

New Testament Teachings and Readings on the Legitimacy of Warfare

Early Christian attitudes to war, violence and the military profession have been widely and passionately discussed. This discussion has taken place mainly in periods of crisis or potential crisis when it was vital to re-evaluate the relations between Church and State. In particular it was mostly during the two World Wars and the “Nuclear Age” (1960s–1980s) that intellectuals showed great interest in the problem and appealed to the Bible and the Christian Fathers, claiming support for almost every conceivable position, from radical pacifism to holy war.

It was at the end of the second century that the issue of legitimacy of Christian participation in warfare began to preoccupy some Christians for the first time. Fascinatingly they were convinced that earlier Christian generations, and certainly Jesus and the evangelists, shared the same concern and hence they turned to the New Testament for guidance and justification. Matthew 2: 21 and 6:24 were especially seen as relevant and given a bewildering variety of interpretations, while the New Testament did not confront the issue at all. It seems that Jesus was not concerned with present realities since he was expecting the imminent end of the world.¹ The evangelists were deeply loyal and supported the status quo to such an extent that they refrained from preaching anything that would have displeased the Roman authorities, such as calling for Christians to abstain from enlisting in the army and participating in war.

The evangelists never presented Jesus as explicitly prohibiting men from pursuing military careers. At times, Jesus and the

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evangelists extolled peace while at others, they seemed to extol violence. They sometimes seemed to challenge secular authority, but they also supported it. It seems as if almost all depends on the reading chosen.

New Testament Gospel Passages of Ambiguous or Even Irrelevant Character

Do not commit murder (Matt. 5:21);²

Blessed are the peacemakers (Matt. 5:9);³

If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn and offer him the other also (Matt. 5:39);⁴

Love your enemies (Matt. 5:44).⁵

There is nothing to suggest that Jesus had state relations in mind when he gave his Sermon on the Mount and was not addressing the individual consciences of his followers in their everyday conduct. Towards the end of the fourth century, Ambrose of Milan and Augustine of Hippo wrestled with this sermon. According to their understanding, it did not exclude the use of force; for Ambrose it merely forbade taking pleasure in revenge⁶ while for Augustine it allowed corrective punishment.⁷ The sixth commandment “Do not commit murder” had nothing to do with soldiers. Soldiers were mere instruments; they were commanded to slay and thus committed no sin.⁸ Those modern scholars who favour the idea of a pacifist early Church use the sermon as evidence in support of their argument and are clearly in disagreement with Ambrose and Augustine.⁹

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the first and love the second, or he will be devoted to the first and despise the second. You cannot serve God and Mammon (Matt. 6:24).¹⁰

Jesus was clear: one could not adore God and Satan at the same time. There is no indication that Jesus forbade Christians from entering or remaining in the army. A vivid imagination is required to reach such a conclusion. At the end of the second century Tertullian was probably the first Christian to use the passage to convince Christians that they ought to avoid military service, because it entailed participating in Roman religious rites and occasionally inflicting capital punishment.¹¹ However, Tertullian elsewhere was faithful to the original meaning that one could not possibly worship both the Christian God and another deity.¹² It is interesting that the same passage could be used for a different purpose. Tertullian’s first interpretation that the passage actually forbade Christians from having military careers prevailed in subsequent years. Late in the fourth century Jerome and Paulinus of Nola often alluded to it with the same aim, namely to keep Christians away from the army.¹³ Probably none of the early Acts of the Martyrs involving soldiers quote it to justify the martyr’s decision to quit his post, nor do they use Matthew 22:21.¹⁴ It can only be found in post-Constantinian Martyr Acts, such as the *Acta Longini*¹⁵ and the *Acta Montani*.¹⁶

“When you are persecuted in one town, take refuge in another” (Matt. 10:23), Jesus advised his disciples. Apparently, Jesus wished to avoid conflict, but did this mean he wanted to avoid upsetting the authorities and thus wanted Christians to serve in the Roman army? Or did it mean he expected people not to commit violence and thus to stay out of the army? Maybe he was just addressing his

disciples and advising them not to choose martyrdom in times of persecution. Although he did not agree, that is how Tertullian understood it in his work *De Fuga in Persecutione*.¹⁷

When one of Jesus' disciples cut off the ear of one of the soldiers who were about to arrest him, Jesus reproached and warned him: "all who take the sword die by the sword" (Matt. 26: 52). Was this an explicit condemnation of the use of violence? Maybe it was. Was it an implicit condemnation of the military profession? It is impossible to say. The early twentieth-century scholar C. J. Cadoux answered those who wondered how Peter came to be carrying a sword at all when his master disapproved of the use of weapons by claiming that Peter had failed to understand his master's condemnation of the use of force.¹⁸ The presence of the weapon, however, did not trouble the evangelist.

