

THE

HARVESTER

"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

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A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF CARNAL WARFARE

Although there has been a recent increase in patriotic zeal, with victories in Grenada and Panama by the United States armed forces, the Christian must keep in perspective his or her responsibilities to God. We realize that we are bound by the holy writ to, "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 evildoers, 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" (I Peter 2:13-15) and to be "subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates" (Titus 3:1). But, these things are binding only when they do not conflict with the will of God. When there

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is a conflict between the laws of man and the will of God, then *"We ought to obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:29). In this regard, then, we must understand that a Christian cannot occupy a role in any of the armed forces or in any other occupation that might jeopardize his or her commitment to God. There are many scriptures that attest to this fact but we will examine only three of these.

I. **THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.** When a person obeys the Gospel, he or she relinquishes their fleshly citizenship for a spiritual citizenship. We in effect leave one kingdom for another—*"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"* (Col. 1:12-13). We are commanded to be under subjection to those that rule the fleshly kingdom (See Romans 13:1-7), of which we must also live but, what many do not see is that these people were placed in these positions for the benefit of God's children *"For he is the minister of God to thee for good"* (Romans 13:4a). The reason God allows us to live in a wonderful country such as this is so that we will not have to compromise our faith. The need for policemen, soldiers and the like is provided for us by our loving Father. Our Lord plainly taught that a Christian cannot be involved with these things: *"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 unto the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence"* (John 18:36).

II. **THE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE.** The early Christians that died in the Roman Coliseum gladly gave their lives for their faith rather than to raise a weapon of defense. The documentation of husbands and wives subjected to

the horror of watching their young torn apart by wild beasts is very thorough. And yet through it all they clearly understood that they did not wrestle *"against flesh and blood"* (Eph. 6:12) but, *"against spiritual wickedness in high places."* The apostle Paul addressed this very thing: *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds)"* (II Cor. 10:3-4). The warfare that Christians are involved with is fulltime and as such does not allow us the freedom to fight any other way.

As Christians we are commanded to *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:15). If we were engaged in carnal warfare we would not and could not teach 'every creature' the Gospel. Can we imagine extolling the virtues of Christianity to someone as we put a bullet into them? The idea of such is beyond ridiculous. We must center our attention on the war at hand, fighting the greatest enemy of man, SATAN.

III. THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITIES. When we obey the Gospel we put on our Lord Jesus Christ (See Romans 6:1-6 and Romans 8:9-10) and therefore we become like Him. Rather than coming to this world to destroy man He came to save him. This is one of our greatest responsibilities; one we must fulfill. Our Lord proclaimed to the multitude: *"But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also"* (Luke 6:27-29); *"But love ye your enemies, and do good,"* (Luke 6:35) and *"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is*

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merciful" (Luke 7:36). How can we expect to show mercy to our enemies if we are killing them? Our Lord's condemnation of violence must be fulfilled in our lives. We are to be like Him. The Apostle Paul also wrote: *"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good"* (Romans 12:19-21). Notice that Paul did not write to overcome evil with the sword or rifle or cannon or any other instrument of war; but with good.

As a Christian we are commanded to not forsake *"the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"* (Hebrews 10:25). A soldier or police officer is expected to be on 24 hour call and often he or she will put in 7-day work weeks. This would severely jeopardize their attempts to obey any commands for the attendance of worship services. Consideration must also be made concerning the possibility of being sent to someplace that does not have a faithful congregation.

CONCLUSION. It would be best that we never place ourselves in such a position as to

jeopardize our service to God. Serving in the military or on a police force does just that (of course there are other occupations which might likewise cause the same thing). The environment that many are placed in has a tendency to destroy morals rather than to build them. The Apostle Paul wrote, "*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners*" (I Corinthians 15:33).

