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Soelle was a German theologian who traveled to America in the 60s to experience the Civil Rights activist movement for herself. King's rhetoric and the overall nature of the time inspired Soelle to write *Beyond Mere Obedience.*

[26] Omar and Duffery, eds., *Peacemaking and the Challenge of Violence in World Religions.*

[27] The most obvious examples being the Crusades and the Spanish inquisition.

[28] Chernus, "American Nonviolence: The History of an Idea."

Obviously, the Reformation movement also had an impact on King and his father, as they are both named after Martin Luther.

weak-minded – whereas nonviolence requires a high level of self-discipline and mental fortitude. King then adopts their argument for Christians to undergo spiritual regeneration to overcome the barbarism of the "animal mind," so to end the cycle of "mutual revenge." Lastly, King elaborated on Ballou and Garrison's ideas of the power of moral suasion on swaying public opinion: by dramatizing the brutality black southerners faced under the state through nonviolent means, King argues that mass witnesses to grave injustices – like the early Christians witnessing Christ's crucifixion – resurrects societies' latent calling for liberating oppressed people and opposing coercive governments. While the advocation of self-discipline, mental fortitude, spiritual regeneration, and ending the cycle of violence, individually, is not specifically unique to Christian anarchism, these values together, however, are essential to Christian anarchists' nonviolent theory of praxis. By adopting such arguments and synthesizing Ballou and Garrison's ideas into new methods of mass civil disobedience, King was able to sway his congregates to accept and appreciate his nonviolent theory of praxis — galvanizing them into active nonviolent resistance against the state.

I.

Christian Non-Resistance and *Practical Christianity* are, arguably, two of Ballou's most important works on Christian anarchism and nonviolent theory of praxis. *Christian Non-Resistance,* his most popular book, attempted to dispel abolitionists' initial suspicion of the effectiveness of nonresistance by establishing its context in scripture and clarifying the common misconceptions of the praxis. Ballou wrote *Christian Non-Resistance* during the height of his Hopedale commune and before talks of an armed struggle against the south really solidified in the abolitionist movement. For fifteen years, he cultivated a small community of people who wanted to live in a society according to the teaching's of Jesus and escape the tyranny of the state —

including multiple "runaway slaves."[29] After *Practical Christianity* was published, however, Ballou had to turn over control of Hopedale to two wealthy commune dwellers, George and Ebenezer Draper, where the community was transformed into a textile factory town.[30] *Practical Christianity* served as a comprehensive text on the fundamental principles of practical Christianity, or the application of Christian ethics into daily life, with subsections like "Christianity and Socialism," "Principles of Theological Truth," "Principles of Personal Righteousness," and "Principles of Social Order." In addition, Ballou also discusses the "Constitution of the Practical Christian Republic," which functions as a "how-to" in creating a Christian anarchist-socialist society like Hopedale. In short, *Christian Non-Resistance* and *Practical Christianity* were Ballou's efforts to fully capture his ideology on nonviolent praxis and vision for society during a time where his ideals seemed to be coming into fruition in Hopedale.

Ballou in *Christian Non-Resistance* attempts to first redefine the term "strength" by arguing that the nature of violence is primitive and of low intellectual capacity– whereas nonviolence requires an elevated degree of self-discipline and mental fortitude. Ballou grounds his argument in Matthew 5:39, "I say unto you, resist not evil," as he argues that this is biblical proof for the divinity of nonviolent praxis and regressive nature of violent retaliation.[31] From that quote, Ballou first explains that non-resistance is "the utmost *moral* resistance, not sinful" and an "uninjurious, benevolent *physical* force" against humanity's evildoings.[32] He asserts that it is not "physical non-resistance to all human beings, under all circumstances" — thus permitting evil actions on the basis of passivity and "cowardice" — but "simply non-resistance of injury with

