

# THE WAY OF PEACE

(Rom. 3:15-17)

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Should Christians participate in military service? This has been a problem since early centuries of the church. History tells us that early Christians refused, and this became one of the things that increased pressure for persecution. However, that was under a pagan power. As beneficiaries of a Christian influenced government, in many respects serving to protect us from our enemies, are we not obligated to obey the government and share in the responsibilities of maintaining it, just as we are to pay taxes? These are tough questions that need to be considered.

## I. THE MATTER OF OUR PERSONAL SECURITY RESTS WITH GOD

A key issue is whether we have faith in God's power to care for us.

### A. Scriptures concerning God's protection

Jer. 17:5-7. *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.*

Prov. 29:25. *The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord SHALL BE SAFE.*

Compare Mark 6:33-34. *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all of these things shall be added unto you...be not anxious for the morrow.*

Ps 27:1-3. *my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me*

Compare Ps. 118:6. *The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? ...*

8 *It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.*

Rom. 8:28. *All things work together for good to them that love the Lord.*

Prov. 16:7. *When a man's ways please God he maketh even his enemies to be at peace.*

2 Peter 2:9. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.*

Compare 1 Cor. 10:13. *There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but god is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able: but will with the temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but god is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able: but will with the temptation also make a way of escape...*

Rom. 8:31-39.

31 *What shall we then say to these things? if god be for us, who can be against us?*  
32 *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also*

*maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

## **B. The importance of accepting suffering if God wills.**

1 Peter 3:8-14

*8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: 9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: 11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. 13 and who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? 14 but and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;*

1 Peter 2:21-23

*21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:*

Rev. 12:11.

*And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony: and they loved not their lives unto death.*

1 Cor. 4:10-13.

*being reviled we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it*

1 Thes. 3:3-4.

*That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we were appointed thereunto...that we should suffer persecutions.*

Heb. 11:25. *Choosing to suffer with the people of God than to suffer the pleasures of sin for a season.*

1 Peter 5:10

*the God of all grace...after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.*

Luke 12:4-7.

*Fear not them that kill the body and after that can do no more...fear him that after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell*

## II. THE MATTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY RESTS WITH GOD

Prov. 21:1. *The heart of the king is in the Lord's hand, he turneth it whithersoever he wills.*

Acts 17:26.

*26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;*

Jer. 27:5-6.

*5 I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me.*

Daniel 4:25, 32; 5:21.

*the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*

Rom. 13:1.

*1 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.*

(Note: "ordained" is translated "appointed" in Matt 28:16; Ac. 22:10; 28:23)

### PROBLEMS PRESENTED BY THE TEACHINGS OF THESE TEXTS:

1. Since the fate of a nation rests in the hands of God, then in the absence of divine authorization, the person who resorts to violence to raise up, bring down, or preserve a nation, can be intruding upon the province of God. He will be taking into his own hands that which properly belongs to God.

-Matt 22:21. *Give unto God the things that are God's*

-Rom. 12:19. *Vengeance belongeth unto ME, I will repay saith the Lord.*

2. Without direct revelation we cannot be sure which side God intends to support. Therefore, our participation may place us in a position of fighting against God. In the Old Testament, when God established a physical nation and was demonstrating to the heathen nations the superior power of Jehovah in supporting his people over the ability of the pagan gods to support them, he provided prophets to guide his people as to what wars they should fight. They were not at liberty to choose which they should fight or not fight or even the extent of devastation they were to produce. God directed so they would not be opposition to His objectives.

-Isa. 30:1-2. God condemns them for trusting the protection of Egypt and not asking him.

- 1 Sam. 28:3-19. Saul received no revelation from the Lord and because he then sought Samuel's guidance through a witch, he died (cf. 1 Chron. 10:13).
- 1 Kings 22:1-40. The prophet Micaiah consulted Ahab. Ahab died for ignoring him.
- 1 Sam. 15:1-23. Saul was condemned for not killing ALL of the Amalekites.

The fact that God provided such special revelation to guide His people when He wanted them to wage war, is an indication that participation in war was not intended in the absence of such revelation.

