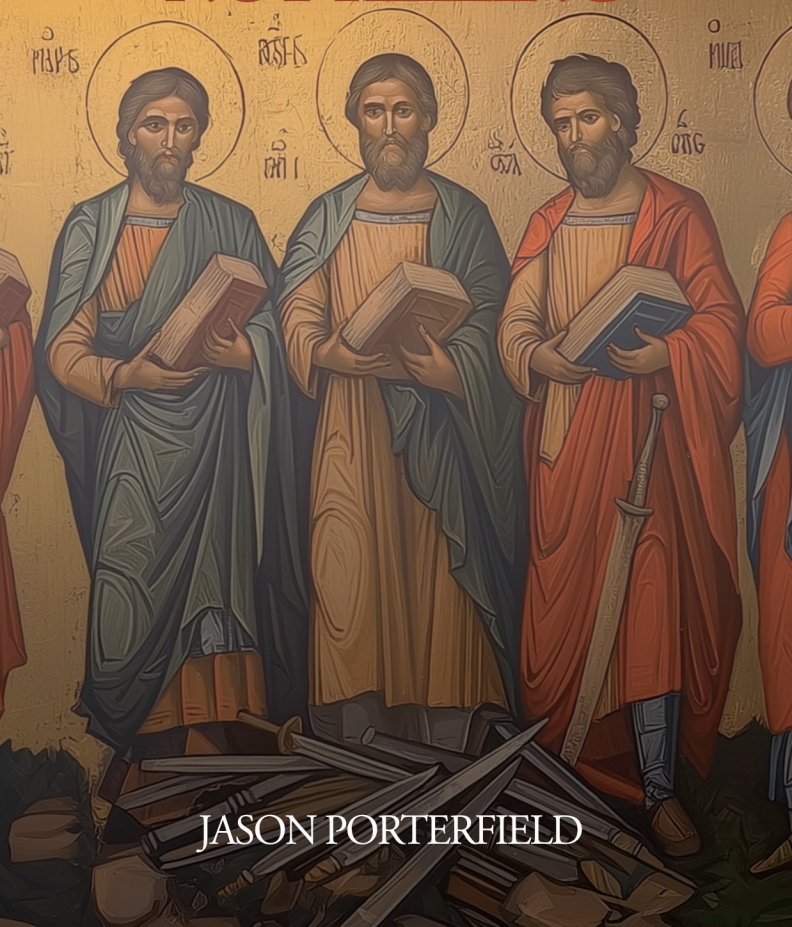


140 EARLY CHRISTIAN QUOTES ON NOT KILLING



JASON PORTERFIELD

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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 Christian writer 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

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throughout time and place protects us from being caught up by every passing, theological fad.

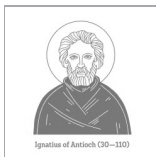
What's more, some of the quotes in this e-book are from Christian leaders who were taught directly by the apostles. As my friend Eddy Hall once wrote:

“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 largely been pushed aside and ignored. It's high time we listen to our forebears in the faith.

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IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH (C. AD 35 - 108)



1. "Nothing is better than peace, by which all war of those in heaven and those on earth is abolished."
2. "Let your baptism endure as your arms, your faith as your helmet, your love as your spear, and your patience as your complete armor."

THE DIDACHE (C. AD 80 - 120)

3. "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

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also do the same? But love those who hate you, and you will not have an enemy.”

4. “If anyone gives you a blow upon the right cheek, turn the other also to him, and you shall be perfect.”

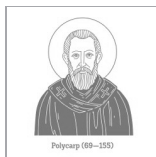
5. “You shall not plan any evil against your neighbor. You shall not hate any man; but some you shall reprove, on some you shall have mercy, for some you shall pray, and some you shall love above your own soul.”

SECOND EPISTLE OF CLEMENT (C. AD 120 - 140)

6. “For when they hear from us that God says, ‘It is no credit to you if you love those who love you, but it is a credit to you if you love your enemies and those who hate you,’ when they hear these things, they marvel at such extraordinary goodness.”

POLYCARP (AD 69 - 155)

7. “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.”



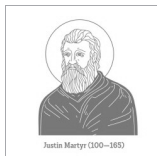
ARISTIDES OF ATHENS (DIED C. AD 134)

8. "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."

JUSTIN MARTYR (C. AD 100 - 167)

9. "If you love merely those that love you, what do you do that is new?"

10. "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."



11. 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.”

12. “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.”

13. “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.”

14. “Listen, my friends, to the Scripture which induces me to act thus: Jesus commanded us to love even our enemies, as was predicted by Isaiah in many passages.”

