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# The Relation of the Christian To Civil Government and War

Glenn E. Green

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GLENN E. GREEN

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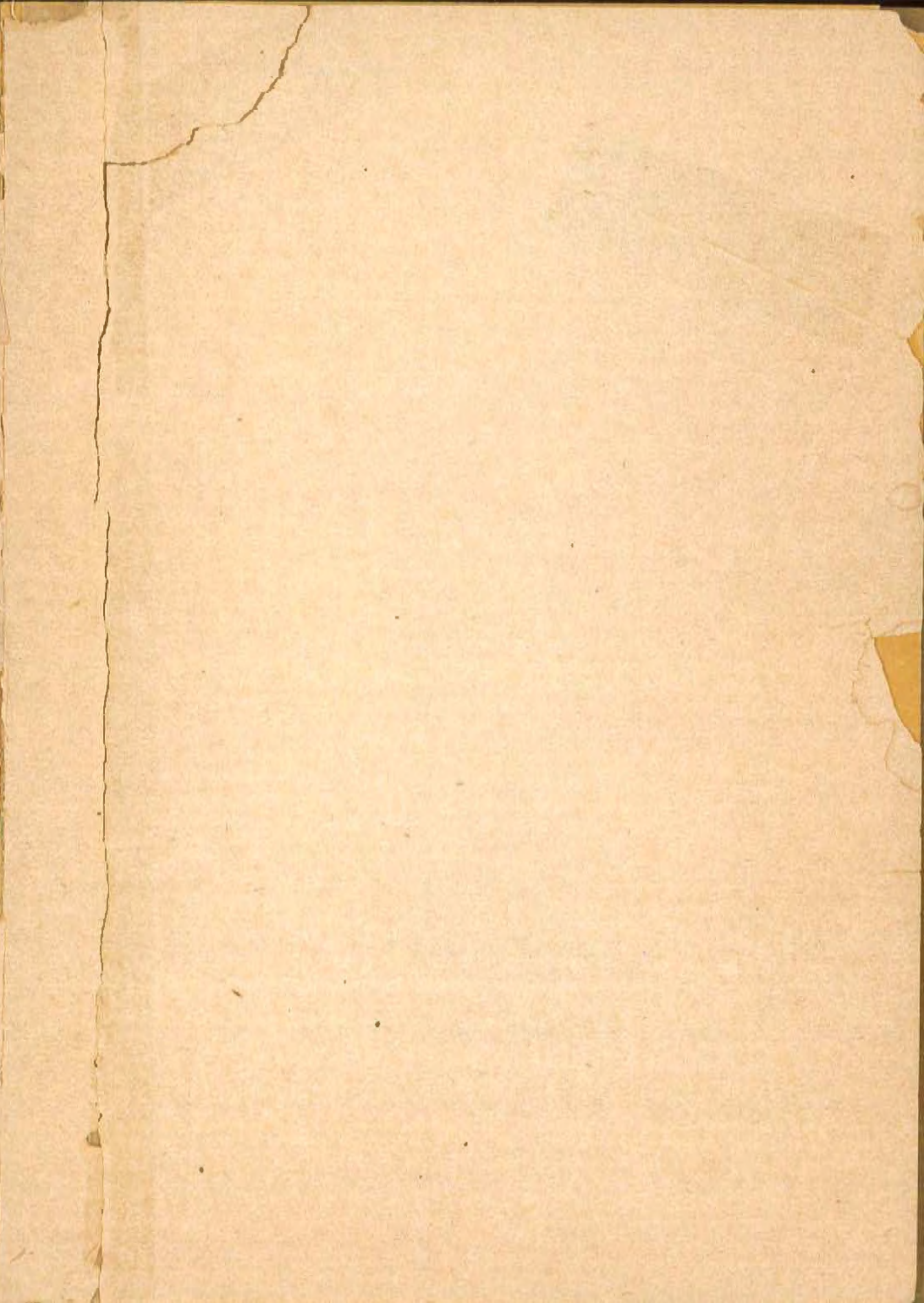
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# The Relation of the Christian To Civil Government and War

BY GLENN E. GREEN  
Altus, Oklahoma

It has been truly said a subject clearly defined is half argued. I lay it down as an axiom "That a Christian can only know what is right or wrong except, as GOD APPROVES or DISAPPROVES of a given thing." Now does God approve or disapprove of Civil Government? If it can be shown that God condemns it, then that is the end of the argument, but NO such proof exists, to the contrary in Rom. 13: 1-7, Paul confirms it. Therefore, I maintain that a Christian can do anything upon which God sets the Seal of Divine approval. If not, why not? X

But to further clarify the issue there are four general views held on this subject:

- ✓(a) That human government is inherently evil.
- ✓(b) That it is approved of God, and right in itself, but can only be administered by sinners.
- ✓(c) That it is right with the exception of the death power.  
"The non resistant theory"
- ✓(d) The one I affirm: That Civil government is ordained of God, and the Civil sword may be used, internally and externally for the protection of the righteous, and punishment of all evil characters who resort to force for wicked purposes.

It is manifest if I can sustain the last position mentioned, the others are overthrown, so we proceed with the argument, and will note how it refutes the other positions as it develops.

I. The Apostles of Christ established christianity among the peoples, subject to the Roman and Jewish Governments, both of which vigorously enforced capital punishment, and sustained themselves by force of arms. Therefore, under circumstances how could the converts to Christ know that it was wrong for them to participate in government, bear arms as soldiers, unless they were plainly so COMMANDED then? If to be a "Christian now" I must be a "non resistant now," to be a "Christian then" meant being a "non resistant then". Where is such a command? There is none. those who so argue X

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now, offer their inferences and deductions, but cannot bring one plain text that states their contention. Rome was a conquering power that allowed no trifling with her authority. For the Apostles to have taught against capital punishment, and soldiers not to be soldiers, would have been plain sedition. In Acts 24:5 it was charged that Paul was a "mover of sedition," but in Verse 13 Paul denies it.