[29] Ballou, Adin. *Practical Christianity*. Providence, Rhode Island: Blackstone Editions, 2002.
[30] Ballou, *Practical Christianity*, xviii.
[31] Ballou, *Christian Non-Resistance*, 23.
[32] Ballou, *Christian Non-Resistance*, 11.

injury — evil with evil."[33] In other words, since the end does not justify the means, there is seldom an occasion where a nonviolent pragmatic solution is not available for a Christian. Ballou goes on to discuss the "principle of Christian non-resistance" which comes from "the inmost bosom of God" and "proceeds from all-perfect love" that "distinguishes the Divine from all inferior natures."[34] He explains that "his love is not mere natural affection, nor sentimental passion" but stems from introspection and developing one's intellect and spirituality.[35] Quoting Jesus, Ballou states that "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Since Jesus "showed that the 'neighbor ' intended was any human being, a stranger, an enemy, a bitter foe — anyone needing relief, or in danger of suffering," Ballou argues that the true strength stems from the ability to put the needs of the community over carnal needs of reactionary retaliation when prompted.[36]

Ballou also describes at length in *Christian Non-Resistance* and *Practical Christianity* the destructive cycle of "mutual revenge" and how spiritual regeneration helps individuals overcome their "animal mind." Ballou first states in *Christian Non-Resistance* that the common notion in society regarding self-defense is: "I will do you incomparably greater evil, than you can me. Therefore be afraid, and let me alone."[37] Furthermore, Ballou states that "faith in injury" leads people to distrust its opposite force, nonresistance, believing that humans are naturally conniving and need the constant threat of violence to keep society in order — thus, nonresistance would only permit "lawlessness and violence" and leave the weak completely vulnerable.[38] Ballou argues that society holds the irrational belief that people, if given the chance, would immediately resort to violence and mayhem, giving rise to the false belief that the omnipresent threat of violence is

[33] Ballou, *Christian Non-Resistance*, 12.
[34] Ballou, *Christian Non-Resistance,* 31.
[35] Ballou, *Christian Non-Resistance,* 31.
[36] Ballou, *Christian Non-Resistance,* 32.
[37] Ballou, *Christian Non-Resistance,* 33.
[38] Ballou, *Christian Non-Resistance,* 33.

needed to keep society in order. "Faith of injury," or the idolization of violence, as Ballou explains, is a problem because:

> Very few know how entirely they trust for defense and security in this grim and bloody god of human injury . . . On this altar they have sacrificed human beings enough to people twenty such planets as the earth, with no other success than to confirm and systematize violence throughout the . . . globe. And yet injury is their god, and at his glory altar of revenge and cruelty they are resolved for ever to worship, amid the clangor of deadly weapons, and the groans of a bleeding world.[39]

Here, Ballou argues that most people don't understand why they put so much belief in the perceived protection retaliatory violence offers, as evidence throughout history shows that it only perpetuates more violence and retaliation. Thus, Ballou concludes his point by calling on Christians to end this cycle of retaliation with themselves, as he states the sub-principle of Christian nonresistance as faith in the "inherent superiority of good over evil, truth over error, right over wrong, love over hatred."[40]

Moreover, in *Practical Christianity*, Ballou's assessment of human nature can be deduced from his belief in the "struggle of the spiritual mind with the carnal mind."[41] He asserts that every single person must go through this struggle and only a few are genuinely able to overcome their ego. Hence, he argues, "Jesus declared that he came not to bring peace, but a sword of division among mankind," where people gradually learn to "follow the shepherd" into the light of truth despite humanity's cruelty.[42] To reach the spiritual plane and be aligned with Christ's truth, Ballou describes the process of regeneration as "whereby human beings are developed into spiritual,

[39] Ballou, *Christian Non-Resistance,* 33.
[40] Ballou, *Christian Non-Resistance,* 35.
[41] Ballou, *Practical Christianity* 43.
[42] Ballou, *Practical Christianity* 43.