"Conservative" New Testament Gospel Passages

In Capernaum, Jesus and Peter paid their taxes.¹⁹ On another occasion, the Pharisees asked Jesus: "are we or are we not permitted to pay taxes to the Roman emperor?" (Matt. 22:17).²⁰ They disliked him and expected him to provide a negative answer so they could go to the Roman authorities and accuse him of rebellious tendencies. Jesus replied: "pay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God" (Matt. 22:21).²¹ Caesar's and God's coexistence was possible. Tertullian at times chose this passage to show that Christians should generally obey Caesar, fulfil their civic obligations and pay the taxes, but if the authorities demanded them to venerate false idols, then Christians would have no choice but to refuse and suffer martyrdom as a result.²² (Similarly, Ambrose understood it to mean that Christians ought to show obedience to the emperor who in turn ought to assist the Church.)²³ On other occasions, Tertullian thought that it meant Christians should not enter or remain in the army.²⁴ So did Paulinus of Nola.²⁵ It is extremely interesting how many and often conflicting interpretations were given to the same New Testament passage. Eucherius of Lyon used it in his *Passio Acaunensium Martyrum* (434–435 CE) to emphasise that Christians owed military service to the emperor, but they had to know and approve of the causes of war.²⁶ Finally, Augustine thought it simply meant that Christians had to enlist in the army, possibly unconditionally.²⁷ Some modern scholars seem to prefer Tertullian's first interpretation and do not understand the passage as specifically referring to soldiers or those who were considering starting an army career.²⁸

When Jesus finished his Sermon on the Mount, he went to Capernaum where he met a centurion,²⁹ a man of power,³⁰ who asked him to cure his paralytic slave. Jesus expressed his admiration for the centurion's faith; he confessed he had never met such faith in all of Israel. In order to deter Bonifacius, the military governor of Africa, from leaving the army Augustine reminded him of this meeting as well as the meeting of Cornelius the centurion with Paul in Acts 10. One could please God while in military service.³¹ The historian Luca de Regibus rightly observed that Jesus did not advise the centurion to leave his profession in the way he advised sinners to abstain from their sins, and even if he did, the authors of the New Testament did not regard it as necessary to record it.³²

After Jesus' crucifixion, his disciples were happy to have military figures admiring Jesus. They circulated the story of a centurion who after witnessing the resurrection of Jesus admitted that he was the son of God.³³ In Matthew's account the centurion was already a Christian.³⁴

Similarly, John the Baptist had no intention of persuading soldiers to change career. When soldiers who were listening to him preach asked him what they should do to gain salvation, he did not tell them to quit their posts and find other ways of earning a living. Rather, he told them: "no bullying; no blackmail; make do with your pay" (Luke 3:14). At the end of the second century, Clement of Alexandria used this passage to remind soldiers that they should be content with their wages.³⁵ Augustine used it (at least twice) to dispel any doubts whether Christians should refuse to enlist, pointing out that if John the Baptist wished Christians to do so, he would have told them just that.³⁶ Most modern scholars concur with Augustine that John the Baptist had apparently recognised the activities of the military as legitimate.³⁷

Some of Jesus' followers tried to exonerate Pontius Pilate for his role in Jesus' execution,³⁸ advancing the view that he found Jesus innocent.³⁹ The decision to sentence Jesus was entirely due to the ill will of the Jews. Some even claimed that Pilate gave Jesus' body to Joseph as a present, and did not demand money or request any favours in return.⁴⁰ It has been convincingly shown that Jesus was arrested, accused, condemned and executed by the Roman authorities on the charge of rebellion.⁴¹ Revolutionary tendencies were associated with the Christian movement during his lifetime.⁴² However, in the years following Jesus' death the majority of his devotees, who finally prevailed and established themselves as the mainstream of Christianity, sought laboriously to suppress any such tendencies, as well as any rumours regarding the existence of revolutionary tendencies in the past, thus cajoling the authorities and reassuring them that Christians were harmless.

