

JASON PORTERFIELD



100 EARLY CHRISTIAN  
QUOTES ON  
**NOT KILLING**

# INTRODUCTION

“Above all,” Clement of Alexandria wrote in the second century, “Christians are not allowed to correct by violence sinful wrongdoings.” These words sum up well the church’s original stance on violence. Under no circumstances—be it war, vengeance or even self-defense—were Christians permitted to harm another person. So central was this conviction, that not a single writing from the church’s first three hundred years advocates otherwise.

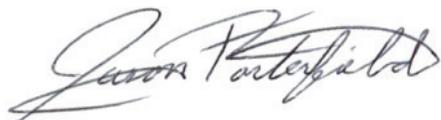
Sadly, few Christians still hold this view today. And those that do are usually dismissed as naïve idealists. Yet the early church’s firm stance on the subject should, at the very least, cause us to pause and consider what they have to say. After all, it’s unwise to only listen to contemporary Christian voices. Learning from Christians throughout time and place protects us from being caught up by every passing, theological fad.

What’s more, some of the quotes in this e-book are from Christian leaders who were taught directly by the apostles. As my friend Eddy Hall once wrote:

“When we want to better understand the teachings of Jesus, it can help to look at the lives of the early Christians. The apostles learned much more from watching and listening to Jesus than could be included in the Gospels. While the writings of these early Christians don’t have the authority of Scripture, they give us valuable insight into how the apostles, and those who learned directly from the apostles, understood and practiced Jesus’ teachings.”

In the pages that follow, I simply want to allow the earliest Christians to speak for themselves on the topic of violence. For 1700 years, their clear teaching on the subject has been pushed aside and ignored. It’s high time we consider what they have to say.

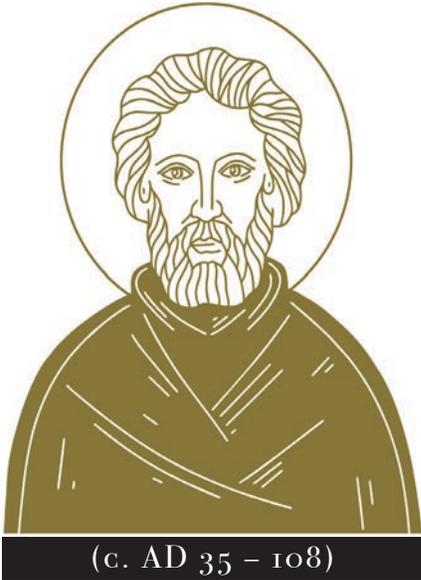
For the peacemakers,



Jason Porterfield

Author of *Fight Like Jesus: How Jesus Waged Peace Throughout Holy Week*.  
Available in audiobook, paperback, hardcover and e-book formats.

# IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH



1. “Nothing is better than peace, by which all war of those in heaven and those on earth is abolished.”<sup>1</sup>

## THE DIDACHE (c. AD 80 – 120)

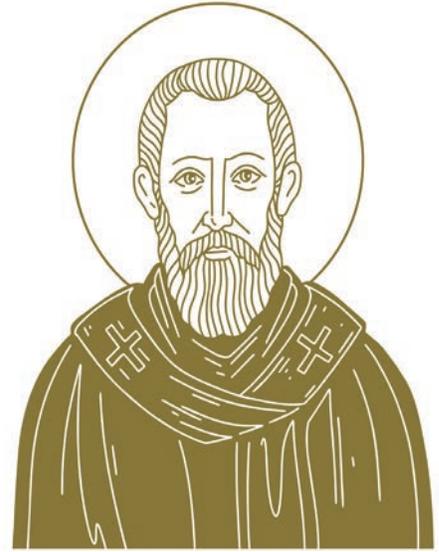
2. “Bless those who curse you, pray for your enemies, and fast on behalf of those who persecute you: for what thanks will be due to you, if ye love only those who love you? Do not the Gentiles also do the same? But love those who hate you, and you will not have an enemy.”<sup>2</sup>

3. “If anyone give thee a blow upon the right cheek, turn the other also to him, and thou shalt be perfect.”<sup>3</sup>

4. “Thou shalt not plan any evil against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not hate any man; but some thou shalt reprove, on some thou shalt have mercy, for some thou shalt pray, and some thou shalt love above thine own soul.”<sup>4</sup>

## POLYCARP

5. “God will raise us from the dead if we do His will and walk in His commandments...not rendering evil in return for evil, or reviling in return for reviling, or fisticuff in return for fisticuff, or curse in return for curse.”<sup>5</sup>



(c. AD 69 – 155)

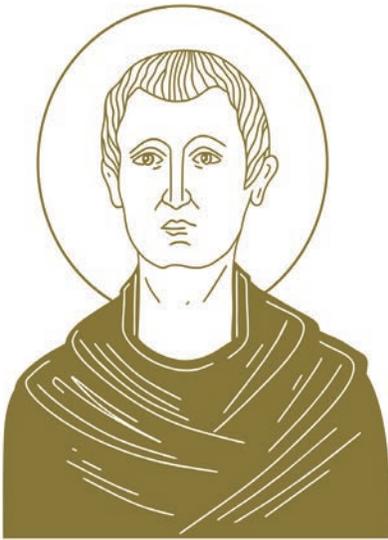
## JUSTIN MARTYR (c. AD 100 – 167)