moral and external life, so as to be conscious of their true spiritual existence, and to exercise its appropriate loves."[43] In other words, spiritual regeneration involves radical transcendental love for not only God (but God, nonetheless, first and foremost), but for all of God's creations — including oneself and evil-doers but especially for the universality of humankind. Ballou defines the "infallible evidence of spiritual regeneration" as "selfishness mortified willingly by the cross of self-denial; true love of God, of brother man, of divine principles, and of the universal good."[44] The "ungenerate man," however, as Ballou describes him, is "governed by essentially carnal, animal, selfish loves; and his intellectual faculties are chiefly exercised in searching out and employing the means of self-gratification."[45] Rather than understanding that the individual is inseparable from society and that everyone's lives are interconnected, the uncultivated choose to reside on a low intellectual level out of laziness and selfishness — wholly disregarding Christian ethics so to fulfill carnal impulses. Ballou goes on to say that:

> Universal human nature is generated and developed first on the low plane of animal intellectuality, innocent indeed at birth, but naturally selfish, and therefore universally manifesting various degrees of folly and sin; that in the order of progress the spiritual man is developed after the animal man; that the process of this second development is spiritual regeneration; and that this spiritual regeneration is necessary for mankind.[46]

Ballou delineates between "regenerate and ungenerate men" not to chastise the latter group, but to assert to readers that such people are not inherently bad people. Uncultivated people are just people stuck in the "lowest plane" of intelligence — which involves feelings of hatred, greed, lust, etc. — and require extra help in inspiring their latent spiritual regeneration: this could range from hearing

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[43] Ballou, *Practical Christianity,* 41.
[44] Ballou, *Practical Christianity* 43.
[45] Ballou, *Practical Christianity*, 41.
[46] Ballou, *Practical Christianity*, 42.

a moving sermon to witnessing extreme acts of cruelty. But what is necessary of Christians, Ballou ultimately argues, is to have patience and mercy for the uncultivated, as they do not know better and are unconsciously waiting for a poignant event to elevate their intellect to the next plane.

II.

In 1830, Garrison started *The Liberator* the same year after breaking membership with the American Colonization Society. This group seemly advocated for black autonomy through their advertised trips to West Africa for free black Americans, but their true intentions were about minimizing the amount of free black Americans in America to not only propagate Southern slavery, but also reduce racial resentment between free black Americans and white Americans.[47] Three years later, after realizing he needed more than a printing press to bring about a social revolution, Garrison helped organize the American Anti-Slavery Society. His speech, "Declaration of the National Anti-Slavery Convention," was a particularly divisive one for the American Anti-Slavery Society. His rhetoric on the power of moral suasion on public opinion over an armed struggle prompted members to either embrace nonviolent praxis or, as many members did, break off into competing abolitionist organizations that were tolerant of violent measures for black liberation.[48] While Garrison did acquire a number of "Garrisonians," nonviolent praxis was still not widely known or accepted in the abolitionist movement during the early 1800s. In 1838, Garrison, Ballou, and a number of other notable abolitionists founded the New England Non-Resistance Society. From there, the New England Non-Resistance Society, *The Liberator*, and

[47] Brock, Peter. "Pacifism in the United States: From the Colonial Era to the First World War," August 24, 2013. https://archive.org/details/pacifismminunited00broc.
[48] Brock, Peter. "Pacifism in the United States: From the Colonial Era to the First World War," August 24, 2013. https://archive.org/details/pacifismminunited00broc.
Examples include the American Foreign and Anti-Slavery Society.

Ballou's commune able to propagate nonviolent theory of praxis throughout the mid-1800s – until the outbreak of the Civil War overcame their demands.