Would God leave His people to grope blindly amidst the whims and propaganda of greedy men? Since both sides usually share to some extent in the wrong, and one abuse begets another, how can fallible men accurately determine the amount of blame and the extent of punishment to be meted out in national struggles? Do the wrongs on both sides justify Christians on each side slaughtering each other? Is it a case of, "our nation, right or wrong"? Are we to discover which side God supports by destroying or being destroyed? Even if we could determine which nation was the more wicked, what if God (as he did in the Old Testament) wants to punish His people by using a wicked nation?

3. Since ALL governments stand by the will of God (cf. Rom. 13:1-2), if we resist ANY of them without God's direction, are we not resisting the ordinance of God?
4. God is not limited to our strength in order to accomplish His objectives.

-Is. 40:15-17. *The nations are as a drop of a bucket...all nations before Him are as nothing.*

-Ps. 2:1-5. *He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.*

-Zech. 4:6. *Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord.*  
 cf. Ex. 13:14-16. God saved Israel out of Egypt without fighting.  
 cf. Isa. 37:33-37. God saved Jerusalem from the Assyrians without fighting.  
 cf. 2 Chron. 20:17-23 (cf. verses 1-16) Jehosaphat saved without fighting.  
 cf. 1 Sam. 19:1; 20:31; 23:26-28; 24:1-22; 26:7-25. David refused to fight against Saul. God protected him and ultimately brought about Saul's death.

Therefore, in the absence of a directive from God, responsibility for the death and devastation that we cause in such struggles will rest squarely upon us.

5. Since the outcome of such struggles is not dependent upon our strength, the increased slaughter and devastation produced by our participation without authorization of God becomes a senseless waste. What about responsibility for the widows, orphans and possible deaths of other Christians? What about the suffering and the maimed? What about the matter of sending lost souls into eternity by our trigger finger?

6. Since, in the absence of divine revelation, only God knows whether a nation is to rise or fall, it is presumptuous for us to decide what God should do. Our responsibility is to ourselves to the will of the Lord.
7. Since the rise or fall of a nation rests in the will of God, then its security can only be assured by its citizens sustaining the kind of relationship with what makes Him pleased to favor them. Someone has said, “America is great because she is good. When she ceases to be good, she will cease to be great.” Arbitrarily taking things into our own hands is an abdication of our responsibility to give place to the wrath of God (Rom. 12:19) and discards the source and means of our true security.

God has told us how we can achieve real security with Him.

-1 Tim. 2:1-2. PRAY for those in authority that we might live in peace.

-James 4:1-3. (cf. 3:13--) *Ye fight and war and receive not because ye ask not.*

-Rom. 8:28. *ALL things work together for good to them that love the Lord.*

-2 Cor. 10:1-6. God has provided weapons and armor which are *mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds: casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of god*. (cf. Eph. 6:10-18)

I am not a “pacifists.” I am aggressively pressing the battle with the weapons God has provided—weapons that do not snuff out men’s lives, but save their souls. Hatred cannot be purged from the earth by more killing. Blood only calls for more blood, and there is no such thing as a war that ends wars.

The fact is that the person who takes things into his own hands actually weakens the likelihood that God will preserve him and the nation he supports because he is demonstrating a lack of faith with God. The materialist may scoff at the idea of winning by not fighting but the “foolishness” of God is wiser than men and the “weakness” of God is stronger than men (1Cor. 1:25; 2:14).

If our participation in a war cannot favorably alter the outcome, then is it not a violation of the responsibilities of Christian stewardship, to participate? (Matt. 25:14-30)

-Consider the eroding effect of military life upon the spiritual growth of the Christian.

-Consider the fact that you are not free to work for the Lord as you otherwise could?

-Consider how your time, talent and example are channeled into the business of making widows and orphans wholesale.

### **III. THE PROBLEM OF FULFILLING GOD’S OBJECTIVE OF BEING AT PEACE WITH ALL MEN?**

Isa. 2:1-4. *they will learn war no more*

Note: This has reference to the church. Compare Luke 24:45-47 “*the law shall go forth from zion*” and 1Tim 3:15. speaks of the church as the “*house of God*.”