15. “For we ought not to quarrel. He has not wished us to imitate the wicked, but rather by our patience and meekness to draw all men from shame and evil desires. This we can show in the

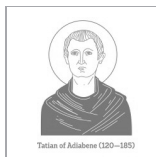
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case of many who were once on your side but have turned from the ways of violence and tyranny, overcome by observing the consistent lives of their neighbors, noting the strange patience of their injured acquaintances.”

16. “For it is plain that, though beheaded, crucified and thrown to wild beasts, and chains, fire and all other kinds of torture, we do not give up our confession. But the more such things happen, the more do others and in larger numbers become faithful, and worshippers of God through the name of Jesus.”

TATIAN (C. AD 110 - 170)

17. “I do not want to be a king. I do not wish to be rich. I decline military command. I hate fornication.”



18. “You wish to make war, and you take Apollo as a counsellor of slaughter. ... You select a divinity to be your accomplice. ... But we repudiate the demons [of war], following the one God.”

EPISTLE OF MATHETES TO DIOGNETUS (C. AD 130 - 180)

19. “Christians love all people, and are perse-

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cuted by all; ... they are reviled, and they bless; they are insulted, and are respectful.”

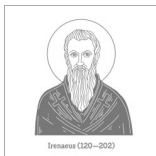
20. “Doing good they [the Christians] are punished as evil-doers; being punished they rejoice, as if they were thereby quickened by life. War is waged against them as aliens by the Jews, and persecution is carried on against them by the Greeks, and yet those that hate them cannot tell the reason of their hostility.”

IRENAEUS (C. AD 130 - 202)

21. “Christians know not how to fight, but when they are struck, offer the other cheek also.”

22. “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.”

23. “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.”



24. "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."

25. "Those who formerly acted like animals and waged war on other people have now been transformed by faith in Christ."²³

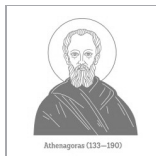
ATHENAGORAS (C. AD 133 - 190)

26. "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."

27. "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.”

28. “We Christians cannot endure to see a man being put to death, even justly.”



29. “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.”

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (C. AD 150 - 215)

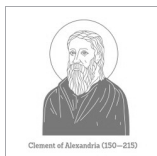
30. “Above all, Christians are not allowed to correct by violence sinful wrongdoings.”

31. “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.”

32. “If the loud trumpet summons soldiers to war, shall not Christ with a strain of peace issued

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to the ends of the earth gather up his soldiers of peace? By his own blood and by his word, he has assembled any army that sheds no blood in order to give them the Kingdom of Heaven. The trumpet of Christ is his gospel. He has sounded it, and we have heard it. Let us then put on the armor of peace.”



33. “We are trained, not in war, but in peace. War needs great preparation, but peace and love require no arms nor excessive supplies.”

34. Clement speaks of the Christian poor as “an army without weapons, without war, without bloodshed, without anger, without defilement.”

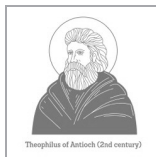
35. “We do not train women like Amazons to be manly in war, since we wish even the men to be peaceable.”

36. “Wisdom pronounces anger a wretched thing, because ‘it will destroy the wise.’ And now He bids us ‘love our enemies, bless them that curse us, and pray for them that despitefully use us.’”

THEOPHILUS (DIED C. AD 184)

37. “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.”



APOLLONIUS (DIED AD 185)

38. “Christ taught us to allay our anger, to increase our love for others, and not to punish those who wrong us.”

TERTULLIAN (C. AD 160 - 225)

39. “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?”

40. “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, though, if it were held right among us to repay evil by evil, a single night with a torch or two could achieve an ample vengeance?”

41. “Has Rome’s religion been the source of its prosperity? ... Their greatness was not the result of their religion. Indeed, how could religion make a people great who have owed their greatness to their irreligion? For, if I am not mistaken, kingdoms and empires and acquired by wars,

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and are extended by victories. More than that, you cannot have wars and victories without the taking and destruction of cities."

42. "And shall a Christian diligently guard at night, leaning and resting on his spear the while with which Christ's side was pierced?"

43. "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? Will a man who does not avenge wrongs done to himself have any part in chains, prisons, tortures and punishments? "

44. "Christ, in disarming Peter, disarmed every soldier."

45. "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."

46. "Jesus cursed the works of the sword for ever after."

47. "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?"

48. Regarding military service: "There is no agreement between the divine and the human sacrament, the standard of Christ and the standard of the devil, the camp of light and the camp of darkness. One soul cannot serve two masters—God and Caesar."