### What Jesus Taught on This Subject Before Pentecost

Luke 20:22-25

"Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar or not?" There can be no mistake here that the government question is up. What did Jesus say? "Show me a penny, whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said Caesar's." "And he said unto them, render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's and unto God the things which be God's." These are the words of Christ squarely upon the issue involved, and he says; "that some things belong to Caesar," as certainly as "some things belong to God." Now what "things be Caesar's and what things be God's?" Let the scriptures answer. Caesar stands for the Civil government, and Rom. 13: 1-7 tells us plainly, that the civil ruler is "Ordained of God—" That whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation," for Rulers are not a terror to good works but to evil!"—The regulation therefore of all secular affairs, and the protection of the righteous against the wicked, is the function of government. What belongs to God? Supreme authority in religion (I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 1:1). God alone has the right to dictate man's religion, moral allegiance and worship, not Caesar. So taught all the Apostles all the time, and so ought we. When Caesar stayed in his place, the Apostles obeyed him; when he told them they could not teach Christ, they disobeyed Caesar, and obeyed Christ, not because government in its proper sphere is wrong; but because it was trespassing upon the divine. I do not argue that Christians should obey Caesar, if Caesar is against God. But I do teach what Jesus taught, "that some things be Caesar's," and teach what Paul plainly taught WAS Caesar's. Rom. 13:4: "the sword in the hands of the Civil Ruler, to execute punishment on him that doeth evil."

### PEACE MAKERS

Matt. 5:9: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God." This is moral teaching showing what is right and ideal. I believe and try to practice every word of it. But what about the thieves, hijackers, kidnappers and murderers? Are they Blessed too? No! Christ through Paul (Rom. 13:4) condemns them under the civil sword.—"for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he

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is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." This is the penalty for NOT keeping the peace. ✓

One writer quotes this, and then says: "The sermon on the mount is an exposition of his mind on the subject of war." He quotes "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you—" and then paints the picture of one with gun in hand who had taken the life of an enemy, and bombed his women and children, and asks: "Can this meet the approval of Christ?" Certainly not! for this is the picture of a wicked AGGRESSOR engaged in slaughter of the innocent. Let it be clearly understood for once and all, that a christian can never be the "aggressor" in any violence. He always chooses "right and reason." The true issue is, can the innocent christian resist force when assaulted by brute force. When the murderer sneaks upon his innocent victim, and assaults him with a deadly weapon, has the victim any choice? If the innocent victim resists, and in the fight ensuing, both are killed, this theory says, "the victim is a murderer, like the foul criminal who deliberately assaulted him." Believe it who can. This breaks down all distinction between right and wrong, good and evil. If the guilty are not guilty, then the innocent are not innocent. What is true between the individual, and wicked brutality, is true between nations. X

Paul seems not to be blessed with such a horrible imagination; for he draws a picture of the civil ruler with "sword in hand," and says he is the "minister of God," the revenger to execute wrath upon the evil doer." It was Jesus who said "Render to Caesar that which be Caesar's, as well as to God that which be God's."

### JOHN 18:36

"My Kingdom is not of this world, if my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my Kingdom not from hence."

In this as in all else, Jesus ordered his acts to fit his mission to earth: to save man from sin and set up a purely spiritual Kingdom. Certainly no force can be employed in a moral realm. Hence Jesus submitted to death rather than fight, or allow his servants to fight for his spiritual Kingdom. But as he had already commanded them to "render to Caesar the things which be Caesar's." He informed Pontius Pilate, that "if His Kingdom were of this world, (a political government) his servants would fight." It only remains to settle whether Christ recognizes the right of civil government to exist, and then we have his word for it. That they may fight. Rom. 13:1-7 settles this, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God." X



MATT. 26:52

✓ "Put up again thy sword into its place; for all they that take sword shall perish by the sword." Jesus was arrested by the Jewish government, and put to death by the Roman. He was never charged with being a thief or murderer, but because he claimed to be the son of God. The issue was not a question of punishing a criminal, but religious. Peter was no officer, constable or police. He was taking up the sword against the constituted authorities, and Jesus said put it up, "all they that take the sword (against government) shall perish by the sword." What sword? Sword of the spirit? No! Paul tells us, Rom. 13:4, "Sword of the Civil Ruler." As certain as Peter's sword was RULED OUT, the civil sword is RULED IN,

I do not propose to use the carnal sword to perpetuate Christianity. If this government commanded us not to set the Lord's Supper, made the issue religious, we should set it, and take the consequences, as did the Apostles; to do otherwise would be to put the CHURCH AS SUCH into carnal warfare.

X But as a citizen of the Divinely recognized government, I can help maintain that political institution, which protects my physical life while I practice Christianity. A person must be blind indeed, who cannot see the difference between wielding the sword to perpetuate christianity, and self DEFENSE of physical life.

"TURN THE OTHER CHEEK"

Matt. 5:39: "But I say unto you that we resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."

This is also moral teaching enforced by physical examples, like; "if the eye offend thee pluck it out," "Let the dead bury the dead" and others. Not a rule thumb to be applied literally. If so then the next verses are literal also. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

I have yet to see the "non resistant" who would literally apply this passage to himself; but according to this reasoning, one christian could approach another, and take away all his property, strip him of his clothing by merely asking for it; and then of course, he could immediately ask it back again, for he would have the same authority to ask, and the possessor would be under the same obligation to give, as the original owner! If not, why not?

If it be replied, "No christians would do such a silly thing;" then I ask, "why make Christ teach it?" Incidentally, the sinner would have the advantage over the Christian, as he could ask him naked, keep what he got, and then compel the poor fellow to go with him two miles in January!