1 Tim. 2:1-2. *that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives*

James 3:13—4:1-3. “*peaceable,*” “*sown in peace,*” “*whence come wars...from your lusts.*”

Rom. 3:15-17. “*The way of peace they have not known.*”

2 Pet. 3:14. “*Be found in peace at his coming.*”

Matt. 5:5, 9. “*Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.*”

Heb. 12:14. “*Follow peace with all men.*”

Rom. 14:17, 19. *The kingdom of God is ... peace...* “*follow after things which make for peace.*”

Note: It does not say, “be at peace with Christians.” It does not say, “blessed are the war-makers.”

#### **IV. THE PROBLEM OF MAINTAINING THE CHRISTIAN GRACES**

Mat. 5:38-48. “*It hath been said, an eye for an eye...But I say, resist not evil...turn the other cheek...love thy enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you...*” (cf. 7:12. The Golden Rule).

Rom. 12:14-21. “*Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not...Recompense to no man evil for evil...live peaceably with all men...avenge not yourselves...if thine enemy hunger, feed him...Be not overcome of evil, but **OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD.***”

Gal. 5:14, 19-23. “*The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness...*”

1 John 3:15. “*He that hateth his brother is a murderer...no murderer hath eternal life.*”

Try to imagine the chaplain just before the battle saying, “Go out there and love your enemies, return not evil for evil.” How do you say, “I love you brother” and then blow his brains out?

I am reminded of the story about the old Puritan who was getting rather upset with a pushy salesman. He walked over to the wall, took down his hunting rifle, and pointed it at the fellow and said, “Friend, I would that no harm would come to thee, but thou art standing where I am about to shoot!”

It is a lot easier to rationalize these contradictory concepts in the detached circumstances of home than in the viscous reality of combat. When you have a man in your gun-sight, there is just you and him and God. You pull the trigger a fraction of an inch and suddenly there is just you—and God! I have never heard a man say that in that moment that he was demonstrating love. There was just fear, hate, or a desire not to think about it at all. The sickening feeling of taking a man’s life tends to make men doubt reality, or to have a loathing for what they are doing that even causes them to doubt the reality of God.

Some may rationalize and become so hardened that they actually derive pleasure out of brutality, but for most it is a gut-wrenching experience. One man I read about had come to enjoy the “sport” of killing men after he had been in combat for a while. He declared bluntly, “Kill a communist for Christ!” War is not pretty and to compensate for the fear and hatred, some are turned into monsters. Others are emotionally shattered and scarred forever. After training to be killers it is no easy job for these men to return to living normal lives in society.

## V. THE PROBLEM OF THE TEMPLE OF GOD AND KILLING?

Because King David had shed blood and made war, God would not permit him to build the temple (1Chronicles 22:8). How then can we, who are “living stones” in the spiritual temple of God, participate in killing? (cf. 1Cor. 3:16; 1Pet. 2:15) Note that this very analogy of our relationship to the temple is used to show our need to be separated from other sins such as idolatry and adultery. (1Cor 6:15, 19; 2Cor. 6:16)

## VI. WARNING AGAINST TAKING UP THE SWORD OR SUPPORTING CAPTIVITY

Rev. 13:9-10.

*9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*

Luke 22:49-51.

*49 When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? 50 And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. 51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.*

Matt. 26:51-52.

*51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. 52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.*

Luke 9:54-56.

*54 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? 55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. 56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.*

## VII. CHRISTIANS DO NOT WAR AFTER THE FLESH

2Cor. 10:1-6.

*I Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you: 2 But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; 6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.*

## **CONCLUSION:**

There is not one place in the New Testament where any Christian participated in carnal war, nor was any Christian ever told to do so. Rather, we are to be separate from such things. The fact is that when we trust God's power concerning personal and national security, the prime motivation for war is removed. It is not easy to overcome the life-long conditioning to strike back but we must shake free from the picture of soldiering as a gallant crusade to thwart the forces of evil. The emotional grip is powerful but Christians can see the true futility and injustice of war.

