

with the sword?" and without waiting for an answer, one of them drew "his sword, and smote the servant of the high-priest and cut off his right ear."—"Put up again thy sword into his place," said his divine Master: "for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." There is the greater importance in the circumstances of this command, because it prohibited the destruction of human life in a cause in which there were the best of possible reasons for destroying it. The question "Shall we smite with the sword," obviously refers to the defence of the Redeemer from his assailants by force of arms. His followers were ready to fight for him; and if any reason for fighting could be a good one, they certainly had it. But if, in defence of himself from the hands of bloody ruffians, his religion did not allow the sword to be drawn for what reason can it be lawful to draw it?

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"Maximilian, as it is related in the Acts of Ruinart, was brought before the tribunal to be enrolled as a soldier. On the proconsul's asking his name, Maximilian replied, 'I am a Christian, and cannot fight.' It was however ordered that he should be enrolled, but he refused to serve, still alleging *that he was a Christian*.—He was immediately told that there was no alternative between bearing arms and being put to death. But his fidelity was not to be shaken:—"I cannot fight," said he, "if I die." He continued steadfast to his principles, and was consigned to the executioner.

The primitive Christians not only refused to be enlisted in the army, but when they embraced Christianity while already enlisted, they abandoned the profession at whatever

cost. Marcellus was a centurion in the legion called Trajana. While holding this commission he became a Christian; and believing, in common with his fellow Christians, that war was no longer permitted to him, he threw down his belt at the head of the legion, declaring that he had become a Christian, and that he would serve no longer. He was committed to prison; but he was still faithful to Christianity. "It is not lawful," said he, "for a Christian to bear arms for any earthly consideration;" and he was in consequence put to death. Almost immediately afterward, Cassian, who was notary to the same legion, gave up his office. He steadfastly maintained the sentiments of Marcellus, and like him was consigned to the executioner. Martin, of whom so much is said by Sulpicius Severus, was bred to the profession of arms, which on his acceptance of Christianity, he abandoned. To Julian the Apostate, the only reason that we find he gave for his conduct was this:—"I am a Christian, and therefore I cannot fight."

"Irenæus, who lived about the year 180, affirms that the prophecy of Isaiah, which declared that men should turn their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks, had been fulfilled in his time; Christians," says he "have changed their swords and their lances into instruments of peace, and they know not how to fight." Justin Martyr, his contemporary, writes,—*"That the prophecy is fulfilled you have good reason to believe, for we, who in times past killed one another, do not now fight with our enemies."*—Tertullian, who lived later, says, "You must confess that the prophecy has been accomplished, as far as