The truth of the matter is, this passage has no bearing whatever on the question of a christian's right to defend himself against a

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murderer, or the government's right to put a criminal to death. To smite on the right cheek, and leave the smitten one able to "turn the other," is certainly less than mortal assault: for then the victim wouldn't be able to turn the other also! Men can be assaulted by words, and deeds of hate, and evil speakings, slanders and lies, the Christian is not to reply in kind. These passages teach, and forcibly emphasize the principles of non retaliation in kind, and generous service and living, the ordinary connections of life. ✓

### MORAL AND PENAL LAW

Without attempting to note every passage from the moral teaching of the New Testament, quote as being against violence of any kind or degrees, let me say at this juncture, that it is not only freely admitted, but positively affirmed that the moral teaching of Christ and the Apostles excludes recourse to all violence, because Christ held up love right and reason only, as the positive standard of life and conduct. "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation" not a sword or cannon. You can not force men to do right in any degree, moral persuasion only is the christian ideal. There is absolutely no argument here. THIS is not the issue. The issue is, with reference to the man, who will NOT OBEY the right, who willfully violates his moral laws, and resorts to brutal violence against those who are doing right! I say, what does he teach shall be done, to and with, these violent characters? Anything? "Rightly divide the word of truth." Doesn't the command to Timothy, apply here as well as to faith and baptism?

This is an important principle I now point out: That all law is of three kinds; positive, moral and penal. Positive law, is that which rests solely upon the arbitrary authority of God, moral law, that which is derived from the nature of things, and sets out what is right between man and man. Penal law, that which defines the punishment due the character violating the others. Failure to make these distinctions can result in nothing but confusion. A thing can be morally right, and yet not permissible under the positive law. For instance, morally right to burn candles and incense at home; but wrong to burn them as an act of worship in the church. Why? because worship comes under the head of positive, not moral law. Likewise a thing may be condemned under the moral law, but a similar act authorized under the penal law, for instance: Moses says in the Ten Commandments, "Thou shalt not kill," and then later appoints the death penalty for several infractions of the moral code. Is there any contradiction here? None if you properly "divide the word," plenty if you don't. You make him violate his own law. With respect to the moral and penal law this principle is always true; the penal is never applied until the moral is broken. \*

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When a man violates the moral law, he FORFEITS all rights under it, and then becomes subject to the penal law until he reforms. To quote the moral law, and apply it to the man under penal condemnation, is to confuse and destroy both. Yet nine tenth of all the arguments made against the position I am maintaining consists in this very thing: Supposing that the moral law of Christ is to be applied to the law violator of the vilest hue. Not so Paul. I Tim. 1-9, "knowing this that the Law (What Law? penal of course) is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless, and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of mothers, for manslayers, etc. Civil government has to deal with these characters in its punitive capacity with respect to actual crime and in meting out punishment to them, instead of violating the moral teachings of Christ, is doing exactly what Christ wants done. Under his penal teaching, Christ warns all sinners, he will make their punishment eternal after death if they don't repent.

There is a sentimentalism which says no murderer should be executed. Put them into prison for life! Yes, but how are you to get them in prison? Just advertise you have a nice comfortable jail, and please Mister criminal come in and be locked up. It will take force to put them in jail, and force to keep them there. Now where do you get your force to do this? You locate it, and I will show it carries the death penalty too. Rom. 13:4. "The civil sword in the hands of government," and the sword is a death instrument. Because it is admitted force is foreign to the moral ideal teaching of Christ, which commands love, right and reason as the standard of conduct, some have jumped to the conclusion, force is not permitted in any relationship of life. Because you can't spank a man to make him obey the gospel, does it follow I can't spank my child to make him behave? Wonderful logic, this! Because I am to cultivate love, goodness, mercy, kindness, longsuffering, forbearance as a christian, in all my dealings with men in the ordinary relationships of life, does it follow I can not protect myself against the criminal population of this world? It does not. We need, and advocate no force against any, except those who first employ it against others, and then only to the extent necessary for protection.

I am asked how can I shoot at a man, and love him at the same time? I reply: How can you spank your child and love him at the same time? The difference is in degree and not in principle. I spanked mine, so they would be FIT to love, and to be able to live with them in peace. I would hate the idea of having to shoot a man trying to murder me, but I ought to do it nevertheless to keep the peace, and protect other innocent people from a human gone beast. Now, if I missed him and he gave up, I would treat him as a friend.

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The Christian fights from PRINCIPLE in all things, NOT from personal hatred. How do you fight religious error brother? Those who talk this way, are generally long on personal hatred themselves, and short on principle, or else they could see how it can and is done.

"If thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink." Then it is asked, "how can the soldier do this when he is shooting at his enemy?" Now my good brother, let us see YOU do it under the same circumstances. You apply this to the soldier in battle, now apply it to yourself. Suppose your enemy is the kind who starts shooting at you. How will you fare carrying food and drink to him, and he drilling holes in you at every step? Most evidently this text doesn't apply to the mortal enemy, but the kind you have, short of physical assault, in the social contacts of life. The other kind will have to be stopped by force, before you can FEED AND WATER them. Another case of moral and penal law.

### JOHN 2:13-16

Jesus did resort to force on one occasion when he expelled the traders from the temple. "And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;" Did Jesus act consistently with his own teachings? Certainly. Deut. 13:1-9, shows that every citizen was obligated to help enforce the law of Moses. This traffic was illegal, the regular officers did not stop it, and Jesus simply did what any courageous citizen could have legally attempted.

It alters not the case to say, "he didn't strike any of them," you do not know whether he did or not. It was force applied. When a robber holds a pistol on you, and takes your money, it is still robbery by force, even if he doesn't shoot you full of holes! If it was the "towering personality of Jesus," that "drove them all out, oxen and sheep" those animals must have been exceptionally intelligent, and this a "new type of table tipping!" This is not quoted to prove capital punishment, for a whip is not a death instrument, but it does prove that it is not contrary to the revealed character of Christ, to enforce LAW of the land against those who violate it. He did it himself in this instance by FORCE.