While the evangelists portrayed military and political officials in a positive light⁴³ in an attempt to make officials sympathetic towards Christianity and to convert the upper classes, they did not show any interest in attracting soldiers. Soldiers played only a peripheral role in the stories about Jesus. They arrested him, mocked him,⁴⁴ divided his clothes to make a profit (and fulfil a prophecy),⁴⁵ guarded his tomb⁴⁶ and accepted bribes in order to spread lies about his resurrection.⁴⁷ Admittedly, these were distasteful actions; but that is our judgement and not that of the evangelists, for there is no explicit condemnation of the soldiers' actions in the Gospels. Soldiers treated Jesus as they would treat any other convict; they behaved as one would expect them to. There was also no attempt to convert them. In Luke they were the ones to approach John the Baptist and ask for advice for their salvation.⁴⁸ Similarly, in the Acts they appear to guard and accompany the captive apostles.⁴⁹ In the Epistles soldiers are barely mentioned, as if they were irrelevant.

"Radical" New Testament Gospel Passages

In the four canonical gospels, the instances where Jesus appears to challenge the Roman authorities are more numerous than those in which he is presented as supporting them. However, when the authors of the Gospels provided their own opinions, thoughts and interpretations of

Jesus' words and actions, they generally tried not to upset the authorities and the political and social order of their time. On the contrary, they condemned all revolutionary tendencies. As far as Jesus himself is concerned, it seems he was not very eager to respond when interrogated by the Roman authorities.⁵⁰ According to Luke, when the Jews took Jesus to Pilate they told him that he was encouraging people to refuse to pay their taxes.⁵¹ According to John they told him: "you are no friend to Caesar" (John 19:12). One wonders whether there was some truth in these claims.

"You must not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34). Did Jesus find violence at times necessary? Or was he simply warning his disciples that they might have to displease their families and friends? Tertullian, Origen, Jerome (and C. J. Cadoux) did not believe that the passage sanctioned Christians to engage in warfare in any way. Tertullian proposed that the sword was the divine word as manifested in the Testaments.⁵² Origen thought that in this case Jesus was declaring war between flesh and spirit.⁵³ So too did Jerome.⁵⁴ According to C. J. Cadoux the sword was also used metaphorically; Jesus wished to prepare his circle for the fierce antipathies that would arise against them.⁵⁵

According to Mark, Jesus drove the merchants out of the temple of Jerusalem.⁵⁶ Luke also preserved the story, but in a much shorter version.⁵⁷ In John's account, Jesus drove the merchants out using a whip.⁵⁸ Observing that the whip was only mentioned in John's Gospel, which is regarded by many as less trustworthy, C. J. Cadoux has claimed that even if Jesus used a whip, it was directed only at cattle.⁵⁹

At the Last Supper, Jesus counselled his disciples to sell their cloaks and buy swords if they did not own one already.⁶⁰ Adolf von Harnack, one of the most influential scholars of the early twentieth century, thought that the sword was meant metaphorically to represent the steadfast defence of Christian teaching under the anticipated persecutions.⁶¹ C. J. Cadoux admitted he was unable to give an entirely satisfactory explanation,⁶² while other prominent scholars took it to mean that violence was occasionally permissible⁶³ or that the apostles were allowed to carry weapons to protect themselves against wild animals.⁶⁴

The Acts of the Apostles

The author of Acts was in agreement with the authors of the four canonical gospels. He advanced the view that the Roman authorities did not have anything against the apostles and protected (or at least tried to protect) them, just as in the Gospels the authorities liked and protected Jesus (or at least did their best to do so). Probably only at one point does Acts voice a potentially 'radical' view, when Peter said: "we must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). But he was addressing the Jews and he may never have dared to say the like in the presence of the Roman authorities; even if he did I suspect that the author of Acts would not have preserved the story. The followers of Jesus, during his lifetime and immediately after his death, but not very long after, were regarded as challengers of authority. At least, some Jews in Thessalonica saw this as a plausible allegation.⁶⁵ The author of Acts attempted to prove the Jews wrong.