49. "For the practice of the Old Law was to avenge itself with the sword, to take an eye for an eye and to repay injury for injury. But the practice of the New Law was to focus on clemency and to turn bloodthirsty swords and lances to peaceful uses and to change the warlike acts against rivals and enemies into the peaceful pursuits of plowing and farming the land."

50. "Christ is promised not as one who is powerful in war, but as a bringer of peace."

51. "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?"

52. "The Christian does not hurt even his enemy."

53. "It is absolutely forbidden to repay evil with evil."

54. "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?"

55. "Military service does not hold out escape from punishment of sins.... Nowhere does the Christian change his character."

56. "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."

57. "The universal rule of patience is contained in this essential commandment: we may not do evil even when it might seem justifiable."

58. "We pray to God for our enemies, and beseech blessings on our persecutors."

59. "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."

60. "Our religion commands us to love even our enemies, and to pray for those who persecute us, aiming at a perfection all its own, and seeking in its disciples something of a higher type than the commonplace goodness of the world. For all love those who love them; it is peculiar to Christians alone to love those that hate them."

61. "Is the military crown of triumph made of leaves or of corpses? Is it adorned with ribbons or with tombs? Is it bedewed with ointments or with the tears of wives and mothers? It may be of some Christians too, for Christ is also among the barbarians."

62. "If someone attempts to provoke you to manual violence, the admonition of the Lord is at hand: 'To him,' He says, 'who smites you on the face, turn the other cheek likewise.' Let outrageousness grow weary from your patience."

63. "For what difference is there between provoker and provoked, except that the former is detected as prior in evil-doing, but the latter as posterior? Yet each stands impeached of hurting a person in the eye of the Lord, who both prohibits and condemns every wickedness. In evil doing there is no account taken of order, nor does place separate what similarity conjoins. And the precept is absolute, that evil is not to be repaid with evil."

64. "Truth, meekness and righteousness: Who shall produce these results with the sword, and not their opposites rather—deceit, harshness and injury—which, it must be confessed, are the proper business of battles?"

65. "Christ is promised not as powerful in war, but pursuing peace."

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66. "You have the work of the apostles which also predicted: 'How beautiful are the feet of them which preach the gospel of peace, which bring good tidings of good,' not of war nor evil tidings."

67. "The situation is different if the faith comes to a man after he is in the army, as with the soldiers whom John admitted to baptism and the converted centurion whom Christ praised and the one whom Peter instructed in the faith. Nonetheless, once a man has accepted the faith and has been marked with its seal, he must immediately leave the service."

68. "Anger has been prohibited. ... Christ says, 'Love your personal enemies, bless your cursers, and pray for your persecutors, that you may be sons of your heavenly Father.'"

MINUCIUS FELIX (LATE SECOND TO EARLY THIRD CENTURY)

69. "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."

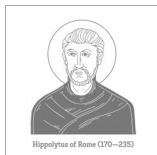
PSEUDO-JUSTINIAN EXHORTATION TO THE GREEKS (WRITTEN AD 180 TO 240)

70. "Learn about the incorruptible King, and know His heroes who never inflicted slaughter on the peoples."

DIDASCALIA APOSTOLORUM (WRITTEN C. AD 230)

71. "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."

HIPPOLYTUS OF ROME (C. AD 170 - 235)



72. "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."

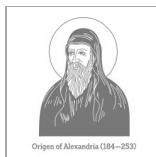
ORIGEN (C. AD 185 -254)

73. "Christians cannot slay their enemies."

74. "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."

75. "God did not deem it becoming to his own divine legislation to allow the killing of any man whatsoever."

76. "If a revolt had given rise to the Christian community, if Christians took their origin from the Jews, who were allowed to take up arms in defense of their possessions and to kill their enemies, the Christian Lawgiver would not have forbidden entirely the taking of human life. He taught that it was never right for His disciples to take such action against a man even if he were the greatest wrongdoer. [Jesus] considered it contrary to his divinely inspired legislation to approve any kind of homicide whatsoever. If



Christians had started with a revolt, they would never have submitted to the kind of peaceful laws which permitted them to be slaughtered like sheep and which made them always incapable of taking vengeance on their persecutors because they followed the law of gentleness and love."

77. "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."

78. "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."

79. "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."

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80. "The Gospel doctrine of peace does not permit people to take vengeance even upon enemies."

81. "They [the Christians] were taught not to avenge themselves upon their enemies, and have thus observed the laws of a mild and philanthropic character. ... They would not, although able, have made war even if they had received authority to do so."

82. "The only way one becomes a son of the Father who is in heaven is by loving one's enemies and praying for one's persecutors."