6. “If you love merely those that love you, what do you do that is new?”<sup>6</sup>
7. “We who formerly slaughtered one another now not only do not make war upon our enemies, but for the sake of neither lying nor deceiving those judges who examine us, gladly die confessing Christ.”<sup>7</sup>
8. Spoken to the Romans: “But if the soldiers enrolled by you, and who have taken the military oath, prefer their allegiance to their own life, and parents and country, and all kindred, though you can offer them nothing incorruptible, it were verily ridiculous if we, who earnestly long for incorruption, should not endure all things, in order to obtain what we desires from Him who is able to grant it.”<sup>8</sup>

9. “And we who had been filled with war and mutual slaughter and every wickedness, have each one—all the world over—changed the instruments of war, the swords into ploughs and the spears into farming instruments, and we cultivate piety, righteousness, love for men, faith and the hope which is from the Father Himself through the Crucified One.”<sup>9</sup>

10. “We who hated and slew one another, and because of differences in customs would not share a common hearth with those who were not of our tribe, now, after the appearance of Christ, have become sociable, and pray for our enemies, and try to persuade those who hate us unjustly, in order that they, living according to the good suggestions of Christ, may share our hope of obtaining the same reward from the God who is Master of all.”<sup>10</sup>

## TATIAN



(c. AD 110 - 170)

11. “I do not want to be a king. I do not wish to be rich. I decline military command. I hate fornication.”<sup>11</sup>

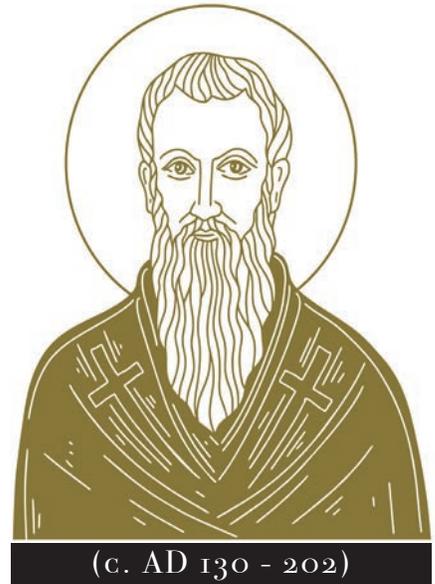
# IRENÆUS

12. “Christians know not how to fight, but when they are struck, offer the other cheek also.”<sup>12</sup>

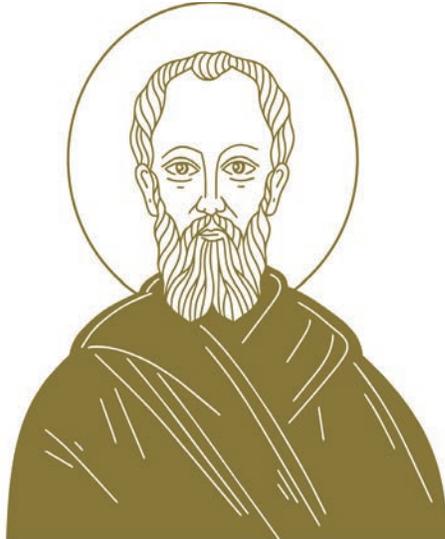
13. “No more shall the law say: ... thou shalt not kill, to him who has put away from himself all anger and enmity... Nor an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, to him who counts no man his enemy, but all his neighbors, and therefore cannot even put forth his hand to revenge.”<sup>13</sup>

14. “With the Lord ... not only is the actual murderer held guilty of having killed another to his own damnation, but the person also who is angry with his brother without a cause: [Christ] commanded His disciples not only not to hate people, but also to love their enemies; and [He] enjoined them ... not only not to strike, but even, when themselves struck, to present the other cheek to those that mistreated them.”<sup>14</sup>

15. “But if the law of liberty, that is, the word of God, preached by the apostles (who went forth from Jerusalem) throughout all the earth, caused such a change in the state of things, that these nations did form the swords and war-lances into ploughshares, and changed them into pruning hooks for reaping the corn, that is, into instruments used for peaceful purposes, and that they are now unaccustomed to fighting, but when smitten, offer also the other cheek then the prophets have not spoken these things of any other person, but of Him who effected them. This person is our Lord.”<sup>15</sup>



# ATHENAGORAS



(c. AD 133 - 190)

16. “We have learned not only not to strike back and not to go to law with those who plunder and rob us, but with some, if they buffet us on the side of the head, to offer the other side of the head to them for a blow, and with others, if they take away our tunic, to give them also our cloak.”<sup>16</sup>

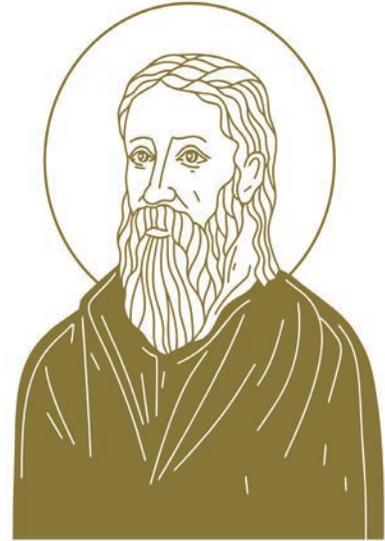
17. “It is not lawful when Christians are struck, not to offer themselves for more blows, nor, when defamed, not to bless. For it is not enough to be just—and justice is to return like for like—but it is incumbent upon us to be good and patient of evil.”<sup>17</sup>

18. “We Christians cannot endure to see a man being put to death, even justly.”<sup>18</sup>

19. “Among us you will find uneducated persons, and artisans, and old women, who, if they are unable in words to prove the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds exhibit the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth: they do not rehearse speeches, but exhibit good works; when struck, they do not strike again; when robbed, they do not go to law; they give to those that ask of them, and love their neighbors as themselves.”<sup>19</sup>

# CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

20. “Above all, Christians are not allowed to correct by violence sinful wrongdoings.”<sup>20</sup>



(c. AD 150 - 215)

21. “If you enroll as one of God’s people, heaven is your country and God your lawgiver. And what are his laws? ... Thou shalt not kill.... Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. To him that strikes thee on the one cheek, turn also the other.”<sup>21</sup>

22. “If the loud trumpet summons soldiers to war, shall not Christ with a strain of peace to the ends of the earth gather up his soldiers of peace? A bloodless army he has assembled by blood and by the word, to give to them the Kingdom of Heaven. The trumpet of Christ is his gospel. He has sounded, we have heard. Let us then put on the armor of peace.”<sup>22</sup>

23. “We are trained, not in war, but in peace. War needs great preparation, but peace and love require no arms nor extensive outlay.”<sup>23</sup>

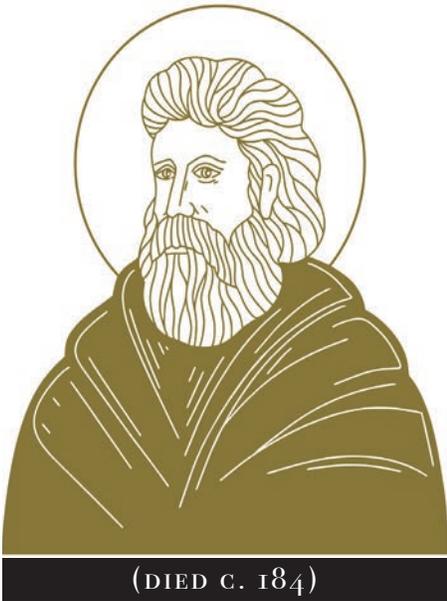
24. Clement speaks of the Christian poor as “an army without weapons, without war, without bloodshed, without anger, without defilement.”<sup>24</sup>

25. “We do not train women like Amazons to be manly in war, since we wish even the men to be peaceable.”<sup>25</sup>

## ARISTIDES OF ATHENS (DIED C. AD 134)

26. “It is the Christians, O Emperor, who have sought and found the truth, for they acknowledge God.... They show love to their neighbors. They do not do to another what they would not wish to have done to themselves. They speak gently to those who oppress them, and in this way they make them their friends. It has become their passion to do good to their enemies.... This, O Emperor, is the rule of life of the Christians, and this is their manner of life.”<sup>26</sup>

## ATHENAGORAS



(DIED C. 184)

27. “In regard to our being well-disposed, not only to those of our own tribe, as some think, but also to our enemies, Isaiah the prophet said, ‘Say to those that hate and curse you, you are our brothers, in order that the name of the Lord may be glorified and it may be seen in their gladness.’”<sup>27</sup>

## APOLLONIUS (DIED AD 185)

28. “Christ taught us to allay our anger, to increase our love for others, and not to punish those who wrong us.”<sup>28</sup>

## TERTULLIAN (c. AD 160 – 225)

29. “If we are enjoined to love our enemies, whom have we to hate? If injured, we are forbidden to retaliate. Who then can suffer injury at our hands?”<sup>29</sup>

30. “Shall the son of peace be engaged in battle when for him it is unlawful to go to war?”<sup>30</sup>

31. “And shall a Christian diligently guard at night, leaning and resting on his spear the while with which Christ’s side was pierced?”<sup>31</sup>

32. “Shall it be held lawful to make an occupation of the sword, when the Lord proclaims that he who uses the sword shall perish by the sword? And shall the son of peace take part in the battle when it does not become him even to sue at law?”<sup>32</sup>

33. **“CHRIST, IN DISARMING PETER,  
DISARMED EVERY SOLDIER.”<sup>33</sup>**

34. “If one were to make an exception for the Christian as soldier, when for every Christian the command to openly confess the faith is binding even in the face of torture, one would overturn the essence of the sacrament of Baptism.”<sup>34</sup>

35. “Jesus cursed the works of the sword for ever after.”<sup>35</sup>

36. “Truth, gentleness and justice: Who shall produce these results with the sword, and not rather those that are contrary to gentleness and justice, namely, deceit and harshness and injustice which are of course the proper business of battles?”<sup>36</sup>

37. “How often you inflict gross cruelties on Christians..., yet banded together as we are, ever so ready to sacrifice our lives, what single case of revenge for injury are you able to point to?”<sup>37</sup>

38. “For the old law vindicated itself by the vengeance of the sword, and plucked out eye for eye, and requited injury with punishment; but the new law pointed to clemency, and changed the former savagery of swords and lances into tranquility, and refashioned the former infliction of war upon rivals and foes of the law into the peaceful acts of ploughing and cultivating the earth.”<sup>38</sup>

39. “Christ is promised not as one who is powerful in war, but as a bringer of peace.”<sup>39</sup>

40. “For what war should we not be fit and eager, even though unequal in numbers, we who are so willing to be slaughtered—if, according to that discipline of ours, it was not more lawful to be slain than to slay?”<sup>40</sup>

41.