The author of Acts repeatedly portrayed the Roman authorities in a favourable light. Gallio, pro-consul of Achaia, refused to pay attention to Jewish accusations against the disciples of Jesus.⁶⁶ The chief officer was afraid that the Jews might kill Paul and placed two hundred infantrymen, seventy cavalrymen and two hundred light-armed troops to guard him.⁶⁷ King Agrippa would have freed Paul had he not appealed to the emperor.⁶⁸ The centurion Julius, who was entrusted to take Paul to Rome, allowed him to meet friends at Sidon.⁶⁹ Finally, in Rome Paul was left to teach “without hindrance” (Acts 28:30–31).

As far as military service was concerned, the author of Acts not only abstained from condemning it, but he also extolled the faith of two high-ranking officials of the Roman army. The governor Sergius Paulus listened to Barnabas and Paul and was converted to Christianity,⁷⁰ while Cornelius, a centurion of the *Legio Italica*, was already a pious man who admired Peter and invited him to his house.⁷¹ Cornelius, who fasted regularly, was held up by Tertullian as a positive role model.⁷² At the end of the fourth century Basil of Caesarea did the same.⁷³ Augustine chose him as an example of someone who remained in the army who at the same time believed in God.⁷⁴ The example of Cornelius was available for anyone to use as they wished.⁷⁵

The Epistles of the New Testament

The authors of the canonical epistles preached conformism. However, not all Christians shared these ‘conservative’ feelings, and it was the resulting division that was the main reason they composed their works.⁷⁶

“Submit yourselves for the sake of the Lord to every human authority, whether to the emperor as supreme, or to the governors as his deputies for the punishment of those who do wrong and the commendation of those who do right. For this is God’s will ...” (1 Pet. 2:13–15). We find exactly the same message in the Epistle to the Romans 13: “every person must submit to the authorities in power, for all authority comes from God, and the existing authorities are instituted by Him” (Rom. 13:1), for the protection of good and the persecution of the criminals,⁷⁷ “you should pay the taxes” (Rom. 13:6). The author of the Epistle to Titus advised him to exhort the Christians in his congregation “to be submissive to the government and the authorities and to obey them” (Titus 3:1). Paul advised Timothy and his congregation to pray “for everyone and especially for sovereigns and for all in high office” (1 Tim. 2:1–3).

At the end of the first century Clement of Rome could not agree more with the First Epistle of Peter 2:13–15 and Romans 13. God approved of temporal authority and Christians were left with no choice but to respect it.⁷⁸ Tertullian approved of all of the above and encouraged Christians to respect the Roman authorities, but on one condition: if the authorities demanded Christians to venerate false idols then they ought to refuse.⁷⁹ Origen at the end of the second century used the First Epistle to Timothy 2:1–3 to argue, to both Christians and non-Christians, that Christians ought to pray to God to ensure his support for the authorities; these prayers made it unnecessary for Christians to enter the army.⁸⁰

Other conformist messages in the Epistles include the exhortation to women to obey their husbands,⁸¹ children their parents,⁸² slaves their masters,⁸³ and the laity their clergy.⁸⁴ Everyone was to stay as they were.⁸⁵ The rich were advised to do charity,⁸⁶ and not to renounce their wealth.⁸⁷

However, a few passages such as: “God put all in subjection beneath Jesus’ feet” (Eph. 1:22)⁸⁸ and the rulers of this world will be destroyed,⁸⁹ caution against a simple labelling of all the authors of the Epistles as ‘conservative’. “There is no question here of Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman; but Christ is all and in all” (Col. 3:11).⁹⁰ If this is to be taken at face value, how can the advice given to women,⁹¹ children⁹² and slaves⁹³ to respect their superiors be explained?

In his Epistle to the Galatians, Paul composed a catalogue of those who should not expect to enter heaven.⁹⁴ Those who had committed murder were among them, while they were not included in the Epistle to the Romans⁹⁵ or the First Epistle to the Corinthians.⁹⁶ One wonders whether a soldier was regarded as a murderer or whether the fact that he did not know his victim, was under orders to kill and did not stand to gain personally from his victim’s death made him a possible heir to the kingdom of God. Augustine certainly thought so.⁹⁷ But the fact that Augustine repeatedly discussed the matter meant that not all Christians shared his views, compelling him to devise ways to convince them.

