
CARNAL WARFARE

(Laws & Arguments)

George Battey

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Does the U.S. constitution guarantee conscientious objection status?
- 2) As of 1985, how did El Salvador recruit men for military service?
- 3) What are the two classifications of Cos and what is the difference between them?
- 4) What is the philosophy of the Medical Corps?
- 5) Does a person have to be a pacifist to qualify as a CO?
- 6) What was the most common reason draft boards denied CO status to applicants during the Vietnam War?
- 7) What is the last resort some men take when denied a CO status by a draft board?
- 8) In what ways is defending your family from an intruder different than participating in a war?
- 9) What sort of "*active force*" may a Christian use?

INTRODUCTION

One of the best documented facts in the Christian religion is that early Christians refused participation in carnal warfare.

Constantine

A significant change occurred in the 3rd century. Constantine gave official support to Christianity. A compromise was made between church and state and men claiming to be Christians soon became soldiers as well.

Augustine

The writings of Augustine on the "Just War" Theory finally influenced the church and the church officially sanctioned Christian participation in the armed services.

Mohandas Gandhi once said:

The only people on earth who do NOT see Christ and His teachings as nonviolent are Christians!

(Brown, ix)

Unfortunately, what Gandhi said is true!

OT PROPHECIES

The Biblical case for non-participation in war begins in the OT. The prophets of old looked forward to a day when God's new kingdom would be established and His people would "*learn war no more.*"

Isaiah 2:4 -- teaches God's people would beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Isaiah 9:6-7 -- foresaw Jesus as the "Prince of peace" and "of the increase of his government and peace there would be no end".

Isaiah 11:6-9 -- predicts that men with ferocious, violent spirits would dwell peaceably within the kingdom of heaven.

Other prophecies include:

- Isaiah 60:18
- Hosea 2:18
- Zechariah 9:10

NT PASSAGES

As we come to the NT Scriptures we see almost immediately these prophecies starting to unfold.

Luke 1:79 -- John the Baptist was born and would lead God's people into the "way of peace."

Luke 3:14 -- After John began preaching he warned the soldiers to: "Do violence to no man."

Matthew 5:3-12 -- Jesus began His famous "*Sermon on the Mount*" with the beatitudes:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit"

"Blessed are they that mourn"

"Blessed are the meek"

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness"

"Blessed are the merciful"

"Blessed are the pure in heart"

"Blessed are the peacemakers"

"Blessed are the persecuted"

(No one could enumerate eight other qualities that are more antagonistic to war!)

Verses 21-22 -- we are not to kill, nor even to be angry with our brother.

Verse 39 -- we are to "*turn the other cheek.*"

Verse 44 -- we are to love our enemies and to such a degree that we bless them, do good to them and pray for them.

Matthew 10:16 -- Jesus sent His disciples out with the charge to "*be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*"

Luke 9:53-56 -- Jesus rebuked James and John for wanting to call down fire from heaven to destroy a city. Jesus stated that He came to save the lives of men, not to destroy them.

Luke 10:27 -- Jesus taught us we should love our neighbor as ourselves and in the rest of that chapter Jesus taught us that our neighbor is any man on earth that needs our help!

Matthew 26:52 -- When Peter used violence to protect Jesus, the Lord rebuked him: "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

John 18:36 -- When on trial for His life Jesus told Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight ..."

Romans 12:17-21

¹² Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

²⁰ Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

Ephesians 6:12

¹⁶ For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

¹⁵ See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

The call to be peaceable and gentle toward all men is not based on just one or two isolated "proof texts." The call for peace is an underlying message throughout the entire NT.

In view of all that the Bible teaches concerning war, God's people cannot consistently serve in the armed services. In the event of a draft we must file as conscientious objectors.

That brings us now to the major thrust of my assignment: What are the current laws governing conscientious objection?

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

NOTE: The material contained in this section is based on information gathered in 1989.

Many people feel that the conscientious objection status stems from the 1st Amendment of the constitution which guarantees freedom of religion. ***This is incorrect.***

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1931 (in the case of U.S. v. MacIntosh) that there is no such constitutional right.

We have this right only because the draft law, passed by Congress, allows it to exist.

OTHER COUNTRIES

As of 1985 there were only four countries in the world that constitutionally guaranteed conscientious objection to military service:

- West Germany
- The Netherlands
- Austria
- Finland

Although the CO status in this country is not guaranteed by the constitution, we are fortunate to at least have a law providing for it. In other countries the situation is much worse.