In his speeches, "Declaration of the National Anti-Slavery Convention" and "Sentiments Adopted by the Peace Convention," Garrison also attempted to redefine the term "strength" by arguing that the nature of violence is already proof of its inherent failure to be a truly powerful and persuasive force. Whereas love or "the spirit of repentance" does not require coercion or immense exertion to be a persuasive force, violence requires incessant and excessive pressure on people for complete submission. In "Declaration of the National Anti-Slavery Convention," Garrison explains that while the American patriots' "principles led them to wage war against the [monarchy], and to spill human blood like water, in order to be free," the "Garrisonian" method:

> forbid the doing of evil that good may come, and lead us to reject, and to entreat the oppressed to reject, the use of all carnal weapons for deliverance from bondage - relying solely upon those which are spiritual, and mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.[49]

Garrison called on white Christians to resist committing retaliation against slave owners, while also urging black enslaved Americans to resist inciting slave rebellions too. The legal recourse following the then-recent Nat Turner Slave Rebellion (1831) convinced Garrison that even the most righteous and violent revolutionary actions will still lead to evil consequences.[50] He goes on to explain that the Garrisonian method of resistance is "the opposition of moral purity to moral corruption . . . the overthrow of prejudice by the power of love — and the abolition of slavery by

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[49] Garrison, "William Lloyd Garrison and the Fight against Slavery: Selections from The Liberator."

[50] "Spreading terror throughout the white South, his action set off a new wave of oppressive legislation prohibiting the education, movement, and assembly of slaves and stiffened proslavery, anti-abolitionist convictions that persisted in that region until the American Civil War (1861–65)."
Source: Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Nat Turner." Encyclopedia Britannica, November 7, 2020. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nat-Turner.

the spirit of repentance."[51] He argues that the inherent cruelty of slavery should give slave owners and its appeasers plenty to privately repent about. Therefore, Garrison advocates for Christians to make repeated and pointed rebukes of the institution of slavery, as sentimentality, a key aspect of repentance, is ultimately a more persuasive and motivating force than violence.

In "Sentiments Adopted by the Peace Convention," the solution to ending the cycle of retaliation is clear: "Hence, we shall employ lecturers, circulate tracts and publications, form societies, and petition our State and national governments . . . It will be our leading object to devise ways and means for effecting a radical change in the views, feelings, and practices of society."[52] He concludes this point by stating:

> We are bound by the laws of a kingdom which is not of this world; the subjects of which are forbidden to fight; in which mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other . . . the officers of which are peace, its exactors righteousness, its walls salvation, and its gates praise; and which is destined to break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms."[53]

Instead of physically fighting back, Garrison calls for Christians to rebuke the institution of slavery consistently, vehemently, and publicly through nonviolent means. He, in the last few sentences of this passage, argues that the power of repentance is a more effective and transformative force against the violent state. He thereby suggests in his nonviolent theory of praxis that an overwhelming swell of support for abolitionism would force the status quo to delegitimize and absorb themselves into the *new* status quo — one that is organic, egalitarian, and divine. As per Galatians 6:8," for he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth

[51] Garrison, "William Lloyd Garrison and the Fight against Slavery: Selections from The Liberator."
[52] Garrison, "William Lloyd Garrison and the Fight against Slavery: Selections from The Liberator."
[53] Garrison, "William Lloyd Garrison and the Fight against Slavery: Selections from The Liberator."

to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." In other words, the Christian principle of "like begetting like" asserts that a violent revolution would lead to violent retaliation, whereas a peaceful revolution would lead to peaceful cohabitation. Therefore, though he is ultimately urging enslaved people to wait in slavery while white Christians galvanize enough public support to successfully challenge southern slave owners, he argues that this is a much preferable option to violent liberation and the prospects of even more violent retaliation.