### WHAT THE APOSTLES TAUGHT AFTER PENTECOST

It is strange indeed that the "non resistant," will run to every place in the Bible where "rulers and subjects are not mentioned by name, to find our duty to the rulers, and ignore the passage where they are mentioned by name.

This is parallel to those who run to the faith texts to define Baptism, instead of the Baptism texts.

Rom. 13:1-7: Paul clearly teaches on the question of the Chris-

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tian's relation to civil government. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher Powers, for there is no power but of God. The Powers that be are ordained of God." *Governments are ordained but not necessarily blessed.*

Jesus tells us, Luke 20:25, "Render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's and unto God the things which be God's." These are the two supreme powers, I Pet. 2:13—"whether it be to the King as supreme" . . . The civil power which regulates all temporal things, and the Divine which regulates all spiritual things. These two comprehend all others, and are the "Higher Powers." Paul says: this arrangement is ORDAINED of God, Ver. 2: "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God," what happens to them? "They that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." There can be no mistake that the "power" of verse 2, is the Civil power, for verse 3 continues, "for rulers are not a terror to good works but to the evil, will not thou then be afraid of the power? The ruler in his official capacity—"do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same," for he (the Civil ruler) is the Minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil be afraid; for he beareth not the SWORD in vain, for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil," language cannot make a thing clearer or stronger. Can a thing have a stronger seal of Divine approval than to be declared to be "Ordained of God," can a sword bearing ruler in his official capacity, receive higher sanction from God, than for God to proclaim him the "Minister of God" a revenger to execute wrath upon the evil doer?" He emphatically cannot. But Paul doesn't stop here, he goes on to give additional reason why we should be subject "Not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake," he didn't say "be subject because you can't help yourself, but for conscience sake. Conscience has to do with right and wrong. Peter applies it: I Pet. 3:21, to Baptism "the answer of a good conscience toward God."

*God's power is first.*

*when one country becomes more evil God lets the lesser of the two evils take over the greater.*

Did God simply "suffer Baptism or command it." Ver. 6. "For this cause pay ye tribute also," for they (they who? The civil rulers) are God's ministers attending continually upon this very thing." When a "non resistant" says you are to pay your taxes simply out of fear, he contradicts Paul, who says to do it because it is RIGHT, a matter of conscience also.

With this agrees I Peter 2:13-15. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: Whether it be to the King as supreme: Or unto Governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers and for the praise of them that do well." For so is the will of God that with well doing, ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

Of course, when Peter says, "submit to every ordinance of man,"

it is understood from Peter's own example, Acts 4:18, and the Lord's teaching, Luke 20:25, that it applies to the government, as long as it stays in its appointed sphere." The punishment of evil doers among its citizens, and protection of the righteous. Punishment of evil doers by the "King as supreme" and his under rulers involved, the death penalty, and military force THEN, and therefore confirms it NOW.

I Tim. 2:1-3 Paul commands Christians to "pray for, and give thanks for, kings, and all that are in authority that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives." Paul said this at the very time some rulers persecuted him for Christ's sake, why? How could he do so except upon the ground, that though the rulers sometimes got out of their legitimate sphere, and tried to dictate religion, does not nullify the fact, that government for the regulation of the mass of society is right, necessary and to be supported by Christians. Can I pray for something wrong? No! Can I work at what I pray for, or should I work and pray not, or pray and work not? It is one thing to fight anything wrong in civil government and another to say the institution itself is wrong. It is either government or anarchy.

Having proved from the New Testament that civil government is "ordained of God," the sword bearer is the minister of God," we are to pay "Tribute for conscience sake," "Obey the King as supreme," Pray for the rulers, "Render to Caesar the things which belong to Caesar," and that the praise of the righteous and punishment of the wicked is his God appointed sphere. I ask how can it be WRONG for a christian to do that which God has said, over and over IS RIGHT?

### PAUL A CITIZEN OF TWO KINGDOMS

We now turn to a new line of argument the examples of inspired men dealing with Civil Government. Paul a citizen at the same time of Rome and Christ's Kingdom.

Col. 1:13 Paul said, "he had been translated from the power of darkness, into the kingdom of his dear son." Acts 22:27 Paul told the Roman captain he was a Roman citizen: "tell me art thou a Roman? and he said "Yea," Acts 23:17, Paul availed himself of Caesar's protection. Therefore, according to Paul's own testimony, not my inference, Paul was a citizen at one and the same time, of BOTH the kingdom of Christ and the Civil Government of Rome. If Paul can stand in BOTH relations, so can I. If not, why not?

He accepted the protection of armed forces, from the forty would be assassins. It is a mere quibble to say, "they killed nobody," when any one with an ounce of sense knows, they would have in an instant, and Paul knew they would if attacked. It was a resort to armed military force, pure and simple. Why not accept the truth?

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Perhaps one will say, "Paul was a citizen of Rome only, when Rome did not conflict with Christ." Correct. Then the use of armed force against ruthless men by the Government, is NOT against Christ, for Paul used it! Paul also confirms capital punishment in Acts 25:11, "for if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to DIE: but if there is none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them, I APPEAL unto Caesar."

Paul here clearly recognizes there are some things a man ought to die for. "I refuse not to DIE." On the other hand he affirms the right of self defence if NOT guilty. "No man may deliver me unto them." Who? The assassins. "I appeal unto Caesar." Can language be plainer or stronger? How reconcile this with Paul's teaching. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal"—I don't have to. Paul does it for me. He was a citizen of both the Spiritual, and Political kingdoms. When he said this last quoted, he was speaking as an apostle of the spiritual warfare. In Acts 25:11 he was speaking as a citizen of the civil government.