France

A CO provision was granted in 1963, but it was illegal for anyone to publish or distribute literature that mentioned the statute until 1983!

Greece

Only Jehovah's Witnesses are recognized as COs. Other objectors are serving prison sentences, or leaving the country.

El Salvador

As of 1985, the armed forces recruited men by abducting them off the streets and the conscience of a man played no part in the process!

WHAT IS CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION?

To qualify as a CO the law says:

"... a person must show that his deeply and sincerely held religious, moral or ethical beliefs cause him to feel opposed to taking part in all war in any form."

(Johnson, 82)

Notice that this definition contains three distinct requirements of a CO applicant:

- A man's beliefs must be based on religious, moral, or ethical grounds
- He must be opposed to all wars
- He must be sincere in what he believes

Receiving this classification is more involved than simply writing that sentence down and sending it to the draft board!

TWO CLASSIFICATIONS

There are two classifications of COs:

1-A-O: opposed to ***combat***, but willing to enter the military in non-combatant positions

1-O: opposed to all military service

Of the two, the 1-A-O classification is the easier to get because this man will go into the military and fill the draft quota.

(However, no one should request a 1-A-O status just because it's easier to get. If a 1-A-O later requests a 1-O status he stands a poor chance of success and could lose his 1-A-O status in the process.)

THE 1-A-O

If given the 1-A-O status the draftee will:

- Enter the military as a non-combatant
- Go thru complete military training and orientation, but
- Will not be trained or used in bearing arms

Instead, he will be trained to perform a non-combatant job. (During Vietnam the majority of these men were trained to be medics.)

The odds are extremely high that this CO will end up in a combat zone working on the front lines -- since that is where medics are needed.

NOTE: The only difference between a 1-A draftee and a 1-A-O is that the 1-A-O will not bear firearms.

- Both are in uniform
- Both are sworn to support the military and its missions
- Both are subject to military rules and regulations

The 1-A-O will not be called upon to kill, but there is nothing preventing him from being killed.

SHOULD CHRISTIANS APPLY FOR 1-A-O STATUS???

Q: Should a Christian apply for the 1-A-O status?

Many COs believe that being a medic is a humanitarian job because it helps the wounded, but a closer look gives a different view.

1) The philosophy of the Medical Corps

In medic school one is taught simply to "*patch up*" soldiers, not necessarily to heal their wounds. (Just hurry up and get them back on the front line so they can fight again.)

Because of this philosophy, the medics often treat the least injured first since they stand a better chance of returning to the battle. (Not quite as "*humanitarian*" as some originally think.)

2) Helping others do what we oppose

As supply sergeants: one would order munitions. Is there really any difference between ordering bombs, or dropping them?

As cooks: one would be aiding and abetting men to do the very thing we are opposed to doing.

ILL: If one had been the cook for Bonnie & Clyde, how would it have worked to plead in court, "*I was only the cook*"?

Even the military can see this reasoning! If a soldier fed the enemy and gave him a drink (Rom. 12:20), he would be court-martialed for treason!

(If they can see feeding the enemy is betrayal to the country, they ought to be able to see that feeding one's own soldiers is aiding and abetting a cause for which a Christian is opposed!)

2 John 1:11

¹¹ for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

This principle is true in war!

Ephesians 5:11

¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

3) Not fulfilling Christian obligations

How could a 1-A-O:

- a) Worship God with a faithful congregation each 1st day of the week in the middle of a jungle?

(It's true ... if thrown in prison for CO beliefs a Christian wouldn't be able to worship each week with a faithful congregation, but if he had a choice, he should not willfully place himself in a position that would hinder his obligations to God. If the government takes a Christian away and prevents him from worshiping it should be against his will and he should not go voluntarily.)

- b) Preach the gospel to all the world when they are assisting in destroying part of the world?
- c) "Do good to all men" (Gal. 6:10) when in an organized effort to destroy part of "all men"?

For these reasons, if for none others, a Christian could not consistently apply for a 1-A-O status.

THE 1-O

As a 1-O draftee a man will serve two years -- just like anyone else. But instead of serving in the military he must perform two years of civilian work that is approved by the *Selective Service* (which they deem essential to the welfare of this nation).