Furthermore, in "Sentiments Adopted by the Peace Convention," Garrison asserts that since the United States government is inherently "unequal and tyrannical," their own cruelty will accelerate the latent spiritual regeneration of their citizens. "It cannot be affirmed that the powers at be . . . are actuated by the spirit or guided by the example of Christ . . . therefore, they cannot be agreeable to the will of God; and therefore, their overthrow, by a spiritual regeneration of their subjects, is inevitable.[54] Garrison also asserts "that there is great security in being gentle . . . long-suffering, and abundant in mercy; that it is only the meek who shall inherit the earth, for the violent who resort to the sword are destined to perish with the sword."[55] The subtext of this quote suggests that people or institutions who do not rise above the cycle of violence are doomed to be destroyed by retaliation, whereas oppressed people and non-evildoers are liberated in the ashes of their downfall. However, it is a long journey before humanity inevitably meets the self-imposed "judgement day," as per the tradition of early Christians:

> So they treated the messiah, whose example we are humbly striving to imitate. If we suffer with him, we know that we shall reign with him. We shall not be afraid of their terror, neither be troubled. Our confidence is in the Lord Almighty, not in man. Having withdrawn

[54] Garrison, "William Lloyd Garrison and the Fight against Slavery: Selections from The Liberator."
[55] Garrison, "William Lloyd Garrison and the Fight against Slavery: Selections from The Liberator."

> from human protection, what can sustain us but that faith which overcomes the world? . . . rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings.[56]

Garrison invokes the suffering of Christ at the arms of the state to argue that retaliation should be expected for Christian non-resisters, as they are directly countering the status quo. Ultimately, he argues that Christians should embrace the fact that they may be persecuted for their commitment to truth and justice for the oppressed— just like Christ and the early Christians. Additionally, Christ "came not to destroy, but to save, even the worst of enemies. He has left us an example, that we should follow his steps. God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."[57] Speaking on the last sentence, Garrison argues that Christ could have easily enacted a violent revenge against the state and everyone who betrayed his trust — though he obviously did not. Christ, per Garrison, understood humans, before his crucifixion, as being unable to ascend past their animal mind and, thus, failing to undergo the necessary spiritual regeneration to actualize the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. God allowing Christ to die at the hands of humans can be seen as his ultimate expression of mercy and compassion for humanity. This counters the popular image of God being a "vengeful" and "jealous" God, showing that if God is actually merciful and compassionate in nature, then humanity should also strive to meet these divine standards. Just as the cruel manner of Christ's execution germinated the latent spirituality of the "witnesses" to his murder, witnesses to the cruelty faced by enslaved people, Garrison ultimately argues, will garner more mass support for abolition than an armed struggle could ever achieve.

In summary, what makes Ballou and Garrison's arguments particularly Christian anarchist is that their nonviolent theory of praxis is meant to create dual power so to undermine the legitimacy of the government. They hoped to create dual power through moral suasion or educating

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[56] Garrison, "William Lloyd Garrison and the Fight against Slavery: Selections from The Liberator."
[57] Garrison, "William Lloyd Garrison and the Fight against Slavery: Selections from The Liberator."

the masses on the inherent cruelty of slavery and how this makes the United States government an evil institution. Instead of calling for liberal reforms, Ballou and Garrison were calling for the immediate abolishment of slavery and the gradual shift towards a decentralized and autonomous, Christian anarchist-socialist community. Ballou and Garrison ultimately believed that people can be persuaded to think more rationally and learn to love other human beings instead of fearing them – which is the most crucial step for a peaceful revolution.

III.

King's "Loving Your Enemies" was written a year before "Palm Sunday Sermon on Mohandas K. Gandhi" and "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," with King editing the former in 1962 during his two-week jail sentence for holding a prayer vigil in Albany.[58] Although King typically "borrowed" passages from other texts and had people assist his writings and ghostwrite his speeches, "Loving Your Enemies" and "Palm Sunday Sermon" is where King's voice is especially apparent. A common motif throughout King's speeches is the statement, "It is no longer a choice between violence and non-violence in this world, it is non-violence or non-existence."[59] This term seemingly stems from King's "Palm Sunday Sermon,"[60] where it appears in the final chapter of his 1967 book, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?,* as "We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent coannihilation,"[61] with the original quote being stated again in King's last sermon, "I've Been to the Mountaintop," a day before his assassination on April 4th, 1968. The notion of "nonviolence or perish" was especially more poignant in King's texts than Ballou and Garrison's, as 19th-century era America was not under grips of the Cold War nor had they discovered the power of nuclear fission yet. Therefore, the stakes were incredibly