Military Metaphors

A final point that requires consideration is that the New Testament contains numerous military metaphors. It is not without significance that during antiquity wars were frequent. Moreover, Christians were met with hostility by Jews and pagans. Military terminology was already current in the cults of other gods, such as Bacchus, Venus, Isis and Mithras.⁹⁸ Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that Christians developed military imagery. Paul was probably the first to introduce the custom of drawing metaphors and similes from the military world (with which he certainly was familiar) to emphasise that Christian life was a continuous fight against the Devil. He thought that violence was necessary for the defeat of evil. Paul was the only canonical writer to have called his fellow Christians *commiliti* or “fellow soldiers”, which was popular with Roman commanders who wished to flatter their armies with an egalitarian and affectionate address. Paul must have thought that the military institutions of the Roman Empire were efficient and that Christians needed to imitate them to defeat their own enemy: the Devil.

Military metaphors generally reveal a deep conformism. Ephesians 6:11–17 is an illustrative example:

Put on the full armour provided by God, so that you may be able to stand firm against the stratagems of the devil. For our struggle is not against human foes, but against cosmic powers, against the authorities and potentates of this dark age, against the superhuman forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, take up the armour of God; then you will be able to

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withstand them on the evil day and, after doing your utmost, to stand your ground. Stand fast, I say. Fasten on the belt of truth; for a breastplate put on integrity, let the shoes on your feet be the gospel of peace to give you firm footing; and with all these, take up the great shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the burning arrows of the evil one. Accept salvation as your helmet, and the sword that the Spirit gives you, the word of God.⁹⁹

It is important to note that the passage stated that only spiritual warfare was necessary and that Christian resistance to temporal authority was illegitimate.

This passage turned out to be one of the most influential of the New Testament in the history of Christianity. It made a profound impression on Christians, especially in the second century. Clement of Alexandria,¹⁰⁰ Ignatius of Antioch¹⁰¹ and Origen¹⁰² repeated, and reassured pagans, that the enemy of God was the Devil and reminded radical Christians that they should only turn against him.

Military metaphors abound in the works of the Christian Fathers, especially in the writings of the early third-century bishop of Carthage, Cyprian. They are often a clear indication of their intention to support the status quo. The divine order had a striking resemblance to the earthly one. Just as generals were austere with their soldiers in order to succeed, God followed the same pattern and acted as a general towards people. Obedience and the ordered ranks of the army were regarded as patterns for the Christian congregation to follow. Just as soldiers were expected to be totally committed to their work and be unquestionably obedient, Christians were to heed the commands of the ecclesiastical and political authorities.¹⁰³

A considerable number of military metaphors describe the persecutions of Christians. Almost every martyr is praised for his military qualities. The *sacramentum* (oath) that soldiers swore on enlistment and renewed annually had great ideological importance.¹⁰⁴ Christian martyrs were also admired for their *ομολογία* (omologia, an oath or confession), proclaiming publicly and exhibiting their Christian faith, and for their determination not to obey civil authority when it demanded something contrary to their faith. When the persecutions ended, equivalents of martyrdom were created. In the sources of the late fourth and fifth centuries, monks and ascetics were presented as soldiers who continued the fight against the Devil and his helpers, the demons.