Many of these jobs are menial and boring:

- a hospital orderly
- truck driver for Goodwill, etc.

But there are some good jobs available. One bonus is that the 1-O can locate his own job and submit it for approval to the *Selective Service*.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT WHO QUALIFIES

There are several misconceptions about who qualifies as a CO. First, let's consider who will **not** be classified as a CO:

1) Those opposed to certain kinds of war.

Some are opposed to nuclear wars, but would fight in other wars (conventional war). These do not qualify as COs.

2) Those opposed for political reasons.

Some disagree with U.S. foreign policy -- a widely used reason during the Vietnam era.

3) Those opposed for sociological reasons.

Some believe it is wrong for this society to waste its healthy men.

4) Those opposed for pragmatic reasons.

For example, "*I don't want to get killed.*"

The question is not:

- How do you feel about dying?, but
- How do you feel about killing?

THOSE WHO CAN QUALIFY

Now let me tell you who can qualify as a CO:

Not just "church goers."

In the past only religious objectors of an orthodox church were recognized. A man pretty much had to be a Mennonite, or Quaker to qualify. But there were two important Supreme Court decisions that changed that:

- U.S. v. Seeger in 1965
- U.S. v. Welsh in 1970 (Johnson, 85)

These two Supreme Court cases broadened the meaning of what it means to be "religious."

No longer does a person have to be a member of a church, or even believe in God to be classed as a CO.

Army Regulation 600-43 states:

"Conscientious objector beliefs must be held personally by the applicant. Membership in a certain church group is not necessary or sufficient, even if that group professes conscientious objection. The person who belongs to such a group must clearly show that he embraces the group's beliefs as his own. Similarly, a person cannot base a claim on the beliefs of a friend or relative."

(Army Regulation 600-43, Section D-4, p. 23)

- Just because your church ***is opposed to war*** doesn't necessarily mean you are opposed. I.e. citing a "church confession" will not be sufficient.
- Just because your church ***believes in war*** doesn't necessarily mean you do.

A person does not necessarily have to be a pacifist to qualify as a CO.

Technically a person can believe in self-defense of his loved ones and still qualify as a CO. (The question is whether most local draft boards know about this technicality!)

It is not necessary to convince the *Selective Service* that your beliefs are right.

You only have to convince them that you are sincere!

ILL: One man who was raised on a Pacific island based his claim of conscientious objection on his belief that God lived in a volcano in his homeland.

The draft board was not converted to his religion, but they were convinced he was sincere and they granted him a 1-O classification!

APPLYING FOR CO STATUS

Putting together a complete and accurate application for a CO can be long and difficult.

If the draft were fired up again you might find yourself with only two weeks to submit the application.

If the application is haphazardly thrown together under the pressure of a 10 day deadline you could find yourself denied the 1-O classification.

ADVICE: Begin right now thinking and studying these matters thru. Putting your thoughts down on paper and collecting a file would not be foolish.

Although the forms change over the years, the *Selective Service* will invariably ask the following four questions:

What are your beliefs?

The *Selective Service* is interested in knowing:

- Do you believe in God?
- If so, what are the teachings of your God?
- Are you a church member?
- What are the teachings of your church about war?

- To what extent do you believe in using force for self-defense?

Simply stating what you believe is not enough here. You need to explain why these beliefs have lead you to be a CO.

(Remember, there are many who claim they believe all the Bible like you, yet they are not COs. What makes you different?)

(This is scary! Some of kids can't even give the plan of salvation and they have to give a Biblically based reason for objecting to war!)

You can't look over to your dad and have him answer for you!

Which kind of CO are you?

If you claim the 1-O classification you must explain why your conscience will not allow you to participate in a non-combatant position.

Be prepared to answer questions like:

- Why do you pay income taxes when over half the national budget pays to support the military?
- What is wrong with being a cook?
- What is wrong with being a supply sergeant?

Where did your beliefs come from?

Expect questions like:

- How did your parents rear you?
- What people have influenced your beliefs?
- What books have influenced your beliefs?
- How long have you held these beliefs?

The draft board is not supposed to deny a request just because it is of recent development (U.S. v. Ehlert -- Johnson, 91). BUT, a man who can point to a long history of beliefs is certainly more believable than a neophyte!

What shows your sincerity?