### CORNELIUS THE ROMAN CENTURION. ACTS 10:1

He is introduced as Cornelius, a Roman Soldier, an officer over a hundred men. If the apostles were "non resistants," and as many writers among us have lately declared, "A christian can under no circumstances engage in carnal war," here is the very place, above all others we might certainly expect a plain statement of so important a doctrine. His business and every day life was to wield the sword of death. How could he know, he ought to cease being a soldier in order to become a Christian, unless the Apostle plainly told him? And how could Peter keep from telling him when, according to verse six, Peter was to tell him what, "he ought to do?" Yet when Peter came he entered no such rebuke; but said: Acts 10:34: "Of a truth I perceive, God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." Peter applied this to Cornelius, BEFORE he preached the Gospel to him, and therefore, confirmed his moral character as a soldier.

Now, if it is true, that a soldier is condemned under the Gospel as a soldier, it is upon the ground that he is a murderer. Not a text in the Bible says soldiering is murder. All "non resistants" argue that all killing not accidental is murder. The soldier therefore who kills is a murderer, because he does it knowingly and deliberately. Yet every "non resistant" in the country knows some peace officers, and soldiers who are upright and honorable, who never killed except in line of official duty and they cannot make themselves feel that such men are murderers in character and fact, their argument to the con-

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rary notwithstanding! Neither do they fear the man who kills a robber, or attempted murderer in self defense. But we all do fear and abhor the ACTUAL murderer.

Why? Because the definition Moses gives of murder, manslaughter and etc. in the law, is the sense in which murder is used throughout the Bible. That definition is that murder consists in the taking of human life by stealth, from malicious intent base and wicked motives. According to the Bible a man must be a murderer in moral character, before he can be one in fact.

Now what was the character of Cornelius before his conversion? Acts 10:2: "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God always." Yet if a soldier is a murderer and he is if the "non resistant Theory" is correct yet God says THIS of him as a murderer, and declares his "Prayers and alms have come up for a memorial before me." Therefore, Cornelius was a "DEVOUT murderer," a murderer who feared God with all his house, a murderer who gave much alms to the people. A murderer who 'prayed to God always' and was heard and answered. A lot of professing Christians could be improved in character by becoming a murderer after this fashion?

But says some one, how do you know Peter didn't tell him afterward to quit the army? My reply is, you can't prove anything from the scriptures by what they do NOT say, but what they DO say. All preachers hold up Cornelius as the example of the moral man, who only needs to accept Christ to be saved under the Gospel, but if the "non resistant" position is true, then this is a base falsehood. His profession was to kill if duty demanded, and was therefore in reality a red handed murderer. Either the Bible is wrong or the theory is wrong, you cannot harmonize the two. The Bible is right, of course, and the theory wrong.

Incidentally let me remind you that when religious and devout persons were guilty of murder, Peter didn't hesitate to tell them of it. Acts 2:5 says there were "Dwelling in Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." Ver. 23 Peter said that these had by "wicked hands slain and crucified Jesus Christ." Why if Cornelius was a murderer didn't he tell HIM also? Besides, Peter wrote two Epistles after this, and said not one word condemning government, or soldiering; but to the contrary, I Peter 2:13, commands "Obedience to the King as Supreme," as already quoted. When Cornelius read this, if he ever did, would it teach him to resign from the army? Did Peter write one thing and preach another? The fact that government in crucifying Christ, an innocent man was WRONG, doesn't prove that it isn't RIGHT to punish the guilty.



THE PHILLIPIAN JAILER. ACTS 16:23

I am sometimes asked, to give one case where a christian was a sword bearer after he became a Christian in the New Testament. Well here it is, take it or leave it. Acts 16:23, Paul and Silas were delivered to the Jailer—"to keep them safely." Ver. 27 says "that when the keeper of the prison awoke, "he drew his sword and would have killed himself," so he was a SWORD bearer with the Death power as all will admit—an official of the government. Ver. 31. He was told what to do to be saved. Ver. 32. And they "Spake unto him the word of the Lord." Verses 33 and 34 show that he was Baptized the same hour of the night. Therefore, became a christian between 12 and 1 a. m. Now note, Ver. 35, "When it was DAY the magistrates sent the sergeants saying Let these men go," and Ver. 36 says, "And the KEEPER of the prison told this saying unto Paul" Therefore, he was still a SWORD bearer, official of the government, and keeper of the prison," AFTER he became a Christian." Paul also lists "Erastus the Chamberlain of the City" among the brethren who he commands to fellowship, Rom. 16:23. So we have both classes of government officials represented among the New Testament Christians. ~~The jailer as the sword bearer, and Erastus the administrative.~~ Paul wrote considerably after this, and never told any official of the government to resign. To suppose he did so privately, is to suppose he wrote one thing and preached another. Such a supposition impeaches the great Apostle's integrity.

GOVERNMENT RIGHT, BUT SINNERS ONLY MAY  
ADMINISTER IT

I next note the position which agrees with the foregoing to the extent, that Government, capital punishment and the defense of the same by armed force is ordained of God, and right but says, "only sinners are to administer it and bear arms. That the Christian is to pay his taxes, obey the laws, but cannot actively participate in it in any official or punitive capacity, that this work appointed to be done by SINNERS ONLY—That is non Christians..

Now I can prove anything if allowed to assume my premise, and this whole argument "Lock, Stock, and Barrel," is based on PURE assumption. Where do the scriptures say, "The sinner only is to administer civil government," in so many words, or in any words? They say no such thing. I demand the scripture, before I can countenance the argument. To the contrary I affirm there is not one passage from the old or New Testaments, which appoints a sinner because he IS a sinner, to perform any righteous service to God, except to repent or go to hell!