“THE CHRISTIAN DOES NOT  
HURT EVEN HIS ENEMY.”<sup>41</sup>

42. “It is absolutely forbidden to repay evil with evil.”<sup>42</sup>

43. “But how will a Christian make war—nay, how will he serve as a soldier in peacetime—without the sword, which the Lord has taken away?”<sup>43</sup>

44. “Military service does not hold out escape from punishment of sins.... Nowhere does the Christian change his character.”<sup>44</sup>

45. “But now inquiry is being made concerning these issues. First, can any believer enlist in the military? Second, can any soldier, even those of the rank and file or lesser grades who neither engage in pagan sacrifices nor capital punishment, be admitted into the church? No on both counts.”<sup>45</sup>

46. “The universal rule of patience is contained in this essential commandment: we may not do evil even when it might seem justifiable.”<sup>46</sup>

47. “We pray to God for our enemies, and beseech blessings on our persecutors.”

48. “God puts his prohibition on every sort of man-killing by that one summary precept: ‘Thou shalt not kill’... God certainly forbids us to hate even with a reason for our hating; for he commands us to love our enemies.”

## EPISTLE TO DIOGNETUS (WRITTEN LATE SECOND CENTURY)

49. “Christians love all people, and are persecuted by all; ... they are reviled, and they bless; they are insulted, and are respectful.”<sup>49</sup>

## MINUCIUS FELIX (LATE SECOND TO EARLY THIRD CENTURY)

50. “It is not right for us either to see or hear of a man being slain; and so careful are we to abstain from human blood, that we do not even touch the blood of eatable animals in our food.”<sup>50</sup>

## PSEUDO-JUSTINIAN *Address to the Greeks* (WRITTEN AD 180 TO 240)

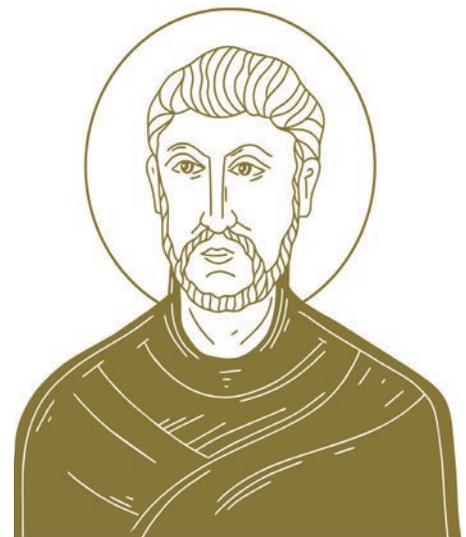
51. “Learn about the incorruptible King, and know His heroes who never inflicted slaughter on the peoples.”<sup>51</sup>

## DIDASCALIA APOSTOLORUM (WRITTEN C. AD 230)

52. “Do not accept money for the church from soldiers who behave unrighteously or from those who kill men or from executioners or from any of the magistrates of the Roman Empire who are stained in wars and have shed innocent blood.”<sup>52</sup>

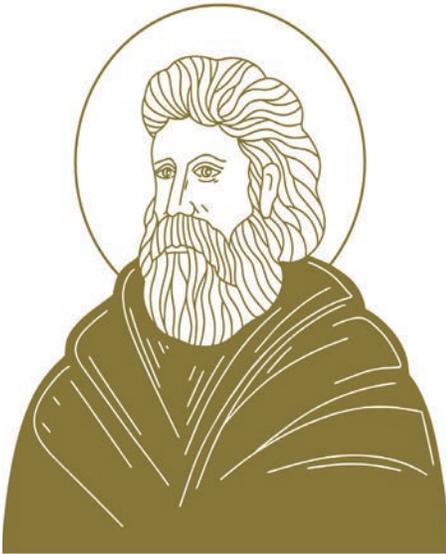
## HIPPOLYTUS OF ROME

53. “The professions and trades of those who are going to be accepted into the community must be examined. The nature and type of each must be established ... brothel, sculptors of idols, charioteer, athlete, gladiator... give it up or be rejected. A military constable must be forbidden to kill, neither may he swear; if he is not willing to follow these instructions, he must be rejected.”<sup>53</sup>



(c. AD 170 – 235)

# ORIGEN



(c. AD 185 -254)

54. “Christians cannot slay their enemies.” <sup>54</sup>

55. “To those who ask us whence we have come or whom we have for a leader, we say that we have come in accordance with the counsels of Jesus to cut down our warlike and arrogant swords of argument into ploughshares, and we convert into sickles the spears we formerly used in fighting. For we no longer take ‘sword against a nation,’ nor do we learn ‘any more to make war,’ having become sons of peace for the sake of Jesus, who is our leader.” <sup>54</sup>

56. “God did not deem it becoming to his own divine legislation to allow the killing of any man whatsoever.” <sup>56</sup>

57. “If a revolt had been the cause of the Christians existing as a separate group ..., the Lawgiver of the Christians would not have forbidden entirely the taking of human life. He taught that it was never right for His disciples to go so far against a man, even if he should be very wicked.... Moreover, if Christians had originated from a revolt, they would not have submitted to laws which were so gentle, which caused them to be killed ‘as sheep,’ and made them unable ever to defend themselves against their persecutors.” <sup>57</sup>

58. “You cannot demand military service of Christians any more than you can of priests. We do not go forth as soldiers with the emperor even though he demands it.” <sup>58</sup>

59. “Concerning the Christians, ... they have been taught not to defend themselves against their enemies; and because they have kept the laws which command gentleness and love to man, on this account they have received from God that which they could not have succeeded in doing if they had been given the right to make war, even though they may have been quite able to do so.”<sup>59</sup>

60. “But taking simply what He says, ‘those who take the sword shall perish by the sword,’ we should beware lest because of warfare or the vindication of our rights or for any occasion we should take out the sword, for no such occasion is allowed by this evangelical teaching, which commands us to fulfill what is written, ‘with those who hated me, I was pacific.’ If therefore with those who hate peace we must be pacific, we must use the sword against no one.”<sup>60</sup>