The New Testament contains many different, and often contradictory, messages on war, violence and military service. Therefore, almost all who appeal to it to justify their positions seem to have a case, even if they hold completely different positions. This confusing picture may indicate that these questions were not poignant or pressing for Jesus. Jesus was not interested in present realities as he was expecting the imminent end of the world. His immediate followers advanced their own interpretations of his deeds and words as they saw fit, according to their political convictions and the circumstances. So did, and still do, subsequent readers of the New Testament.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Albert Schweitzer, *The Kingdom of God and Primitive Christianity*, New York: Seabury Press, 1968 and John G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: the Social World of Early Christianity*, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975.
- 2 All Biblical translations are from the *The Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989.
- 3 See also Matthew 5:22.
- 4 See also Luke 6:29.
- 5 See also Luke 6:27 and 6:35.
- 6 Ambrose, *Epistula 47.5* and *Epistula 138.2.13*.
- 7 Augustine, *De Sermone Domini in Monte 1.20.63–64* and *Contra Faustum 22.76*.
- 8 Augustine, *De Civitate Dei 1.21* and *1.26*.
- 9 Like for example Cecil John Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War. A Contribution to the History of Early Christian Ethics*, London: Headley, 1919, pp. 20–1, Peter Brock, *The Roots of War Resistance. Pacifism from the Early Church to Tolstoy*, New York: Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1981, p. 9; Bernard Häring, *The Healing Power of Peace and Nonviolence*, Slough: St. Paul, 1986, p. 48; John Ferguson, "The Biblical Basis of Pacifism", in Clive Barrett (ed.), *Peace Together. A Vision of Christian Pacifism*, Cambridge: James Clarke, 1987, pp. 14–28 (20); John Driver, *How Christians Made Peace with War. Early Christian Understandings of War*, Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988, p. 16, and also Ronald G. Musto, *Catholic Peacemakers. A Documentary History. From the Bible to the Era of the Crusades*, New York and London: Garland, 1993, pp. 52f., who all rejected the idea that the commandment "Do not commit murder" refers only to private murder. Giovanni Crescenti in *Obiettori di coscienza e martiri militari nei primi cinque secoli del cristianesimo*, Palermo: Flaccovio, 1966, p. 19, could not make up his mind whether the commandment applied to the taking of life in war or not. Andreas Bigelmair in *Die Beteiligung der Christen am öffentlichen Leben in vorkonstantinischer Zeit*, Munich, 1902, p. 165, thought that this precept is a counsel of perfection, valid only in a perfect society and not seriously meant to be practised under existing conditions. Klaus Wengst in *Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ*, London: SCM, 1987, p. 69 and Gerd Theissen in *Social Reality and the Early Christians. Theology, Ethics and the World of the New Testament*, trans. Margaret Kohl, Edinburgh: Clark, 1993, p. 139, were exceptions who did not think that the sermon had anything to do with state relations.
- 10 Luke 16:13.
- 11 Or he was the first Christian who recorded such an interpretation. See Tertullian, *De Idololatria 19* and *De Corona 1.1.4–5*.
- 12 Tertullian, *De Anima 16*.
- 13 Jerome, *Epistula 14 Ad Heliodorum Monachum 6.2* and Paulinus of Nola, *Epistula 25 Ad Crispianum 3* and *Epistula 25 Ad Crispianum 2*.
- 14 Also Mark 12:17 and Luke 20:25.
- 15 *Acta Longini 3*.
- 16 *Acta Montani 4*.
- 17 Tertullian, *De Fuga in Persecutione 5*.

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- 18 C. J. Cadoux, *Early Christian Attitude to War*, p. 31, n. 1. See also José Fernández Ubiña, *Cristianos y militares. La iglesia antigua ante el ejército y la guerra*, Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2000, pp. 149–50.
- 19 Matthew 17:22–27.
- 20 See also Mark 12:14 and Luke 20:22.
- 21 See also Mark 12:17 and Luke 20:25.
- 22 Tertullian, *De Fuga* 12, *De Idololatria* 15 and *Scorpiace* 14.
- 23 Ambrose, *Sermon Contra Auxentii* 2.35–36.
- 24 Tertullian, *De Corona* XII.4.
- 25 Paulinus of Nola, *Epistula* 25.3.
- 26 Eucherius of Lyon, *Passio Acaunensium Martyrum* 3.
- 27 Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 22.74.
- 28 C. J. Cadoux, *Early Christian Attitude to War*, p. 40; Francis Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy*, Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Centre, 1966, vol. 1, p. 446; Wolfgang Schrage, *Die Christen und der Staat nach dem Neuen Testament*, Gütersloh: Mohn, 1971, pp. 34f.; J. G. Davies, *Christians, Politics and Violent Revolution*, London: SCM, 1976, p. 45; K. Wengst, *Pax Romana*, p. 58; Willard M. Swartley, “War and Peace in the New Testament”, in Wolfgang Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, II.26.3, Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996, pp. 2298–408 (2322); J. F. Ubiña, *Cristianos y militares*, pp. 154–6; and Dimitris J. Kyrtatas, “Modes and Relations of Production”, in Anthony J. Blasi, Jean Duhaime, Paul-André Turcotte (eds), *Handbook of Early Christianity. Social Science Approaches*, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002, pp. 529–54 (550).
- 29 Matthew 8:5–13, Luke 7:1–10.
- 30 Matthew 8:9, Luke 7:8. Christians were always proud to have admirers from the upper classes. See for example John 12:42 and 1 Corinthians 16:15.
- 31 Augustine, *Epistula 189 Ad Bonifacem* 4.
- 32 Luca de Regibus, “Milizia e cristianesimo nell’ impero romano”, *Didaskaleion* NS 2 (1924), pp. 41–69 (45).
- 33 Mark 15:39, Luke 25:47.
- 34 Matthew 27:54.
- 35 Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* III.XII.91,1.
- 36 Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 22.74 and *Epistula 189.4*.
- 37 Jean Lasserre, *War and the Gospel*, trans. Oliver Coburn, London: James Clark, 1962, p. 53 and Steve Walton, “The State they Were in: Luke’s View of the Roman Empire” in Peter Oakes (ed.), *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church*, Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002, pp. 1–41 (20).
- 38 Matthew 27:23, Mark 15:14, John 18:28–40.
- 39 Luke 25:4.
- 40 Mark 15:45. For more information on the Christian portrayal of Pilate, see: Paul Winter, *On the Trial of Jesus*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1961, p. 60; A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law* in