[58] King, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," *The Radical King,* 59.
[59] King, "I Have Seen the Mountaintop," *The Radical King,* 267.
[60] King, "Palm Sunday Sermon on Mohandas K. Gandhi," *The Radical King* 38.
[61] King, "The World House," *The Radical King,* 96.

high in King's time than in the 19th-century – even considering slavery and the Civil War – as there was a reasonable possibility that any escalation of violence by the world's superpowers could lead to humanity's total extinction.

As detailed in "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," King in the 1950s and early 1960s seriously believed in the power of nonviolent praxis to peacefully achieve black liberation by rebuilding relationships with perceived enemies. This essay comes three years after the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a protest campaign against Montgomery, Alabama's Jim Crow laws regarding the racial segregation of the public transit system. The lead figures of the boycott movement were King, Rosa Parks, E.D. Nixon, Fred Gray, and along with four black Baptist churches being firebombed by white racists, King's home was also targeted. Around 300 black Americans appeared at King's doorsteps in rage against the movement's refusal to retaliate against white racists assaulting boycotters, with King stating:

> If you have weapons, take them home; if you do not have them, please do not seek to get them. We cannot solve this problem through retaliatory violence. We must meet violence with nonviolence. Remember the words of Jesus: "He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword". We must love our white brothers, no matter what they do to us. We must make them know that we love them. Jesus still cries out in words that echo across the centuries: "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; pray for them that despitefully use you". This is what we must live by. We must meet hate with love. Remember, if I am stopped, this movement will not stop, because God is with the movement. Go home with this glowing faith and this radiant assurance.[62]

[62] Darby, Jean. "Martin Luther King, Jr." 1990. https://archive.org/details/martinlutherking00darb/page/41/mode/2up.

Despite the brutalization King and other boycotters faced, King remained committed to nonviolent praxis and Jesus' teachings of "loving your enemies" for the end-goal of black liberation. Although the notion of seeking reconciliation with enemies decreased in frequency in his later texts, King was nonetheless consistent in his belief that the path towards black liberation was through nonviolent means that left space for mending relationships with evil doers.

In his early texts, King, like Ballou and Garrison, attempts to redefine the term "strength" by arguing that nonviolent praxis is not cowardice but, instead, requires a sophisticated level of mental and spiritual fortitude that violence could never achieve. In "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," King discusses the five principles of nonviolent resistance that the people of the Montgomery boycott movement adopted, with the first requiring participants to be "spiritually and intellectually strong."[63] Like Ballou, King writes that "it must be emphasized that nonviolent resistance is not a method for cowards," as "while the nonviolent resister is passive in the sense that he is not physically aggressive toward his opponent," he is "constantly seeking to persuade his opponent that he is wrong."[64] King, like Ballou and Garrison, defines nonviolent praxis as "passive physically" but "strongly active spiritually."[65] The fifth and most relevant principle King cites is that nonviolence avoids "not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit," as the "center of nonviolence stands the principle of love."[66] Since the "struggle for human dignity" tends to leave the oppressed "bitter and indulging in hate campaigns," the best way to ascend hatred and violence, per King, is "by projecting the ethic of love to the center of our lives."[67] He is quick to clarify that he is not suggesting that black Americans should "love their oppressors

[63] King, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," *The Radical King,* 49.
[64] King, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," *The Radical King,* 49.
[65] King, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," *The Radical King,* 49.
[66]King, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," *The Radical King,* 51.
[67] King, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," *The Radical King,* 51.