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The very idea is ridiculous, the sinner is a rebel against the Government of God. For God to appoint a sinner to do anything, in "righteous service" to him would be to recognize and treat with him in rebellion which means to negotiate with him in sin. God requires the sinner to lay down the arms of rebellion, before he recognizes him in any way. This theory makes sin necessary to righteousness. It is admitted that government is necessary and right. But God has appointed "only sinners to administer it." Therefore, sin is necessary to righteousness. Marvelous logic! Let EVIL be done that GOOD may come.

It sometimes is said, "Didn't God use Nebuchadnezzar a sinner to punish Israel?" Yes, but the scriptures do not say that he made him king, a ruler because he WAS a sinner, and that is what is needed to sustain the assertion that "God has appointed only sinners to rule." Neither can any man show that his fighting Israel was what made him a sinner. God commanded that; what God commands is always right. If not why not? He was a sinner on other grounds, not this. If it be asserted that God uses wicked Kings and Nations to punish wicked nations and their rulers, sometimes, yes. But does God always use ONLY the wicked? If so, how about Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David and others who were righteous? Therefore, this argument falls to the ground. That God some times uses wicked men, in their wickedness, to further his righteous purposes, I freely admit. But he does it by overruling their wicked actions, through the intervention of righteous elements, and not by ordaining their wicked actions.

Wicked men crucified Christ, put him in the tomb, but God overruled it to his glory by the resurrection and charged them with the crime. This theory says, being FIRST RATE SINNERS, they are now eligible for office by DIVINE appointment, in that "God ordained civil government." In other words, this is one place where God prefers a sinner to a Christian, therefore, places a PREMIUM on sin! Here is a thing which is admittedly right, but in this thing a man must be WRONG before he can do RIGHT! What contradiction!

### EXODUS 9:16

What has been said about Nebuchadnezzar is also true of Pharaoh, Cyrus, and all others. The Bible nowhere says he made any of them "Rulers because they were Sinners." Exodus 9:16 "In . . . deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power: and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." This God said of Pharaoh. God raised him up to show his POWER, not that he made him a ruler because he was a sinner. In Isaiah 44:28

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and 45:4, the prophet says this of Cyrus: . . . "He is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem thou shalt be built," and again—"I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me". As a ruler disposed to do what God wanted done at the time; to restore Israel and rebuild Jerusalem, God approved those official acts, though Cyrus was a sinner.

Romans 13:3 says that the "Rulers are not a terror to good works but to evil." This text does not say, "Sinner rulers." This is a pure assumption. Neither does it say Christian Rulers; this would be equally an assumption. It simply says RULERS; being a saint or a sinner does not make a man a ruler. Men become rulers only by political means, regardless of their spiritual standing.

God says that the sword bearer is his minister, "A revenger to execute wrath on him that doeth evil." I ask again, how can it be wrong for a Christian to be God's minister, and execute his wrath on the evil doer? This is stern business; God is also a stern God in all retribution. He is not only a God of love and mercy but also a "consuming fire." Are we to go "mushy", and try to get better than God? Because the idea of executing a bloody handed murderer is repellant to a Christian, or killing a ruthless invader, is no sign that it ought not to be done. The Bible nowhere says that God enjoyed the destruction of the Sodomites, Amelekites, etc., but he executed them nevertheless. Though he doesn't enjoy it, Ezek. 18:32 God says, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked."

The Bible teaches, and nature as well, that retribution is always ferrible; but necessary and a part of the Divine government. Parents do not enjoy spanking their children, but they do it nevertheless. To fail to perform an unwelcome duty is a sign of weakness, not of superior goodness.

The idea that the sinner only shall participate in civil government presents other palpable inconsistencies. Government consists of units, all interlocked. Government is more than law enforcement, and the army and navy. There is the executive, legislative, judicial and departmental, the postal department, interior, agriculture, educational, etc. Why single out the peace officer and soldier, who serve in one branch of government, and make them murderers, while the legislator, judge, postal employe, school teacher, and all others of the same system are held innocent? The different departments are all cogs in the same machine and the individuals who work under them, teeth in the cogs, and all the cogs mesh and revolve, to maintain the institution of civil government.

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Some who have scruples about bearing arms and doing the government's actual killing, think that to get in some branch of the non-combatant service solves their difficulty, and exempts them from the supposed guilt of the soldier, and while that is their privilege, yet I deny that in FACT and principle it actually does so; because the government has instituted all of these other agencies to put and keep combat forces in the field, and they are an indispensable part of the war effort; therefore, the man who participates in them is participating in the WAR. What he does goes into it. He supplies the fellow at the front with all the needs to keep him there, and without which he couldn't stay there, and then in effect says, "I am carrying you food, water, and ammunition, YOU PULL the trigger and GO to hell for your part, while I GO to heaven for mine!" No need to say he has to do this. He no more has to do the one than the other. He can refuse, and become a martyr at one point as well as another. If not, why not?

### TAKING PART IN GOVERNMENT BY PAYING TAXES

You can refuse to pay taxes as well as to enlist. If the government is engaged in wholesale murder, as some argue, then why pay somebody to do the murdering? If in private life I hire someone to assassinate another, am I not equally guilty? But if I pay my axe to the government to do it wholesale, it is a pious act! Remember the position I am arguing against is the one which says, "Government is RIGHT, and it is right for the sinner to administer it, but WRONG for the Christian to participate except to pay taxes and obey the laws."

I have shown, not only that this whole argument rests upon pure assumption, but it also is shot through with impossible contradictions. Truth is never so embarrassed.

Now it may be said, "Suppose this government should engage in a war of aggression." If such were the fact, then I could refuse to serve in any capacity and take the consequences. Yet, I could continue to pay taxes, and obey all laws that are right, because I hold the institution itself is right, and that I may participate in it and would need only to register my protest against the part that was wrong. However, I might be mistaken in my opinion as to what constitutes aggression.