the New Testament, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963, p. 25; D. R. Griffiths, *New Testament and the Roman State*, Swansea: John Penry Press, 1970, pp. 70–1; Helen K. Bond, *Pontius Pilate in History and Interpretation*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998, and Dominic Janes, *Romans and Christians*, Stroud: Tempus, 2002, pp. 9–10.

- 41 Orazio Marucchi, "The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ", *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, vol. 4, New York: Robert Appleton, 1908, pp. 519–20 and William Reuben Farmer, *Maccabees, Zealots and Josephus. An Inquiry into Jewish Nationalism in the Greco-Roman Period*, New York: Columbia UP, 1956, p. 197.
- 42 The triumphal entry into Jerusalem was a symbolic seizure of the reins of government and a proclamation of the will of the people to acquire national independence from Roman rule, according to P. Winter, *On the Trial of Jesus*, pp. 141–2. Norman A. Beck in his book *Anti-Roman Cryptograms in the New Testament. Symbolic Messages of Hope and Liberation*, New York: P. Lang, 1997, tried to show that Jesus had a strong desire for liberation from Roman political, economic and social oppression. Revolutionary tendencies might not have been wrongly associated with the movement, after all.
- 43 W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, London; Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984, pp. 108–9, K. Wengst, *Pax Romana*, p. 91 and Justin Taylor, "The Roman Empire in the Acts of the Apostles", in Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, pp. 2436–500 (2492). For the opposite view see K. Aland, "The Relation Between Church and State in Early Times: a Reinterpretation", *Journal of Theological Studies* NS 19 (1968), pp. 115–27 (122).
- 44 Matthew 27:27–31, Mark 15:16–25, Luke 23:11, 23:36 and 23:37 and John 18:2–3.
- 45 Matthew 27:35, Luke 19:23–25.
- 46 Matthew 27:66.
- 47 Matthew 28:12–13.
- 48 Luke 3:14.
- 49 Acts 12:4, 12:6 and 23:23.
- 50 Matthew 27:12 and 27:14, Mark 11:33 and 15:3 and 15:5 and Luke 20:8.
- 51 Luke 23:2.
- 52 Tertullian, *Contra Marcionem* 3.14.
- 53 The authorities had nothing to fear. Origen, *Scholia in Johanem* 1.36.
- 54 Jerome, *Commentarium Evangelium Secundum Matthaeum* lib.iv, cap. xxvi.
- 55 C. J. Cadoux, *Early Christian Attitude to War*, p. 38 and J. Ferguson in "Biblical Basis of Pacifism", p. 26.
- 56 Mark 11:15.
- 57 Luke 19:45–48.
- 58 John 2:12–16.
- 59 C. J. Cadoux, *Early Christian Attitude to War*, pp. 34–5. J. Ferguson in "Biblical Basis of Pacifism", p. 25, was of the same mind as C. J. Cadoux. See also E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, London: SCM, 1987, pp. 61–76 and Paul Beauchamp and Denis Vasse, *La violence dans la Bible*, Paris: Cerf, 1991, pp. 61–2.
- 60 Luke 22:35–38. Jesus referred to an earlier occasion (Matthew 10:9–10 and Mark 6:8–9) when he had sent his disciples unarmed in the world. Now, he appeared more practical.