61. **“THE GOSPEL DOCTRINE OF PEACE  
DOES NOT PERMIT PEOPLE TO TAKE  
VENGEANCE EVEN UPON ENEMIES.”<sup>61</sup>**

CYPRIAN (c. AD 202 - 258)

62. “God designed iron for tilling, not killing.”<sup>62</sup>

63. “Homicide is a crime when individuals commit it, but it is called a virtue, when it is carried on publicly.”<sup>63</sup>

64. “None of us offers resistance when he is seized, or avenges himself for your unjust violence, although our people are numerous and plentiful ... it is not lawful for us to hate, and so we please God more when we render no requital for injury ... we repay your hatred with kindness.”<sup>64</sup>

65. “And what more—that you should not curse; that you should not seek again your goods when taken from you; when buffeted you should turn the other cheek; and forgive not seven times but seventy times seven, ...that you should love your enemies and pray for your adversaries and persecutors?”<sup>65</sup>

66. “When an injury has been received, one has to remit and forgive it.... Requital for wrongs is not to be given.... Enemies are to be loved.”<sup>65</sup>

67. “The hand that has held the Eucharist must not be sullied by the blood-stained sword.”<sup>67</sup>

## COMMODIANUS (c. AD 250)

68. “Make thyself a peacemaker to all men.”<sup>68</sup>

69. “Do not hurt anyone.”<sup>69</sup>

## DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA (DIED AD 264)

70.

“LOVE IS EVER ON THE ALERT TO DO GOOD  
EVEN TO HIM WHO IS  
UNWILLING TO RECEIVE IT.”<sup>70</sup>

71. “He [Jesus] seized the weapons from their hands, and rent from them every occupation that relies upon them.”<sup>71</sup>

## LACTANTIUS (c. AD 250-325)

72. Christians are “those who are ignorant of wars, who preserve concord with all, who are friends even to their enemies, who love all men as brothers, who know how to curb anger and soften with quiet moderation every madness of the mind.... This we believe to be to our advantage, that we should love you and confer all things upon you who hate us.”<sup>72</sup>

73. “God has commanded that enmities are never to be contracted by us, but are always to be removed, so that we may soothe those who are our enemies by reminding them of their relationship to us.”<sup>73</sup>

74. “For he who endeavors to return an injury, desires to imitate that very person by whom he has been injured. Thus, he who imitates a bad man can by no means be good.”<sup>74</sup>

75. “No exception at all ought to be made to the rule that it is always wrong to kill a man, whom God has wished to be a sacrosanct creature.”<sup>75</sup>

76. “But if God alone were worshipped, there would not be dissensions and wars, since people would know that they are the children of one God; and, therefore, among those who were connected by the sacred and inviolable bond of divine relationship.”<sup>76</sup>

77. “Cicero [a critic of Christianity] says in his *De Officiis*, ‘He is a good man who profits those whom he can, and injures no one unless provoked by injury.’ Oh, how he marred a simple and true sentiment by the addition of a few words. For what need was there of adding these words, ‘unless provoked by injury’? that he might append vice as a disgraceful tail to a good man and might represent him without patience, which is the greatest of all the virtues. He said that a good man would inflict injuries if he were provoked: now he must necessarily lose the name of a good man from this very circumstance, if he shall inflict injury.”<sup>77</sup>

78.

“FOR HOW CAN HE BE JUST WHO  
INJURES, HATES, DESPOILS, KILLS?  
AND THOSE WHO STRIVE TO SERVE  
THEIR COUNTRY DO ALL THESE THINGS.”<sup>78</sup>

79. “For when God forbids us to kill, he not only prohibits us from open violence, which is not even allowed by the public laws, but he warns us against the commission of those things which are esteemed lawful among men. Thus, it will be neither lawful for a just man to engage in warfare, since his warfare is justice itself, nor to accuse anyone of a capital charge, because it makes no difference, whether you put a man to death by word, or rather by sword, since it is the act of putting to death itself which is prohibited.”<sup>79</sup>

80. “For what are the interests of our country, but the inconveniences of another state or nation?—that is, to extend the boundaries which are evidently taken from others, to increase the power of the state, to improve the revenues—all which things are not virtues, but the overthrowing of virtues; for in the first place, the union of human society is taken away, innocence is taken away, the abstaining from the property of another is taken away; lastly, justice itself is taken away, which is unable to bear the tearing asunder of the human race, and wherever arms have glittered, must be banished and exterminated from thence.”<sup>80</sup>

81. “What then, or where, or of what character is piety? Truly, it is among those who are ignorant of wars, who maintain concord with all, who are friendly even to their enemies, who love all people as brothers and sisters, who know how to restrain their anger, and to soothe all fury of mind by quiet control.”<sup>81</sup>

82. “Patience is to be regarded as a very great virtue; and that the just man might obtain this, God willed ... that he should be despised as sluggish. For unless he shall have been insulted, it will not be known what fortitude he has in restraining himself. Now if, when provoked by injury, he has begun to follow up his assailant with violence, he is overcome. But if he shall have repressed that emotion by reasoning, he altogether has command over himself. He is able to rule himself. And this restraining of oneself is rightly named patience, which single virtue is opposed to all vices and affections.”<sup>82</sup>

83. Spoken of the Romans during the Great Persecution, Lactantius writes, “If anyone has slain a single man, he is regarded as contaminated and wicked, nor do they think it right that he should be admitted to this earthly dwelling of the gods. But he who has slaughtered endless thousands of men, deluged the fields with blood, and infected rivers with it, is admitted not only to a temple, but even to heaven.”<sup>83</sup>