The term "conscientious objector" carries negative connotations in that many assume this to mean "coward." But its meaning is far from that. It takes much more courage to stand up to one's belief than to just go along. The conscientious objector refuses to serve in the military on the basis of his or her belief in the sanctity of life and/or their devotion to the precepts and principles laid down in God's Holy Word.

In matters of this gravity we must "*let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 2:5). If we do this then we can be assured of our salvation.

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The Bible does not say very much
about homes;
it says a great deal
about the things that make them.
It speaks about life and love
and joy and peace and rest.
If we get a house and put these into it,
we shall have secured a home.

- John Henry Jowett -

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

1. Who spoke until midnight in Troas?
2. Where were the poles for carrying the ark stored?
3. What is the reward of the man who does not yield to temptation?
4. According to Isaiah 43, who was formed, redeemed, called, and possessed by the Lord?
5. How was the earth watered before the great flood?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. For what two royal officials did Joseph interpret dreams while in jail? CHIEF BUTLER AND CHIEF BAKER (Gen. 40:2-23)
2. Where was the school of Tyrannus, in which Paul spoke? EPHEBUS (Acts 19:1,9)
3. In what two places did God say He would put His law? HEARTS AND MIND (Heb. 10:16)
4. To whom does Proverbs advise that strong drink be given? THE PERISHING (Prov. 31:6)
5. As David turned Israel over to Solomon, whose head did he not want to go to the grave in peace? JOAB'S (1 Ki. 2:6)

AS THE MANNER OF SOME IS

(A Series to Promote Church Attendance)

"How often does God expect me to keep going to church?" or "How long must I keep up good attendance?" When confronted with these questions, I am often reminded of the Israelites and their effort toward the work of the tabernacle. This is recorded in Exodus 35:21. "And

they came, every one WHOSE HEART STIRRED HIM UP, and every one WHOM HIS SPIRIT MADE WILLING, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments."

What really amazes me in this story is how the heart guided these people to such an extreme. The children of Israel were stirred up to the extent that they were soon bringing too much! The wise men complained. "And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make." (Exo. 36:5)

Finally Moses had to order the people to stop giving. "So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much." (Exo. 36:6,7) Imagine that! The people were commanded by God to bring free-will offerings (Exo. 35:4-9) and did they! The people continued to bring so much that the Lord had to command them to stop. What kind of a heart could motivate a person to respond like the children of Israel did?

With a similar attitude, we must continue to diligently attend the church services. We already have been given the command (Heb. 10:25) and the examples (Acts 2:42,46), but do we have the heart? Oh, wouldn't it be wonderful if our hearts guided us such that we would want to attend every church service? Every time the doors opened, we would try to be there! What if the building was overflowing, and the pews were packed? What if everyone came to worship the Lord, to the point that He would almost have to shout, "Enough! No More!" Except, ... there IS enough room in heaven for all.

RAY

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place & Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
March 9-11 (F-Su)	Pleasant Grove Church near Alex City, AL 7:00 pm Fri & Sat 10:00 & 6:00 Sunday	V.W. Boland (Gadsden, AL)
Mar 30 thru Apr 1	Brushy Creek Church Lucedale, MS 7:30 evenings	Lindeal Greer (Bogue Chitto, MS)

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WHAT AMERICA NEEDS

A leader like Moses, who refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter but was willing to go with God.

Army generals like Joshua, who knew God and could pray and shout things to pass rather than blow them to pieces with atomic energy.

A good administrator like Joseph, who knew God and had the answer to famine.

Preachers like Peter, who would not be afraid to look people in the eye and say, "Repent or perish," or denounce their personal as well as national sins.

Mothers like Hannah, who would pray for a child that she might give him to God, rather than women who are delinquent mothers of delinquent children.

Children like Samuel, who would talk to God in the night hours.

Physicians like Luke, who could care for physical needs and introduce their patients to Jesus Christ who is a specialist in spiritual trouble.

A God like Israel's, instead of the dollar god, the entertainment god, and the auto god.

A Saviour like Jesus, who could and would save from the uttermost to the uttermost.