This is the most difficult area, but perhaps the most important! The most common reason for denying CO claims during the Vietnam era was that the local draft boards did not believe the applicant was sincere!

Be prepared to demonstrate that you "practice what you preach"!!

ILL: Brother Alton Baker (Camron, TX) described his case. The appeal board asked:

- "What kind of TV shows do you watch?" (He didn't have a TV)
- "What kind of movies do you go to?" (He didn't go to movies)
- "What kind of magazines do you read?" ("Progressive Farmer")

The FBI was called in to investigate his life. He was found to be blameless!

(Later he was allowed to read his file the FBI composed and he discovered one of his neighbors had said: "Yes, *I believe Alton is a conscientious objector ... the whole family is kind of weird!*")

How would it fair with you? Would there be enough evidence to prove to a draft board that you were sincere in your claim as a CO?

NOTE: The *Selective Service* forms are designed to encourage brief, one paragraph answers to these questions. Draft experts say, "*Don't fall for it.*"

- Use extra paper to fully explain all questions, but
- Don't go overboard and submit a 40 page application.

WHEN TO FILE

When should you file?

The last draft calls were issued in 1972 and the President's authority to draft men expired on July 1, 1973. Since that time the U.S. has relied on volunteers for its armed forces.

Registration continued until 1975 and was then suspended, but reinstated in the summer of 1980.

Today this country is on "*standby*" registration. All men must register with the *Selective Service* within 30 days of their 18th birthday and must notify the *Selective Service* of any changes until their 26th birthday.

(At the present, no one is being classified by the *Selective Service*.)

In the event of war a man must file for CO status only after he has received an induction notice, but before he reports for induction. This can be as little as 10 days.

NOTE: If you do not file during this brief period, you may have lost all chance of filing at all!

ADVICE: Although the *Selective Service* does not classify men at this time here are some suggestions that are worth considering:

- When registering, write on the registration form that you are a CO.
- When sending a change of address form, write on the form that you are a CO.
- Some have submitted letters and some complete written applications that they are COs.
- When mailing these forms, mail a photocopy to yourself at the same time and when it arrives at your house, DO NOT OPEN IT.

The Selective service usually throws away your letters, notes, and original registration forms. If you write on the forms you are a "CO" and have it in a sealed envelope with a postmark, you can prove before a tribunal that you were a CO at the time you mailed the form in.

ADVICE: During the present peacetime young people and their parents could prepare a document stating: **(1) *what they believe*** and **(2) *why they believe it***. Then have it notarized.

(This notarized document could help prove the "*sincerity*" requirements and would help establish that the CO plea is not newly founded just to avoid war.)

MORE POINTS TO CONSIDER

If the military draft is reinstated, CO applicants will be required to appear personally before a local draft board for a hearing.

If you cannot attend the meeting it can be rescheduled, but if you do not attend the rescheduled hearing your claim will be denied and you cannot appeal the decision.

Some draft boards automatically deny the request to test the sincerity of the CO. If you do not appeal the case, or if you do not attend the scheduled hearings, you will bring doubt upon the sincerity of your claim.

If an appeal board is unanimous in rejecting a CO request, there is no further appeal possible (Johnson, 100). However, there are other recourses.

FURTHER RECOURSES

The National Selective Service Director has the power to order reconsideration of claims regardless of the vote of the appeals board.

He could help if you sent your file to him and requested his intervention.

(A sympathetic member of Congress could aid in presenting your case to the *National Selective Service Director*.)

By submitting substantial new evidence the local board must consider it and they could re-open your case entitling you to a new set of appeal rights. (Johnson, 100).

Refusing induction.

Some men find there is no relief in sight and when ordered to appear for induction they refuse induction rather than enter into the military and violate their consciences.

Statistics show that only one in a thousand objectors who refuse induction, after trying every avenue of appeal, will be imprisoned for refusing induction.

(That's little comfort if you're the one guy in a thousand!)

The government simply cannot win a case where:

- A person files a valid CO claim.
- Pursues all his avenues of appeal.
- And follows thru by refusing induction.

If anything, his refusal of induction is further proof of his CO claim. Here is a man who would risk prosecution rather than violate his conscience!

In many cases the U.S. Attorney will review the case, decline prosecution and send the file back to the local board with recommendations to "*reconsider*" the claim in light of the new evidence of sincerity.