84. Addressed to his Roman critics, Lactantius writes, “Oh how great the darkness ... that you imagined the ascent to heaven to be open to people through slaughters and bloodshed! And Cicero also assented to this delusion.... If this is the virtue which renders us immortal, I for my part should prefer to die, rather than to be the cause of destruction to as many as possible. If immortality can be obtained in no other way than by bloodshed, what will be the result if all shall agree to live in harmony?”<sup>84</sup>

85. “From what source do contests, fightings and contentions arise among men, except that impatience opposed to injustice often excites great anger? But if you meet injustice with patience ..., it will immediately be extinguished as though you should pour water on a fire. But if that injustice which provokes opposition has met with impatience equal to itself, as though overspread with oil, it will excite so great a firestorm, that no stream can extinguish it, but only the shedding of blood.”<sup>85</sup>

86. “His is not a fool who does not even spare himself to prevent injury to another, which is an evil.... A person who has the knowledge of good and evil abstains from committing an injury even to his own damage.”<sup>86</sup>

## ARNOBIUS (c. AD 255 – 330)

87. “For since we—so large a force of men—have received it from his teachings and laws, that evil ought not to be repaid with evil, that it is better to endure a wrong than to inflict it, to shed one’s own blood rather than stain one’s hands and conscience with the blood of another, the ungrateful world has long been receiving a benefit from Christ, through whom the madness of savagery has been softened.”<sup>87</sup>

88. Contrasting Jesus with the rulers of the Roman Empire, Arnobius asks, “Did Jesus claim royal power for himself, occupy the whole world with fierce armies, destroy and remove peaceful nations, and compel others to put their necks beneath his yoke and obey him?” <sup>88</sup>

89. “If Christ had determined that none should do him violence, he would have striven to the utmost to repel his enemies, even by directing his power against them. Could not he, then, who had restored sight to the blind, make his enemies blind if it were necessary? ... Would it have been difficult for him who raised the dead from their tombs to inflict death on whom he would? But ... he, with gentleness passing understanding and belief, ... submitted to the violence of savage and most hardened soldiers.” <sup>89</sup>

## THE EGYPTIAN CHURCH ORDER

(PROBABLY EARLY THIRD CENTURY)

90. “The soldier who is of inferior rank shall not kill anyone. If ordered to, he shall not carry out the order, nor shall he take the oath. If he does not accept this, let him be dismissed. Anyone who has the power of the sword or the magistrate of a city who wears the purple, let him give it up or be dismissed. The catechumen or believer who wish to become soldiers shall be dismissed, because they have despised God.” <sup>90</sup>

## MAXIMILIAN OF TEBESSA (AD 274 – 295)

91. Maximilian was the son of a Roman soldier, and thus was legally mandated to enlist in the military at the age of 21. On March 12, 295, he was brought before the proconsul of Africa to swear allegiance to the Emperor as a soldier. He refused, stating, “I cannot serve as a soldier; I cannot do evil; I am a Christian.” For these remarks, Maximilian was promptly beheaded. <sup>91</sup>

## MARCELLUS THE CENTURION (c. AD 250 – 298)

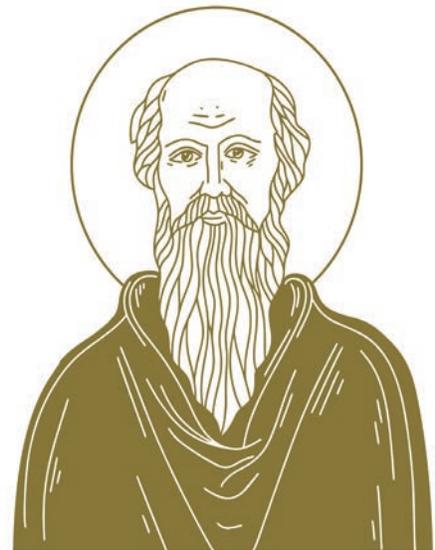
92. On occasion of the Emperor's birthday, Marcellus cast off his military belt and called out, "I serve Jesus Christ, the eternal king." When brought before a judge for his insubordinate act, he explained, "I threw down my arms; for it was not seemly that a Christian man, who renders service to the Lord Christ, should render it also by inflicting earthly injuries." For this, he was martyred.<sup>92</sup>

## TYPASIUS THE MARTYR (DIED AD 304)

93. When Typasius was ordered to serve in the army, he answered, "Now I serve Christ. Before I served the world." When commanded a second time to take his place in the ranks, he responded, "No one after victory returns to the battle. As far as I am concerned, I have conquered the world; I have enrolled among the servants of Christ. I am a soldier of Christ, I serve Christ; and if you want to rage against me, it is for Christ that I shall suffer."<sup>93</sup>

## ATHANASIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

94. "Christians, instead of arming themselves with swords, extend their hands in prayer."<sup>94</sup>



(c. AD 296 – 373)

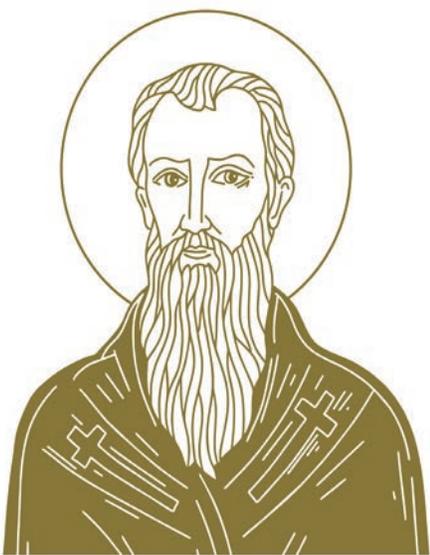
## MARTIN OF TOURS (AD 316 – 397)