in an affectionate sense," but rather is advocating for the transcendental love for humanity that Ballou and Garrison also referred to in their texts.[68] Here, King refers to this kind of love as "agape," a Greco-Christian term meaning an

> understanding, redeeming goodwill for all men. It is an overflowing love which is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless, and creative. It is not set in motion by any quality or function of its object. It is the love of God operating in the human heart.[69]

King asserts that the praxis of centering Christ's love in nonviolent resistance can transcend the coercive "power" of violence. The strength of the resister does not reside in irrational hatred — the lowest and weakest realm of human intelligence — but in their love and commitment to seeing through their community's liberation.

King also describes the self-destructive elements of retaliatory violence in Jim Crow era south and how overcoming segregation requires broader spiritual regeneration among the masses. In "Loving Your Enemies," King goes over the various reasons why his congregates should "love their enemies." Similar to Ballou and Garrison's arguments, King explains that "hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that" and that the "chain reaction of evil — hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars — must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation."[70] He goes on to say that "we never get rid of an enemy by meeting hate with hate; we get rid of an enemy by getting rid of enmity" or hostility, and that "by its very nature, hate destroys and tears down; by its very nature, love creates and builds up. Love transforms with redemptive power."[71] Thus, King calls upon his black congregates to take up the "difficult task" of loving segregationists, citing Jesus: "Love your enemies… that ye may be children of your

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[68] King, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," *The Radical King,* 51.
[69] King, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," *The Radical King,* 51.
[70] King, "Loving Your Enemies," *The Radical King,* 59.
[71] King, "Loving Your Enemies," *The Radical King* 60.

Father which in heaven."[72] This requires a spiritual regeneration beyond what Ballou and Garrison could have comprehended, as after decades of state violence and white terrorism, King asking oppressed black southern Americans to "develop the capacity to love their enemies" so that "the darkness of racial injustice [can] be dispelled . . . by light of forgiving love" is needless to say, a hard sell.[73] However, he asserts to his audience that embracing the "cult of mutual revenge" has not brought southern black Americans closer to liberation, therefore it is worth trying another method. Such method requires his congregates to "abhor" segregation but "love the segregationist," or to put their collective love for their community above their individual desires for retaliation. Through nonviolent praxis, King advocates for black Americans to extend the "olive branch" first to racist white Americans, in the mild hope that it may appeal to their good conscience. Realistically though, King knew that racist white Americans would have an extreme overreaction to the peaceful protests of black southern Americans. The dramatization of such oppression, not only in print but televised for the whole world to see, offers the plight of southern black Americans for new witnesses and potential allies to experience.

Lastly, King argues that dramatizing the brutality black southerners faced by the state through nonviolent means creates mass witnesses to grave injustices. Like Ballou and Garrison before him, King ultimately argues that dramatizing injustice resurrects their witnesses' latent Christian duty for liberating oppressed people and opposing coercive governments. Specifically, King draws on Ballou's argument for having patience and mercy for uncultivated people — who just need a "spark of inspiration" to elevate their intellect — and on Garrison's argument for moral suasion to gradually gain the masses' support for liberating oppressed people. Quoting Gandhi in "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," King writes that "things of fundamental importance to people are

[72] King, "Loving Your Enemies," *The Radical King* 61.
[73] King, "Loving Your Enemies," *The Radical King* 62.