I have heard it said, what about the christians in one country fighting against the christians in another, christian going out to shoot christian? This looks mighty bad and is. But no genuine christian has ever done this as pictured, for no christian ever starts a war. But it isn't my complication to solve more than yours. There are no difficulties connected with government NOW that were not

present in the days of Jesus, Paul and Peter. What Paul wrote to the Romans 13:1-9, Jesus, Luke 20:25; I Peter 2:13, etc., was circulated among ALL christians in every nation then. It would read the same in Athens, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Rome then as now. They made war on one another THEN, as aggressor nations do now, so there is no difficulty NOW, that didn't exist THEN, and yet Paul said what he SAID: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God." Rom. 13:1. I can only conclude with references to this command, as with all others that it embodies the wisdom of God, and if obeyed, will work out better than anything human wisdom may suggest. I know this, that to the extent men become christianized they conform all their laws and institutions to it. There would be no war today, or any other day, if the rulers were Christians. Evidently the Lord intended for His people to follow this plan. On the other hand, if the devil as he frequently does, is able through wicked rulers, to inveigle the nations into war, and Christians go and are killed in the line of duty, they die individually as martyrs to Christian duty as much so, as those thrown to the lions in the arenas of pagan Rome. If not, why not? The war was none of their making, any more than the bloody persecutions. But if we turn the government over to "sinners only" as advocated, then we have definitely surrendered the rule of society as a whole to the devil, who is a murderer, a liar, and father of it (John 8:44); and what need we expect?

### INCONSISTENCY OF "CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS"

Now without questioning the motive of any genuine "conscientious objector," who is courageously doing what he thinks is right, yet I can not but point out the inconsistency of those who make the claim that "true christians ought to die in protest against bearing arms." That such martyrdom is the WAY to stop war, and they pose as ready for it. Yet I notice most seek first every avenue of exemption allowed by the government. If he isn't trying to save his own skin what is he doing? Couldn't he get himself shot in the front ranks quicker, than behind the ranks, in some non-combatant position? But he says "he had rather be shot for not shooting than to be shot shooting." Very well then, if to die at home in protest against war, is the way to stop wars, then why not stand up boldly and denounce the government to the extent necessary to get THIS job done! "By their fruits ye shall know them." Some of these claim greater courage and superior christianity over all who support the

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government in times of war, and belittle any soldier who offers himself in defense of his home and country. Who has the best claim to the crown of martyrdom anyway, the man who offers himself where he knows he MAY die, or the man who says he is READY to die for his cause, and then takes ALL pains to stay off the SPOT where he can die?

I recently read this—"The Lord has no praise for heroes or soldiers of war". Now I suppose Paul represents the Lord, and I read where he is commending the heroes of faith and says (Heb. 11:34) among other things, "Waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight, the armies of the aliens." If this isn't praising some soldiers what is it? The truth in this class is not really looking for martyrdom, but want the protected peace we have right here—but want somebody else to do the protecting. They get along all right with their theory, like every other false theory of life, until put to the test of practice, and then it evaporates. The "non-resistant" in this country has peace, and the opportunity to practice christianity, not because his theory IS practiced, but because it is NOT practiced. This government maintains itself by force, and controls the brutal wicked by force. While he prattles of the virtue of "non-resistance" a policeman is on his beat and the army and navy throw a ring of steel around our frontiers. Take all these away and THEN see how much peace he has!

That non-resistance doesn't stop war has been demonstrated in recent months. Denmark didn't resist Germany. Was Germany "softened and absorbed" by this sample of "non-resistance"? The only result was that Germany put the heel on their necks, and used them for a spring board to assault Norway. Rumania didn't resist and they rolled on to Bulgaria. Hitler doesn't seem to be any nearer conversion now than when he started! But says one: "Some did resist and that hasn't stopped the war". Correct. There is no way to stop ruthless brutality, in either the individual or nation, but by superior force exerted in behalf of righteousness. ENOUGH force hasn't been applied to aggressor Hitler as yet. When it is we will have peace as far as he is concerned—not until then.

Thousands of my brethren are trying to be conscientious objectors, not because they are cowards, they have plenty of courage, but because they have been taught the Scriptures teach it, and they are trying to be loyal to the scriptures, but they have not really searched the scriptures on this subject. When they do, they will believe and practice what they teach. I am simply contributing this to that end.

Neither do I want to be misunderstood or misrepresented. I am

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opposed to, and abhor, war as much as anybody. War is of the devil, just as lying, stealth and murder are of the devil. I have never said the christian can GO to war, in the sense of being the AGGRESSOR, any more than he can GO to commit theft or murder. The issue is, "Can the Christian protect himself when they COME to him?" I say, God has ordained the civil government and the civil sword for this very purpose, and that where they are not available, he can protect himself and family aganist brutal force in human hands, just as he can against a mad dog or wild animal. X

I accept everything Christ teaches in the Christian morality, and try to practice it, and get others to do the same. But I also believe the distinction God makes between the innocent and the guilty, the righteous and the wicked. I deny you can apply the Golden Rule to a man trying to cut your throat.

### CHRISTIANITY DOES NOT TEACH TO WITHDRAW FROM SOCIETY

Finally, I do not believe the scriptures teach the "monkish monastic" idea of Christianity. That it must withdraw from society to a hermit's cave to retain its "unsullied purity." To the contrary I hold it is a lusty plant, designed to crowd out and uproot "every plant the heavenly father hath not planted." The "Leaven" to transfer all society after its own peculiar character. It is a religion of contact not of isolation.

At this point I must register a protest against the effort being made in some quarters by congregations "to manufacture a creed" for us on the war question, and in this respect line us up with the "Jehovah's Witnesses," by passing resolutions of "non-resistant" character to be presented to the government to secure the "conscientious objectors" exemption. I deny that this is a congregational question, but each individual must settle it for himself. This procedure makes the inferences of those engineering it, a CREED and test of fellowship. No Apostle ever proposed any such thing. If this isn't creed making, how would we go about making one? To formulate a conclusion from Scripture, and say, "now this is IT"; this is what we believe and teach on this particular subject, and formally bind this conclusion on congregations, is the essence of all the creeds in christendom. If not why not? Neither is it a fact that the rank and file of the Church of Christ are conscientious objectors. Thousands of them have been, and are now in the combat services of the United States.