NOTE: Those who refused induction and violated some other regulation (e.g. late registration, failure to send in change of address, etc.) are sure to land in a prison cell!

A person considering refusal of induction are advised to keep their records clean.

A conviction carries a maximum 5 year prison sentence and \$10,000 fine (as of 1989), but the usual sentence (during Vietnam) was 3 years of probation with 2 years of alternate service work. Plus you now have a police record as a convicted felon!

ALTERNATE SERVICE WORK

Once you receive a 1-O classification it is up to you to find a job that is approved by the *Selective Service*. If you do not find your own job the *Selective Service* will assign you a job.

(Be assured they will assign you the worst job they can find.)

If you refuse to comply with a work order you can be prosecuted the same as if you refused an induction.

Those prosecuted for refusing to comply with a work order stand a stronger chance of conviction than someone who refuses an induction order.

(Apparently the courts feel that a CO has already been given a break.)

WHAT IF??? (Case #1)

Let us look briefly at two of the more commonly used arguments used against conscientious objection.

The most common objection offered against conscientious objection is the hypothetical case: **What would you do if someone broke into your house and tried to attack your wife?**

NOTE: We're going to have to answer this question better than we have in the past!

The argument is designed to say that if you defend your family from an evil villain, then you are not really a CO.

This argument does not compare with war.

Even if one should admit he would shoot and kill an attacker to defend his family, he could still, with consistency, reject war.

(1) If one killed an intruder the man guilty of the crime is the only one killed. The CO would not go to the intruder's house and begin killing his wife, kids, parents, aunts and uncles!	But in war millions of innocent people are destroyed. Entire villages and cities are ransacked -- not just the ones guilty of wrong-doing.
(2) If an attacker intrudes someone's home, he is clearly the guilty party. He has no right for his attack.	But in war , a nation that is completely innocent and one that is completely guilty difficult to pinpoint.

(3) If one killed an intruder his actions will be reviewed by a court of law. If the court determines that unwarranted, excessive force was used, the CO will go to prison.

But in war there is no higher court to decide whether one nation acted justly, or not.

Even our government recognizes the fact that a man defending himself in his home is not equivalent to fighting in a war.

Army Regulation 600-43:

A conscientious objector is not necessarily a pacifist. An applicant may be willing to use force to protect himself or his family and still be a conscientious objector.

(Army Regulation 600-43, Section D-4, p. 23)

There are unwarranted assumptions in this argument.

To some people conscientious objection means:

- A man must sit passively in a chair and twiddle his thumbs while his wife is being attacked.
- He cannot yell.
- He cannot lift a phone and call for the police.
- He cannot interpose himself between his wife and the attacker.
- He cannot interfere in any fashion, but must allow the attacker unobstructed access to his wife.

Furthermore, this argument assumes some rather vital points. It assumes: ***Killing the intruder is the only possible solution.***

- One cannot restrain the intruder.
- No one can flee.
- One cannot disarm the intruder.
- One cannot stop short of lethal force.

Foy Wallace:

... R. L. Whiteside said, that if he should see a criminal dragging an innocent woman or girl into a secluded spot to assault her, he would have no more compunction of conscience against shooting down that criminal than to shoot a mad dog attacking a child. We subscribe to that statement unreservedly.

(Sermon on the Mount, 225)

In other words, Wallace would not try to restrain the man. He would skip over every possible alternative and jump immediately to the most destructive force available.

This reasoning is invalid, unscriptural and anti-Christian. No one can review the life of Jesus Christ and honestly reach these conclusions made by Wallace.

THE USE OF FORCE

Q: May a Christian ever use force in subduing an intruder in our homes?

There are two types of force:

- Passive force
- Active force

PASSIVE FORCE

Barricades

Examples of this type of passive force would include:

- A lock on a door
- Bars on a window
- A fence with a barbed wire at the top

- A big dog in the yard

These things are designed to "force" intruders to stay on the outside. None of these things violate any scriptural principle.

John 20:19 -- the disciples met behind "shut" doors for fear of the Jews. (Those "shut" doors were probably barred.)

Acts 12:13-16 -- the saints met behind a "shut" gate thru which Peter could not enter.

Christians should make proper use of locks and bars to prevent intruders!

Flight

This "forces" an intruder from fulfilling his intentions.