New Testament Teachings and Readings on the Legitimacy of Warfare

- 61 Adolf von Harnack, *Militia Christi. The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries*, trans. David McInnes, Philadelphia; Fortress Press, 1981 (1905), p. 4.
- 62 C. J. Cadoux, *Early Christian Attitude to War*, p. 39.
- 63 G. Crescenti, *Obiettori*, p. 25.
- 64 J. Ferguson, "Biblical Basis of Pacifism", p. 26.
- 65 Acts 17:7.
- 66 Acts 18:14–15.
- 67 Acts 23:10 and 23:23.
- 68 Acts 26:32.
- 69 Acts 27:3.
- 70 Acts 13:6–12.
- 71 Acts 10:1–48.
- 72 Tertullian, *De Ieiunio*.
- 73 Basil of Caesarea, *Homilia 18.7*.
- 74 Augustine, *Epistula 189.4*.
- 75 See also M. P. Speidel, "The Roman Army in Judaea under the Procurators: the Italian and the Augustan Cohort in the Acts of the Apostles", *Ancient Society* 13–14 (1982–3), pp. 233–40.
- 76 Romans 14:21, 15:6, 16:17; 1 Corinthians 1:10, 1:11, 3:3, 8:13, 11:18, 11:19; 2 Corinthians 12:20, Galatians 1:6, Ephesians 4:1–16, Philippians 2:2.
- 77 Romans 13:2–5
- 78 Clement of Rome, *Epistula I Ad Corinthios* 32.2.
- 79 Tertullian, *De Idololatria* 15.
- 80 Origen, *Contra Celsum* 8, 73.
- 81 1 Corinthians 14:34, Ephesians 5:22–33 and Colossians 3:18–19.
- 82 Ephesians 6:1–4, Colossians 3:20–21.
- 83 Ephesians 6:5–9, Colossians 3:22–25 and 4:1, 1 Timothy 6:1, Titus 2:9.
- 84 1 Timothy 5:1–2 and 5.19, Hebrews 13:17.
- 85 1 Corinthians 7:24. See also 1 Corinthians 15:23.
- 86 1 Timothy 6:18. I am currently engaged in postdoctoral research on early Christian charity and bribery at the University of Thessaly under the supervision of Professor D. J. Kyrtatas.
- 87 G. E. M. Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World from the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests*, London: Duckworth, 1981 and Justo L. Gonzalez, *Faith and Wealth. A History of Early Christian Ideas on the Origin, Significance and Use of Money*, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990.
- 88 See also 1 Corinthians 15:27 and Hebrews 2:8.
- 89 1 Corinthians 2:6.

- 90 See also Galatians 3:28.
- 91 Colossians 3:18–19. On women and Christianity, see Elizabeth A. Clark, “Ideology, History and the Construction of ‘Woman’ in Late Antique Christianity”, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2:2 (1994), pp. 155–84 and Bart D. Ehrman, “The Text as Window: New Testament Manuscripts and the Social History of Early Christianity”, in Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes (eds), *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research. Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001, pp. 361–79 (367–8).
- 92 Colossians 3:20. On Christianity and children, see Diana Wood (ed.), *The Church and Childhood (=Studies in Church History 31)*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.
- 93 Colossians 3:22–25 and 4:1. Wayne A. Meeks attempted to provide an explanation in “The Image of the Androgyne. Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity” in Allen R. Hilton and H. Gregory Snyder (eds), *Wayne A. Meeks. In Search of the Early Christians. Selected Essays*, New Haven: Yale UP, 2002, pp. 3–54.
- 94 Galatians 5:19–21.
- 95 Romans 1:29–31.
- 96 1 Corinthians 6:9–10.
- 97 Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 1.21 and 1.26, *Contra Faustum* 22.70, *De Libero Arbitrio* 1.4.9.25 and 1.5–11.32–13.41 and *Epistula* 47.5.
- 98 See for example the excellent article J. A. North, “Religious Toleration in Republican Rome”, *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* NS 25 (1979), pp. 85–103.
- 99 See also 1 Thessalonians 5:8 and 2 Corinthians 10:4.
- 100 Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* X190P.
- 101 Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Polycarpum* 6.2.
- 102 Origen, *Contra Celsum* 8, 55.27–29.
- 103 A. Jaubert, “Les sources de la conception militaire de l’église en I Clément 37”, *Vigiliae Christianae* 18 (1964), pp. 74–84.
- 104 See Justin, *Apologia Secunda* 39 and Brian Campbell, *War and Society in Imperial Rome 31 BC–AD 284*, London: Routledge, 2002, p. 38.