83. "If the horrible wars related in the Old Testament were not to be interpreted in a spiritual sense, the apostles would never have transmitted the Jewish history books for reading in the church to the disciples of Christ, who came to teach peace."

84. "But if all the Romans, according to the supposition of Celsus, embrace the Christian faith, they will, when they pray, overcome their enemies, or rather, they will not war at all, being guarded by that divine power."

CYPRIAN (C. AD 202 - 258)

85. "God designed iron for tilling, not killing."

86. "Homicide is a crime when individuals commit it, but it is called a virtue, when it is done in the name of the state."

87. "None of us offers resistance when he is seized, or avenges himself for your unjust violence, although our people are numerous and plentiful."

88. "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."

89. "When an injury has been received, one has to remit and forgive it.... Requital for wrongs is not to be given.... Even our enemies must be loved."

90. "The hand that has held the Eucharist must not be sullied by the blood-stained sword."

91. "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and a murderer does not arrive at the kingdom of heaven nor does he live with God. He cannot be with Christ, who preferred to be an imitator of Judas rather than of Christ."

92. "Love those whom you hated before. ... Your sacrifices will be accepted, when you shall come to God as a peacemaker."

93. "A gladiatorial combat is being prepared that blood may delight the lust of cruel eyes. ... Man is killed for the pleasure of man, and to be able to kill is a skill, is an employment, is an art. Crime is

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not only committed but is taught. What can be called more inhuman, what more repulsive? It is a training that one may be able to kill, and that he kills is a glory. ... And at such impious and terrible spectacles they do not realize that with their eyes they are killers of their own kin."

94. "You should love your enemies and pray for your adversaries and persecutors. ... And this we see done in the case of Stephen, who, when he was slain by the Jews with violence and stoning, did not ask for vengeance for himself, but for pardon for his murderers."

COMMODIANUS (C. AD 250)

95. "Make thyself a peacemaker to all men."

96. "Do not hurt anyone."

DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA (DIED AD 264)

97. "Love is ever on the alert to do good even to him who is unwilling to receive it."

98. "He [Jesus] seized the weapons from their hands, and rent from them every occupation that relies upon them."

LACTANTIUS (C. AD 250-325)

99. "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."

100. "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."

101. "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."

102. "No exception at all ought to be made to the rule that it is always wrong to kill a man, whom God willed to be a sacred creature."

103. "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."

104. "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."

105. "For how can he be just who injures, hates, despoils, kills? And those who strive to serve their country do all these things."

106. "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."

107. "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."

108. "What would you do to those who give the name of justice to the tortures inflicted by tyrants of old, who fiercely raged against the innocent. Though they are teachers of injustice and cruelty, they wish to appear just and prudent. ... Is justice so hateful to you? ... If we appear to you wise, imitate us. If foolish, despise us or even laugh at us, if you please; for our folly is profitable to us. Why do you lacerate us? Why do you afflict us? We do not envy your wisdom. We prefer this folly of ours. We embrace it. We believe that it is expedient for us to love you, and to confer all things upon you who hate us."

109. "He is the wisest person who prefers to perish rather than injure another."

110. "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."

111. 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."

112. 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! ... 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."

113. "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 over-spread with oil, it will excite so great a firestorm, that no stream can extinguish it, but only the shedding of blood."

114. "He 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."

115. "It is no less evil to return an injury than it is to inflict one."

116. "We must avoid them [the shows] because they are a strong enticement to vice, and they have an immense capacity for corrupting souls. ... For anybody who finds it pleasurable to watch a man being slain (however justly the person was condemned) has violated his own conscience as much as if he had been a spectator and participant in a clandestine murder."

ARNOBIUS (C. AD 255 - 330)

117. "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."

118. 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?"

119. "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."

APOSTOLIC TRADITION (EARLY THIRD CENTURY)

120. "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 purple, let him give it up or be excluded. A catechumen or believer who wishes to become a soldier shall be dismissed, because they have despised God."

MAXIMILIAN OF TEBESSA (AD 274 - 295)

121. Maximilian was the son of a Roman soldier, which meant he was legally mandated to enlist in the military at the age of 21. On March 12, 295, he stood 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." Because of this, Maximilian was promptly beheaded.

MARCELLUS THE CENTURION (C. AD 250 - 298)

122. 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

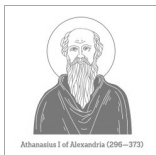
service to the Lord Christ, should render it also by inflicting earthly injuries." For this, he was martyred.

TYPASIUS THE MARTYR (DIED AD 304)

123. 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."