I realize this is a complicated question, involving as it does all the relationships of life. I think our brethren have done a lot of false reasoning on this subject, but I have never questioned nor

expect to, the christian integrity of those who differ from me. But when congregations formulate and adopt a "non resistant creed" on the subject, it is subscribe or GET OUT of that congregation.

In conclusion, all I ask is a fair examination of the arguments made, with a due regard for the "proper division of the word" and the application of the same principles of scriptural analysis we follow in teaching on faith, repentance and baptism. Scripture must harmonize with scripture, not one passage destroy another.

Neither is it sufficient to say, "Oh, well, it may be right to participate in the government in time of peace and war, but I will be safe and have nothing to do with it." But Paul did not say be safe. He said, "Quit yourselves like men." There's no way for Christians to be safe in anything but to do their Christian duty. Practical religion consists in doing what we ought to do, whether we want to or not. When I hear professed christians say, "Save our men from the horrors of war," I say "AMEN"; but I ask if a would-be world conqueror threatens our national existence with fire and sword as the case now is, by whom, and how are they to be saved? By some OTHER man facing death on the firing line, while ours hide out? Who is to save our old men, women and children from rapine and degradation, unless our men do it? What right has a christian to accept a peace and safety bought with other men's blood? Is his more precious than others in the sight of God? Neither does it help to say, "IF all were christians there would be no war," as well as say, "IF all were angels there would be no sin." But we are NOT all christians anymore than we are all angels; so what! Sin and brutality are on the march and must be stopped. Now is it christian for the christian to accept and exercise every benefit and privilege conferred on him by the government, at the constant sacrifice of other men's lives, in time of peace and war, and not bear his share of the danger as well as expense of the same? I maintain it is his duty to BEAR the danger as well as PAY the taxes. The non resistant admits the tax, and denies the danger. Both are necessary. For a government that didn't maintain itself by force wouldn't be here thirty days to collect taxes.

**UNMOLESTED WORSHIP IS ENJOYED UNDER  
THE STARS AND STRIPES**

Whatever may be said of other governments, ours is in harmony with the Church, if we have restored it. For it fully protects us in the exercise of our religion. Therefore, to support and defend it as a civil subject is to make it possible to exercise myself in the great work of the spiritual kingdom. I thank God every day that under the Stars and Stripes of free America the Spirit of Christianity and the



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spirit of Patriotism go hand in hand. If, as all admit, a Christian should accept martyrdom under a wicked government rather than give up his Christianity, how much more should he be willing to accept martyrdom, in defense of a good government, that fully sustains Christianity?

### ADDENDA

By Robert C. Jones, Wichita Falls, Texas

In addition to your statement on moral and penal law, I think it would be good to mention the different words used in these commandments.

The word "kill" in the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:13) is "ratsach" and means murder. The word "kill" in the commandment "Thou shalt surely kill him" (Deut. 13:9) is "harag" and means to slay. It is sinful to murder but it is not sinful to slay. The official slaying as punishment for crime therefore is not murder.

As a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven I am obligated to support the church as long as the church is true to the principles set forth by the one who ordained and established it. If this institution in spite of all that I can do to prevent it, becomes an apostate church, I should not support it. As a citizen of the U. S. A. I am obligated, as a citizen and as a child of God, to support the government as long as it is true to the principles set forth by the one who ordained it. If the government becomes an apostate institution, if it falls into the hands of rulers who are not a terror to evil works, but to the good, then I should not in any way support it.

The scriptures show that some disciples were connected with military service in the apostolic period. History shows that many brethren were in the army during the first few centuries of the christian era. These men continued in military service as long as the government followed the divine plan. When the state ceased to follow the principles set forth in Rom. 13, many of these men quit the army and all of them should have.

"There were, up to this time, many Christians connected with the military service, both in the higher and lower ranks; and they as yet had never been compelled to do anything contrary to their conscience." (295 A. D.) Neander, Vol. 1, page 146.

"Already then, when he who had received such power, was first roused as from a deep slumber, he had secretly and unobserved, been plotting after the times of Decius and Valerian, how to assault the churches; but he did not all at once, nor in mass, wage open war against us, but as yet only made trial of those that were in the armies. For in this way he supposed that the rest could easily be

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taken, if he could first succeed in subduing these. Then one could see great numbers of the military, most cheerfully embracing a private life, so as not to renounce their reverence for the Supreme Creator of the universe. For when the general, whoever he was, first undertook the persecution against the soldiers, he began by a review and lustration of those that were enrolled in the army, and gave them their choice, either to enjoy the honor conferred upon them if they obeyed, or on the contrary to be deprived of this, if they disobeyed the command. Very many who were soldiers in the kingdom of Christ, without hesitating, preferred the confession of his name to that apparent glory and comfort which they enjoyed, and of these a few here and there exchanged their honors, not only for degradation but even for death, for their perseverance in religion. These last, however, were not yet many, as the great instigator of these violent measures had, as yet, but moderately proceeded, and ventured only so far as to shed the blood of some only. The great number of believers, probably deterred and caused him to shrink from a general attack upon all; but when he began to arm more openly, it is impossible to tell how many and how eminent those were that presented themselves in every place and city and country, as martyrs in the cause of Christ." Eusebius Book 8, Chapter 4.

"The persecution having begun with those brethren that were in the army." Eusebius Book 8, Chapter 1.

*Imp.* (Rom. 12:18) "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." This verse implies that there are men in the world who make peace impossible. It takes two to make a fight. If the theory of pacifism were true it would always be possible to be at peace with all men.