It takes considerable honesty, faith, and courage to face the scorn of one's fellows. It takes great courage to do this in the face even of imprisonment and disgrace, even against part of the military that would be unlikely to enter combat. Ironically, this nation, which has granted the right to refrain from military service is the strongest in the world.

## **THE PROBLEM OF BOUNDARIES**

Sometimes it is not easy to determine just how far we may go in cooperation with the military. Does responsibility cease with the man who fires the bullet? --with the one who transports them? --or with the one who manufactures them? What about the medic that prepares the men for battle?

The armed service is a TEAM. Every part is essential to the effective job of killing. The man who thinks that in the medics he will not be contributing to the success of the team is laboring under a delusion.

The Army Field Manual, FM 8-10<sup>1</sup> says, "*The primary duty of medical troops as of all other troops is to contribute their utmost to the success of the command of which the medical service is a part.*" "*The mission of the medical service in a theater of operations is to contribute to the success of the military effort through—*a. *Conserving Manpower. Military strength is preserved by seeing that only the fit take the field, by protection of troops against unnecessary hazards to health and efficiency, and by effective care and early return to duty.* b. *Preventing adverse effects of unevacuated casualties on combat efficiency. Casualties within any combat unit restrict its movement. Lack of care and proper evacuation reduces the soldier's willingness to take necessary risks. Both can be prevented by adequate medical*

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<sup>1</sup> Army Field Manual, FM 8-10, Medical Service Theater of Operations, March, 1951. p. 195

*aid and rapid evacuation.”<sup>2</sup> “The essentiality for physical fitness is a critical factor in the combat efficiency of troops. Military history is rampant with examples of battles that were lost and campaigns that failed solely because the troops were immobilized by disease.”<sup>3</sup>*

What activities outside the military might be involved? This is a more difficult problem, and one that must be approached with caution. The fact that the line is not always easy to recognize is not justification for disregarding its existence. One rule I find helpful is that of leaving the margin of error on my side of the line. The fellow who is always crowding the line is exposing a weakness and will inevitably step over from time to time. If we are going to be safe we must start with the right attitude towards safety.

The following are some ground rules to consider.

1. We are free to perform such services as would exist in the absence of war. (All must eat, so raising and selling food would be permissible.)
2. It must not be the development or fabrication of a military weapon. (Thus, one might make steel but could not form it into guns, bombs etc. Some areas such as making trucks, ships etc., which may be used for either peaceful or military uses where involvement with weapons is not present may be open to debate. The basic rule here is, “if in doubt—don’t.” (Rom. 14:23)
3. Whatever we do must not be such as to interfere with our life of service for Christ.
4. Since Jesus taught that taxation levied against us belongs to “Caesar” we are not responsible for what the government does with it.

## **DEALING WITH OBJECTIONS**

OBJECTION: “Does not Rom. 13:1-7 teach that we must obey laws of the land?”

ANSWER:

Yes, even if you lived under Stalin or Hitler. ALL governments are ordained of God. (“There is NO POWER but of God”) If you resist any of them you will be in violation of Rom. 13:1-2. However the text designates the extent of their power as being that which is for “good.” James 4:1-3 shows us that war is NOT good. Since all nations derive their authority from God, the higher authority takes precedence over any earthly law in any area where there is conflict.

Acts 5:29 puts the issue pointedly, “We must obey God rather than men.”

It is stretching credulity pretty far to maintain that the suffering, destruction and wholesale killing of both soldiers and civilians is “good.” Is it “good” to drop a bomb that wipes out a whole city of 100,000 souls? Dare we assume such a responsibility without a command of God?

OBJECTION: “Does not Rom. 13:1-7 empower the government to use the sword against evil doers?”

ANSWER:

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<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* p. 20

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.* p. 22

Yes, and only evil doers. These powers have to do with their power over their citizens and not wholesale killing of the citizens of another state. All powers are ordained of God and therefore the citizens of one have no right to kill citizens of another. Even within the state this does not justify throwing a bomb that kills people en mass. There is a vast difference between the state restricting itself to punishing the guilty, and the realities of the carnage of war.

It may not always be easy to distinguish when the punishment of evil doers changes to a struggle for the state but God has made such a distinction and it is up to us to see that we stay on His side of the line. “We do not war after the flesh” (2Cor. 10:3).