ATHANASIUS OF ALEXANDRIA (C. AD 296 - 373)

124. "The barbarians ... rage furiously against each other and cannot bear to be a single hour without weapons. But when they hear the teaching of Christ, they turn from fighting to farming. And instead of arming themselves with swords, they extend their hands in prayer."



125. "While they were still idolaters, the Greeks and Barbarians were always at war with each other, and were even cruel to their own kith and kin. Nobody

could travel by land or sea at all unless he was armed with swords, because of their irreconcilable quarrels with each other. Indeed, the whole course of their life was carried on with weapons. But since they came over to the school of Christ, as men moved with real compunction, they have laid aside their murderous cruelty and are war-minded no more. On the contrary, all is peace among them and nothing remains save desire for friendship."

126. "Who, then, is He Who has done these things and has united in peace those who hated each other, save the beloved Son of the Father, the common Savior of all, Jesus Christ."

MARTIN OF TOURS (AD 316 - 397)

127. 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.

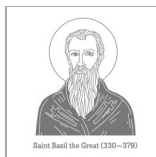
PSEUDO-CLEMENTINE LETTERS (C. AD 320-380)

128. "Wars and contests are born from sin; but where sin is not committed there is peace to the soul."

BASIL OF CAESAREA (AD 330 - 379)

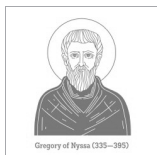
129. Lamenting the world's glorification of violence, Basil wrote, "Many gain glory from the valor they show in battle. They go so far as to boast of the murder of their brothers. Indeed, military courage and the triumphal arches erected by a general or the community exist only through the magnitude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

130. "Nothing is so characteristically Christian as being a peacemaker, and for this reason our Lord has promised us peacemakers a very high reward."



131. I cannot persuade myself that without love to others, and without, as far as rests with me, peaceableness towards all, I can be called a worthy servant of Jesus Christ."

GREGORY OF NYSSA (C. AD 335 - 394)



132. "Zachariah blessed his murderers while standing between the temple and altar of incense (Matt. 23:35-7); John proclaimed God's help when Herod beheaded him (Matt.

14:1 ff.); the Apostles blessed those who bound and persecuted them; and all the martyrs loved their persecutors."

THE CANONS OF HIPPOLYTUS (C. AD 336 - 340)

133. "Whoever has received the authority to kill, or else a soldier, they are not to kill in any case, even if they receive the order to kill. ... A Christian must not become a soldier."

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

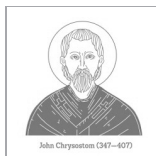
134. Borrowing heavily from the earlier *Apostolic Tradition* church order, *The Testament of the Lord* declares: "If anyone be a soldier or in authority, let him be taught not to oppress or to kill or to rob, or to be angry or to rage and afflict anyone. But let those rations suffice him which are given 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. 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."

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (C. AD 347 - 407)

135. "As it is not to be imagined that the fornicator and the blasphemer can partake of the sacred Table, so it is impossible that he who has an enemy, and bears malice, can enjoy the holy communion. ... I forewarn, and testify, and proclaim this with a voice that all may hear: 'Let no one who hath an enemy draw near the sacred table, or receive the Lord's body! Let no one who draws near have an enemy! Do you have an enemy? Draw not near! Do you wish to draw near? Be reconciled, and then draw near, and touch the Holy Thing!'"

136. "We are commanded to have only one enemy, the devil. With him never be reconciled! But with a brother, never be at enmity in your heart.



137. "Prayer for our enemies is the very highest summit of self-control."

138. "Praying against one's personal enemies is a transgression of the law [of the Gospel]. ... For it is not on behalf of their own sins that they beseech God; nor are they asking forgiveness of the offenses committed by them; but they are exerting this earnestness against their enemies, doing just the same thing as if one, after whetting his sword, were not to use the weapon against his enemies, but to thrust it through his own throat. So, these also use their prayers not for the remission of their own sins, but about revenge on their enemies; which is to thrust the sword against themselves."

139. "How great a punishment must they deserve, who, far from themselves forgiving, do even entreat God for vengeance on their enemies."

140. "To love our enemies is to love God, who has enjoined it, who has given it as His law. To imitate Him is to love our enemy."

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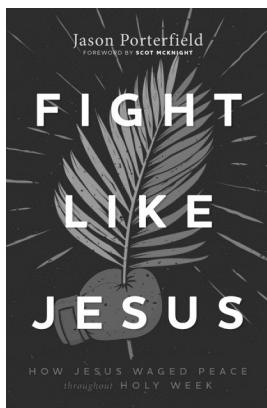
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