not secured by reason alone, but have to be purchased with their suffering," as suffering — or the feelings of sentimentality by witnessing suffering — is "infinitely more powerful" in "converting the opponent and opening his ears which are otherwise shut to the voice of reason."[74] Additionally, in "Loving Your Enemies," King describes love as a creative force and "the most potent instrument available in mankind's quest for peace and security."[75] He goes on to argue that "the empire of Jesus, built on . . . the foundations of love, is still growing" and though starting with a "small group of dedicated men," where at least during King's time, "the vast earthly kingdom of Christ numbers more than 900,000,000 and covers every land and tribe."[76] Dramatizing extreme acts of suffering, King ultimately concludes, is an unfortunate requirement for nonviolence praxis to pragmatically work. In order to acquire a mass of allies in support of liberating oppressed people, this requires witnesses of suffering to fully experience and digest their sentimentality. Since the process of spiritual regeneration for a few people may only be triggered by extreme acts of suffering, King often reminded his congregates in his sermons that nonviolent praxis requires a participant to move past the fear of death so to embrace the possibility of revolutionary resurrection. This can be seen in "Palm Sunday Sermon," with King ending the sermon by stating that the path of nonviolence may as well be considered the path of martyrdom: "And God grant that we shall choose the high way, even if it will mean assassination, even if it will mean crucifixion, for by going this way we will discover that death would be only the beginning of our influence."[77] Whereas violent retaliation has no potential for revolutionary resurrection, King saw nonviolent praxis and the eventual suffering of martyrs as the only path for southern black people to sway public opinion to their side rather than the side of the white supremacist state.

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[74] King, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," *The Radical King,* 50.
[75] King, "Loving Your Enemies," *The Radical King,* 63.
[76] King, "Loving Your Enemies," *The Radical King,* 63.
[77] King, "Palm Sunday Sermon on Mohandas K. Gandhi," *The Radical King* 38.

King, like Ballou and Garrison before him, ultimately argued for radical and progressive nonviolent praxis through the bodily sacrifice of participants. While they do not urge their audience to actively seek out opportunities to sacrifice their wellbeing for "the cause," King, Ballou, and Garrison argues that commitment to truth and justice – as seen in Christ's example – will undoubtedly attract opponents who may resort to violence or even murder to stifle their momentum. Therefore, they ask their audience to first confront their fear of death and understand the consequences of their activism so to be more successful participants in the impending social revolution. With acceptance of death comes a level of freedom and creativity that opens nonviolent participants to imagine novel methods of praxis to achieve their goals, while also encouraging them to be mentally active and spontaneous so to better adapt to new circumstances. The entire end goal of Christian anarchism is to actualize the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth through a "lived out" revolution – or gradual transformations in society's morals, leading to the collective and autonomous decision to decentralize the government in favor for self-sufficient, Christian anarchist-socialist communities. King was already a noted democratic socialist, though never publicly admitting his political leanings because of the anti-communist rhetoric of the time. He recognized, however, that decentralized power, spread among the citizens of a nation, is the next logical step in American politics to reduce state coercion and empower the masses. In conclusion, King's nonviolent theory of praxis is the embodiment of radical self-discipline and love for humanity and embraces the resurrective power of suffering and death in instigating social revolutions – which all, inevitably, stems from 19th-century Christian anarchist thought.

In context of contemporary times, anarchism and Christianity still tend to have widely different connotations in the mind of the public. Although the 19th-century Christian anarchist thought of Ballou and Garrison had an immeasurable effect on global and domestic protest

movements and politics, from the Tolstoyans to Gandhi's Salt March to King's rhetoric on nonviolent praxis during the Civil Rights era, their texts and activism are hardly talked about in the 21st-century. The absence of recent scholarship on the ideology and praxis of Ballou and Garrison does an immense disservice to contemporary protesters. Since the 2020 George Floyd Rebellion, "anarchism" has not only entered public consciousness again – but has been obscured in media coverage and political discourse by allegations of anarchists "burning down cities" so as to instigate a violent revolution. As I have previously argued, "anarchism" can essentially mean anything to anyone; since anarchist ideology and praxis has precedence in scripture and in the life and teachings of Christ, it would make no more sense to see anarchists as inherently violent than it to call Christians violent revolutionaries. I hope scholars will consider "re-reviving" the study of 19th-century American Christian anarchism and the works of Ballou and Garrison – as their works on nonviolent theory of praxis are even more important in public discourse now than ever before in history.

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