95. Forced to join the Roman army, Martin modeled kindness to his fellow soldiers and extreme generosity to the poor. On the eve of his first battle, however, Martin declared, “I am the soldier of Christ. It is not lawful for me to fight.” When ridiculed as a coward, he replied, “I will take my stand unarmed before the line of battle tomorrow, and in the name of the Lord Jesus, protected by the sign of the cross and not by shield or helmet, I will safely penetrate the ranks of the enemy.” On the following day, the barbarians surrendered without battle, and Martin’s life was spared. <sup>95</sup>

## PSEUDO-CLEMENTINE RECOGNITIONS (c. AD 320-380)

96. **“WARS AND CONTESTS ARE BORN FROM SIN;  
BUT WHERE SIN IS NOT COMMITTED  
THERE IS PEACE TO THE SOUL.”** <sup>96</sup>

## BASIL OF CAESAREA



(AD 330 – 379)

97. Lamenting the world’s glorification of violence, Basil wrote, “Many gain glory from the valor they show in battle. They go so far as to boast of the murder of their brothers. Indeed, military courage and the triumphal arches erected by a general or the community exist only through the magnitude of the murder.” <sup>97</sup>

## AMBROSE (c. AD 340 – 397)

98. Ambrose composed the following poem for the anniversary of three martyrs: Victor, Nabor and Felix.

The faith of the maternal Church  
Filled them with Holy Spirit  
And was crowned thrice  
By the holy blood of martyrs.  
Having torn them away from the impious camps,  
She consecrated them as Christ's soldiers....  
They do not request iron arms  
Nor weapons, these soldiers of Christ....  
For the true man, faith is a shield  
And death a victory.<sup>98</sup>

## THE TESTAMENT OF THE LORD (WRITTEN LATE FOURTH TO EARLY FIFTH CENTURY)

99. "If anyone be a soldier or in authority, let him be taught not to oppress or to kill or to rob, or to be angry or to rage and afflict anyone. But let those rations suffice him which are given to him. But if they wish to be baptized in the Lord, let them cease from military service or from the post of authority, and if not let them not be received."<sup>99</sup>

100. "Let a catechumen or a believer of the people, if he desires to be a soldier, either cease from his intentions, or if not let him be rejected. For he has despised God by his thought, and leaving the things of the Spirit, he has perfected himself in the flesh, and has treated the faith with contempt."<sup>100</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, 13.2.
- <sup>2</sup> *Didache*, 1.2.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.3.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.6f.
- <sup>5</sup> Polycarp, *The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians*, 2.
- <sup>6</sup> Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 15.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.
- <sup>9</sup> *Idem*, Dialogue with Trypho, 109f.
- <sup>10</sup> *Idem*, *First Apology*, 14.
- <sup>11</sup> Tatian, *Address to the Greeks*, 11.
- <sup>12</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 4.34.
- <sup>13</sup> *Idem*, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, 96.
- <sup>14</sup> *Idem*, *Against Heresies*, 2.32.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.34.
- <sup>16</sup> Athenagoras, *A Plea for the Christians*, 1.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.
- <sup>20</sup> Clement, *frag* in Maximus Confessor, *Serm* 55. (see Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, xci. 965).
- <sup>21</sup> *Idem*, *Exhortation to the Greeks*, 10.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.
- <sup>23</sup> *Idem*, *The Educator*, 1.12.
- <sup>24</sup> *Idem*, *Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?*, 34.
- <sup>25</sup> *Idem*, *Miscellanies*, 4.8.
- <sup>26</sup> Aristides, *Aristides' Apology*, 15.3.
- <sup>27</sup> Theopholis, *To Autolytus*, 3.14.
- <sup>28</sup> Apollonius, *Acts of Apollonius*, 37.
- <sup>29</sup> Tertullian, *Apology*, 37.
- <sup>30</sup> *Idem*, *On Idolatry*, 19.
- <sup>31</sup> *Idem*, *The Military Crown*, 11.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.
- <sup>33</sup> *Idem*, *Apology*, 37.
- <sup>34</sup> *Idem*, *The Military Crown*, 11.
- <sup>35</sup> *Idem*, *On Patience*, 3.
- <sup>36</sup> *Idem*, *Against Marcion*, 3.14.
- <sup>37</sup> *Idem*, *Apology*, 37.
- <sup>38</sup> *Idem*, *Against the Jews*, 3.
- <sup>39</sup> *Idem*, *Against Marcion*, 3.21.
- <sup>40</sup> *Idem*, *Apology*, 37.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.
- <sup>42</sup> *Idem*, *On Patience*, 10.
- <sup>43</sup> *Idem*, *On Idolatry*, 19.
- <sup>44</sup> *Idem*, *The Military Crown (de Corona Militia)*, 11.
- <sup>45</sup> *Idem*, *On Idolatry*, 19.
- <sup>46</sup> *Idem*, *On Patience*, 6.
- <sup>47</sup> *Idem*, *Apology*, 31.
- <sup>48</sup> *Idem*, *On the Spectacles*, 2, 16.
- <sup>49</sup> *The Epistle to Diognetus*, 5.11, 15.
- <sup>50</sup> Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 30.6.
- <sup>51</sup> Pseudo-Justinian, *Address to the Gentiles*, 5.
- <sup>52</sup> *Didascalia Apostolorum* IV, 6.4.
- <sup>53</sup> Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*, 16.9-17.
- <sup>54</sup> Origen, *Against Celsus*, 7.26.
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.33.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.7.
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.7.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.73.
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.8.
- <sup>60</sup> *Idem*, *Commentary on Matthew*, 26:52. Quoted in Windass, "War," 240.
- <sup>61</sup> *Idem*, *Against Celsus*, 2.30.
- <sup>62</sup> Cyprian, *On the Dress of Virgins*, 11.
- <sup>63</sup> *Idem*, *To Donatus*, 6.
- <sup>64</sup> *Idem*, *To Demetrian*, 17.
- <sup>65</sup> *Idem*, *On the Good of Patience*, 16.
- <sup>66</sup> *Idem*, *Testimonies Against the Jews*, 3.22, 49.
- <sup>67</sup> *Idem*, *On the Good of Patience*, 14.
- <sup>68</sup> Commodianus, *Instructions*, 2.22.
- <sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.22.
- <sup>70</sup> Dionysius, *Epistle* 14.
- <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.63.
- <sup>72</sup> Lactantius, *The Divine Institutions* V, 10.10. and 12.10.
- <sup>73</sup> *Idem*, *The Divine Institutions* VI, 10.5.
- <sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.25.
- <sup>75</sup> *Idem*, *The Divine Institutions* VI, 20.15-17.
- <sup>76</sup> *Idem*, *The Divine Institutions* V, 8.
- <sup>77</sup> *Idem*, *The Divine Institutions* VI, 18.10-20.
- <sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.20, 22.
- <sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.10, 15-17.
- <sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.18-24.
- <sup>81</sup> *Idem*, *The Divine Institutions* V, 10.
- <sup>82</sup> *Idem*, *The Divine Institutions* VI, 18.29-32.
- <sup>83</sup> *Idem*, *The Divine Institutions* I, 18.8-10.
- <sup>84</sup> *Idem*, *The Divine Institutions* VI, 18.
- <sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.10-20.
- <sup>86</sup> *Idem*, *The Divine Institutions* V, 18.
- <sup>87</sup> Arnobius, *Against the Pagans*, 1.6.
- <sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.1.
- <sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.63.
- <sup>90</sup> *Apostolic Tradition*, 16.
- <sup>91</sup> Ruinart, *Acta Martyrum*, 341.
- <sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.
- <sup>93</sup> *Passio Sancti Typasii Veterani*
- <sup>94</sup> Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 8.52.
- <sup>95</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Mart.*, 4, 3.
- <sup>96</sup> Pseudo-Justinian, *Address to the Greeks*, 5 init.
- <sup>97</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *Homilies on the Psalms*, 61, 4.
- <sup>98</sup> Ambrose, *Hymn XI*, in PL, *Supplementum I* (Paris, 1958), cols 584-585.
- <sup>99</sup> *The Testament of the Lord*, see Bradshaw et al., *Apostolic Tradition*, 91.
- <sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