OBJECTION: “What about Cornelius, a soldier of the Roman army? (Acts 10)

ANSWER:

Here we have a case of a soldier becoming a Christian—not of a Christian becoming a soldier! At the time of his conversion he was performing ordinary police responsibilities—not engaged in war. We don’t know what he did after his conversion.

Any argument drawn from silence concerning the future of his military status is pretty frail. It is just as easy for me to conjecture that he must have resigned. The fact is that NOTHING is said about his future life. We have no record of any changes whatsoever that he needed to make in his life beyond baptism but it is pretty presumptions to declare that he would need to grow in nothing.

If silence proves that Cornelius continued in the military and we must do the same, then what does it teach us about becoming publicans (as in the case of Zachaeus. Lk. 19:1-9) or harlots (Mat. 21:31-32)? Certainly the prohibitions against favoring captivity would apply to him just as would commands against stealing, adultery and extortion. (cf. Lk. 3:14)

OBJECTION: “Did not John the Baptist tell the soldiers to be content with their wages?”

ANSWER:

Yes, the soldier, living under the Old Testament and performing the function of a policeman was told this. He was also told that he was to “do violence to no man” (Lk 3:14). if he was obedient we may presume that he did BOTH of these things, but this is not an argument for Christians killing people in war.

OBJECTION: “Doesn’t it say there will be wars and rumors of wars?” (Mat. 24:6-10; Luke 21:9-21)

ANSWER:

Such arguments sound like the fellow who believed that if there was a gunfight in the street that he should get into it so he wouldn’t be SHOT AS AN INNOCENT BYSTANDER!

It also says that there will be false-prophets. Must we join them?

Actually, the text teaches just the opposite. It tells them to “pray” and when they see the armies they are to “flee.” It is significant that in this, the only place in the New Testament

where it deals directly with what the Christian is to do when confronted by a war, they are told to flee. Do we have any authority for doing anything else? (Mat. 24:16, 19)

**OBJECTION:** What about Jesus driving the moneychangers out of the temple?"

**ANSWER:**

Not one word is said about any man being struck—much less killed. The Greek text indicates the “scourge” was used to drive the animals. Furthermore, Jesus had authority to do anything he pleased, but he specifically disavowed any sympathy with taking life. (Lk. 9:55-56; Jn. 18:36). Above all, this certainly has nothing to do with the mass violence of war.

**OBJECTION:** “Did not Jesus say to buy a sword?” (Luke 22:36-38)

**ANSWER:**

Was he telling them to prepare for war? Was the gospel to be spread by means of physical swords? Certainly two swords among twelve men were a bit inadequate to wage war! Perhaps his request was related to the prophecy, “he shall be reckoned among the transgressors.” Even if we suppose this to provide for defense in restraining an evil doer, it is a far cry from a war between two nations that spreads wholesale devastation. This is not a contradiction of Luke 9:55-56 and John 18:36. The fact that Peter misunderstood is evident from the rebuke of Jesus later. (cf. Mat. 26:51-52; Luke 22:49-51. cf. Rev. 13:9-10)

**OBJECTION:** “Did not Jesus say that he came to set a sword upon the earth?” (Mat. 10:34)

**ANSWER:**

Are we to kill our parents and other relatives who disagree with us concerning Christ? if the “sword” here is to be regarded as literal, it certainly does not indicate that it is the Christian who would use it. The scriptures forbid Christians from returning evil and for many years after the New Testament they refused to participate in the army through their enemies used swords upon them. The parallel passage in Luke 12:51-53 indicates what he had in mind. It says he came to set “division.” The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, was the weapon provided for the Christians. (Eph. 6:17; 2Cor. 10:3-5)

**OBJECTION:** “What if everyone quit fighting? Would not our country be destroyed and Christianity abolished?”

**ANSWER:**

Not as long as God is still God. Matthew 16:18 says the gates of Hades shall not prevail against the church. We trust in God and know that God will be victorious. Rome ruled the world and tried with all her might in every way possible to stamp out Christianity. Certainly the governments today are no more depraved than Rome and yet Christians were not to fight against Rome. In the end, Rome fell to the power of Christian influence.

