

expected of them if they became disciples of Christ. John did not tell them to cease being Tax Collectors, but he told them to be honest and to refuse to cheat the people.⁶ *Second*, the soldiers asked what would be expected of them as followers of Christ. John's answer was three-fold:

- ① Do violence to no man, i.e., do not engage in police abuse. This reveals a distinction between *violence* and a government official doing bodily harm to a criminal. "Violence" here refers to a Roman soldier doing bodily harm to an innocent victim.
- ② Neither accuse any falsely, i.e., do not haul someone into court simply because you dislike him and without evidence.
- ③ Be content with your wages.

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus Christ, so it was his work to explain what was to be expected of them as disciples of Jesus. There is no indication whatsoever these soldiers were to cease being soldiers. In fact, to the contrary, they were told what constituted good soldiers of the civil government! These soldiers of the civil law were to know that if they were to be baptized of John, becoming disciples of Christ, they could *abide in the same calling* wherein they were called. Therefore, Cornelius could abide in the calling wherein he was called, *provided* he allowed himself to be guided by the divine principles of the gospel in his attitude and treatment of others.

GOD ORDAINED THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT

Another reason Cornelius did not need to resign from his position in the civil government was because God ordained the powers that be (Rom. 13:1-7). Paul even stated that the soldier in Jesus' day (and this would include our civil and national defense today) was called, "**the minister of God.**" (Note: Not called this with reference to salvation from sin). He is described as this three times in verses 1-7. God intends for the policeman, the servant employed by the government, to protect the law-abiding citizen. The government bears not the sword in vain, i.e., God even gives the authority to the government branch of policemen *to use force* upon the evildoers of the land. The "**sword**" was a weapon and symbol of death (Acts 12:2, James was

killed by the sword). The policeman or soldier is called God's "**revenger**" who executes "**wrath**" (God's wrath)! Of course, God originated the very concept of government, but God is not to be blamed when evil men are appointed to office. Friend, does this sound like a Christian cannot scripturally serve as a policeman, or an enlisted man, who bears arms?

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

Objection Number One: Someone says, "Granted, Romans 13 teaches the Government officials are to keep and enforce the civil law, but God uses only sinners (non-Christians) to do this dirty work. He wants saints to be busily engaged in the spiritual warfare." **Answers:** *First*, this objection denies that the gospel is universal in scope. God does not have one law for the sinner and another law for the Christian (Acts 17:30). This objector sounds somewhat like the self-righteous Pharisee who prayed to God while thinking he was better than others (Lk. 18:9-14). What kind of a God would let sinners do the "dirty work" of punishing criminals and allow Christians, the examples of light in a dark world, to escape the responsibility? *Second*, God wants the Christian involved in the spiritual warfare in the fight for souls, and this work may be accomplished in whatever *honest* endeavor (career) one is positioned. We cannot escape the fact that we are *in* the world but not *of* the world (Jn. 17:16). We are members of the kingdom of God in the spiritual realm and we are citizens of our nation in the secular realm. Therefore, we abide by the civil law. Being a policeman who labors in a combative role is therefore optional, unless drafted. (It is not the purpose of this tract to discuss the Draft. The civil law makes an exception for the *conscientious objector*, so that he may serve in a noncombative position). A Christian may choose to volunteer as an enlisted soldier, who also labors in a combative role, and be perfectly within scriptural bounds.

Objection Number Two: "But how can one hate the enemies of Caesar and at the same time love the enemies of Jesus?" This faulty argument says that enlisted men in times of war are trained to hate the enemy. **Answer:** The soldier (in order to please God) must love his enemy, but hate his criminal acts! It is possible to love the sinner and hate his sinful behavior (Jn. 8:1-11).

Objection Number Three: "Since it is not revealed what Cornelius personally did after his conversion, you are speaking where the Bible does not speak to say he could continue to be a Roman soldier without sinning." **Answer:** The course to pursue for the Christian who was (is) a soldier in the military of his country may be determined by a study of the New Testament of Christ. We may know the truth (Jn. 8:32). Any person may know whether the Lord approves or disapproves of his particular occupation (whatever that occupation may be). God has given all things that pertain unto life and Godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). We are to be wise and understand the will of the Lord (Eph. 5:17). We are to give diligence in our study of the Word of Truth, as workmen who rightly divide it (2 Tim. 2:15). When the scriptural position is determined through a study of the 27

books of the New Testament (with reference to the occupation contained in the title of this tract), then that position may be applied to the case of Cornelius. This is the approach this tract has pursued. Authorization by necessary inference (implication) is one of the three ways a position is authorized by the New Testament of Christ. It is *implied* that Cornelius could continue in his position.

SUMMARY

Cornelius could remain a soldier as long as he allowed the gospel to control his attitude and treatment of others. Just so, a policeman or an enlisted man (who works in a combative role) who becomes a Christian may remain in that honorable calling wherein he was called, *provided* he allows himself to be guided by the divine principles of the New Testament. ☪

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May A Christian
Be A Policeman
And Bear Arms?



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