## THE AUTHOR



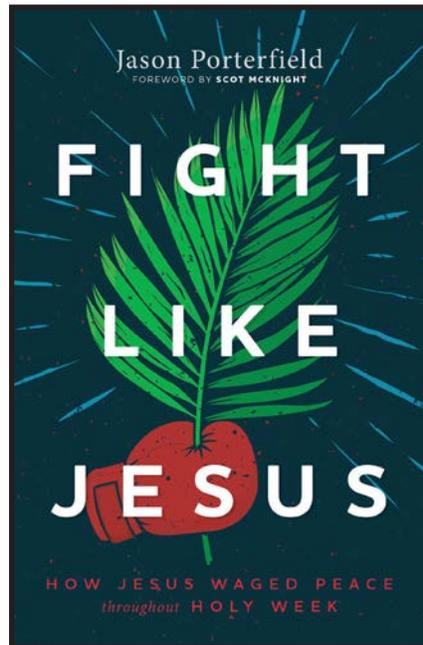
**JASON PORTERFIELD** has made his home in places abandoned by society, from Canada's poorest neighborhood to the slums of Indonesia. His passion is to cultivate God's shalom wherever it is painfully absent and to help churches embrace their peacemaking vocation.

In 2007, Jason joined Servants ([servantsasia.org](http://servantsasia.org)), an international network of Christian communities living and ministering among the urban poor. He was a founding member of the Servants team in Vancouver, started a new team in Indonesia, and directed operations in North America through 2015.

Jason holds a masters in theology from Fuller Theological Seminary and is the author of *Fight Like Jesus*, a groundbreaking book that equips readers with practical peacemaking skills as it examines how Jesus confronted injustice and contended for peace on each day of Holy Week.

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## ALSO FROM JASON PORTERFIELD



THROUGHOUT HOLY WEEK, TWO COMPETING APPROACHES TO PEACEMAKING COLLIDE. WHAT IF WE'VE EMBRACED THE WRONG ONE?

At the start of Holy Week, tears streamed down Jesus' face as he cried out, "If only you knew the things that make for peace." From that moment, until a week later when he triumphantly declared, "Peace be with you," Jesus spent each day confronting injustice, calling out oppressors and contending for peace.

But what if—despite all our familiarity with the events of Holy Week—we still don't know how Jesus makes peace? And what if—despite clinging to the cross of Christ for our salvation—we've actually embraced a different approach to peacemaking? One that justifies killing enemies. One whose methods include nailing criminals to crosses.

We desperately need to recover the radical vision of peacemaking that Jesus embodied throughout Holy Week. And we urgently need to be trained in his way of making peace. So, come. Let's journey together day by day through Jesus' final week and discover anew why he is called the Prince of Peace.

