

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 23.-Of the Civil Magistrate.

II. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the Office of a Magistrate; when called thereunto¹: in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain Piety, Justice, and Peace, according to the wholsom Laws of each Commonwealth²; so, for that end, they may lawfully now, under the New Testament, wage War, upon just and necessary occasion³.

Question 1.—*Is it lawful for a Christian to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto?*

Answer.—Yes. Prov. 8:15, 16; Rom. 13:1, 2, 4. Thus, the Anabaptists err, maintaining that it is not lawful for Christians to carry the office of a magistrate. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because there is no power but of God, and the powers which are, are ordained of God, Rom. 13:1. 2.) Because Solomon says, By me (that is, by the Lord) kings reign, and princes decree justice, Prov. 8:15. 3.) Because the magistrate exercises, and executes God's judgments, Deut. 1:17. 4.) Because the magistrate receives all things from God, which are necessary for the performance of his office, Num. 11:17. 5.) Because the Lord has promised, that magistrates under the gospel, shall be nursing fathers to his church, Isa. 49:23. And shall make the whore desolate, naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, Rev. 17:16.

Question 2.—*Ought the magistrate in the managing of this office, especially to maintain Piety, Justice, and Peace, according to the wholesome Laws of each Commonwealth?*

Answer.—Yes. Ps. 2:10-12; 82:3, 4; 2 Sam. 23:3; 1 Pet. 2:13. The magistrate ought to maintain *piety*, as well as justice and peace. The apostle exhorts that prayers be made to this end, 1 Tim. 2:2. Rulers are not, in their official capacity, to be indifferent to *godliness* any more than to *honesty*; both are to be countenanced and promoted by them, Ezra 6:8-10.

Question 3.—*May the civil magistrate now under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions?*

Answer.—Yes. Rom. 13:4. The magistrate is not prohibited from exercising judicial homicide, for unto him is committed the sword for the purpose of avenging evil, whether individual or corporate, Rom. 13:4; 1 Pet. 2:14. Nor does this pertain only to the heathen because it is those higher powers, or moral authorities, as they are ordained by God which are contemplated in this exercise, Rom. 13:1. Nor is this public right opposed either by the command of God, which respects private persons, Matt. 5:39; or by Christian charity, which can love the persons and punish the crimes, Josh. 7:25; Acts 5:3, 4. Nor is it opposed by prophecy concerning the wolf dwelling with the lamb, which refers not to the duty of magistrates, but to believers, Isa. 11:6. Nor is it opposed by the words of Christ, "resist not evil," which treats only of private vengeance, not public, Matt. 5:39, 40.

¹ Prov. 8:15, 16; Rom. 13:1, 2, 4.

² Ps. 2:10-12; 1 Tim. 2:2; Ps. 82:3, 4; 2 Sam. 23:3; 1 Pet. 2:13.

³ Luke 3:14; Rom. 13:4; Matt. 8:9, 10; Acts 10:1, 2; Rev. 17:14, 16.

Thus, the Quakers, Anabaptists, and Socinians err, maintaining that it is altogether unlawful, now under the New Testament, to wage war. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because God appointed and commanded lawful war under the Old Testament, Num. 31:2. For it is said, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, when he was to fight the battles of the Lord, against the Midianites and Amalekites, Judg. 6:34. The Lord himself prescribes the manner and way of making war, Num. 10 and 31:27; Deut. 20:2. He gives knowledge and skill to his generals and heroes, to fight his own battles, Ps. 18:34; 144:1. All which is in no wise abrogated under the New Testament, *cf.* Matt. 5:17, 18. 2.) Because the centurion that was converted to the faith, did not lay down his office of a captain of a hundred, which surely he would have done, if to war under the New Testament had been unlawful, Acts. 10:1, 2, 47. The same may be said of the believing centurion, Matt. 8:8-10. 3.) Because the office of a soldier is not reprehended and reproved by John the Baptist, but rather approven when he sanctioned military discipline by laws, Luke 3:14. 4.) Because opposition, and defence against unjust violence which oftentimes cannot be done without war, is the very law of nature, Gen. 14:1-9. 5.) Because it is foretold, that the kings of the earth shall make war against the beast, Rev. 17:14, 16.