Matthew 10:23 -- Jesus told the disciples to flee when being persecuted

Acts 9:25 -- Paul fled Damascus to save his life

Christians could flee their homes if an intruder came in.

Appeal to the police

This is what God "ordained" them for (Romans 13:1-4).

Paul appealed to the civil authorities for protection (Acts 25:10-11)

BUT, the Christian is strictly warned by God not to become a civil law enforcer and administer the vengeance (Mt. 5:38-49; Rom. 12:17-21).

ACTIVE FORCE

Active force comes in two forms:

- **Destructive force**

- **Restraining force**

Destructive force –

The intentional taking of life.

Killing in self-defense and war are examples of destructive force. These are forbidden to the Christian.

Restraining force

- This is not intended to destroy life.
- It does not seek to inflict bodily injury, or harm of any kind.
- Its purpose is to restrain so as to prevent injury, or death.
- It is prompted by love and executed so that all concerned will benefit.
- There is no destruction of any kind.

"*Restraining force*" does not mean that violent actions of all kind are excluded!

NOTE: The issue is not violence vs. non-violence, but rather destruction vs. preservation.

ILL: Spanking a child. (If you asked the child he would agree this was restraining force of a violent nature.)

This type of active force is approved of in both the OT and NT:

- Prov. 13:24
- Prov. 22:15
- Prov. 29:15
- Heb. 12:9-11

This active, restraining force protects a child from future harm to himself, or to society.

(Injury, or death are the farthest things from the parents' intentions!)

ILL: Suppose a mental patient goes berserk. Active, restraining force might be necessary to stop him from harming himself, or others.

One man:

The motive must always be to preserve BOTH the violent person AND those he may injure. To take the one's life to spare the others would be a destructive force unacceptable to the Christian.

(William Paul, 100)

In view of the command to "*Recompense to **no man** evil for evil*" (Romans 12:17), this seems to be the only scriptural conclusion.

Even if a Christian's life was on the line, he cannot return evil for evil to this intruder.

SUMMARY

To answer the question:

- A Christian should lock his doors.
- Call for the police.
- If possible, flee for safer quarters
- If necessary, use active restraining force that would be designed to protect both the violent offender and those he may injure.

This, of course, would not be an easy course to follow, but God promised He would not allow Christians to be tested above what we are able to withstand! (1 Cor. 10:13).

WHAT IF??? (Case #2)

The second most commonly asked question is: *What if all Everyone believed like you did?*

To that I would say, "Wonderful!" At last there would be peace in the world!

ARGUMENT: Excuse me, I worded that wrong. I mean, what if all Americans believed like you did? Wouldn't the Communist march right in and take away our freedoms?

It will never happen!

Matthew 7:14

¹⁴ "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

It would be a great testimony to the Faith!

If all 700 million Americans believed so strongly in Jesus that they would suffer martyrdom for His cause, it would be the noblest witness to Christianity the world has ever seen!

Think of the implications of this argument:

This argument implies that if every American became a Christian and lived like Jesus that would be the worst thing that could happen!

The possibility of all Americans becoming and acting like Christians is a wonderful thought. There's no telling what would happen, but it would be enjoyable to witness!

Wouldn't God protect us?

Barton W. Stone,

We may imagine a thousand difficulties; but have we not a king in Zion, who is zealous for the glory of His Church upon earth? Is He not almighty? Can He not check and restrain the

opposing power? Will He not hear prayer, and impose in time of need? To these queries our enlightened judgment answers in the affirmative; but where is our faith? Can we trust in this king?

(Rogers, 15-16)

Christians can know this much: They would gain life.

Matthew 10:39

³⁹ "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

One man:

If religious convictions are not worth suffering, yes, even dying for, then that religion is not the religion of Jesus Christ. There is something more precious than life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness ... and that something is the standard of spiritual values which makes the Christian every man's neighbor and every man's brother.

(Rogers, 107)

NOTE: If brethren are not careful in their reasoning, they will reason away the need to ever lay down their lives for the sake of Christ! They will keep reasoning and debating until they convince ourselves that:

- under no circumstances
- at no time
- and for no reason should a Christian have to die for what he believes in!

God forbid that we should think like this! Someday our faith in Christ may cost some brethren their property and lives.

2 Timothy 3:12

¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

May God give His people strength to endure!

Matthew 5:11-12

¹¹ "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

¹² "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

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