If our whole nation turned Christian it is inconceivable as to the vast impact upon other nations. Certainly they would feel no need for vast firepower and destruction to be unleashed because they would feel no real threat. They might take over our nation, but in time Christians would just convert them or at least enough of them that any repression would be ineffectual.

However, the basic weakness with such arguments is that they do not really make any difference, if God does not want us to fight. They begin with a big empty “if” which is entirely presumptive. But 1Pet. 3:8-14 has an “if” that is the direct answer to this. “But even IF ye should suffer for righteousness’ sake, blessed are ye: And fear not their fear, neither be troubled.”

Besides this, Jesus rejected the idea of fighting for his kingdom. (John 18:36) We are to fight with the weapons of God. (2Cor. 10:3-5)

OBJECTION: “What would you do if your wife or children were being molested?”

ANSWER:

The question is unfair and has no bearing on the issue. In the first place, I am being asked to tell what I would do in a situation that has never arisen. I don’t know what I would do but my faith in God trusts that He would never permit it to take place. Secondly, is it right to say that if you defend yourself against an actual act of wickedness that therefore you are at liberty to join the wholesale devastation of a nation, which is characteristic of war? Thirdly, there is a difference between a forceful attempt to restrain a person, and the intent to take his life or vent revenge upon him. Fourthly, here again is the presumptive “if.” Is God going to permit this “if” to take place if I am right with him? Also, “if” he does then does that relieve me of responsibility to do as he said?

Since “if’s” are such appealing arguments I could easily counter with, “If five men had the drop on you and you had no weapon, what would you do about someone molesting your wife?” Does the fact of what you would do or not do prove that we can go to war whenever we choose? Does it prove that we can never be violent? Actually, it proves absolutely nothing. If my answer decides this issue then I say that I will not kill so you must not.

OBJECTION: “What about wars in the Old Testament?”

ANSWER:

When God wanted men to fight he spoke to them through prophets to tell them which side He was supporting. There were times when they had to just lay down their arms and surrender to a wicked nation (Jer. 38:14-17). Also, it is often overlooked that at times they were even to kill the women and children (1Sam. 15:3). Does such a divine decision authorize us to do whatever extent we choose? Rather, the fact that we do not have such divine guidance today is an indication that we are not expected to do it.

OBJECTION: “Is it not inconsistent to draw the benefits of this country derived from the sacrifice of others and refuse to share in its defense?”

ANSWER:

The true source of the benefits of this country is GOD. It stands by the power of God, and its wealth is derived from God. By being true to God and bringing Christ into the lives of men I am engaged in the very highest form of contribution to its security. The man who REALLY undermines the security of our nation is the person who is unresponsive to His will. is it not then inconsistent for other men to draw from the benefits of this country which stands by the power of god, while refusing to share in returning the love and obedience which he asks?

## **CONCLUSION:**

Whenever one presents the truth he is always confronted by the inevitable array of objections. Usually, most of them are superficial and emotionally inspired. Some will be sincere difficulties. Some will be repeated time and again. I have here tried to deal with some of the most common and sometimes difficult problems.

However, I have found that for the most part there are two key factors which when solved tend to dissolve the difficulties.

First, when the person becomes fully informed on the subject. Usually the people who are the most vehement in their objection are those who have not personally been involved in the hideousness of war and the misery it produces, what it does to the men who do the killing, or have not assimilated the teachings and attitudes of the scriptures concerning this issue.

Secondly, when the person is freed of his anxiety for his future and fear of social intimidation's. Many people are more concerned with what other people think than with what God thinks. It takes great courage to face the scorn of friends and intimidation of the law. It takes great faith to trust that God will work things out to his own good ends and we are not to be swayed by concern for our security.

For me, the whole issue is solved in this: I trust God. I believe that His word means exactly what it says. God has always taken care of me and I am not going to desert Him nor tell Him how He must run things. If He wills that I should suffer then I only pray that He will strengthen me to bear it courageously so that His name can be glorified and His objectives will be achieved.