

constantly has to reckon with the fact that there are many Christians in the world, and that many others are so affected by the results of Christian teaching that their support of his plans is limited. The only way to draw a line in determining our activity in the world is to make careful study of what the Scripture says and to determine all things in the light of its teaching. Good and evil are always struggling in this world. The time is coming when God's own power will intervene to put an end to the evil and to establish His righteous kingdom of peace and joy.

Romans 13:1-4 and other passages point out that the Christian is normally to be subject to the existing government of the area in which he lives. During this confused age it is God's will that human governments preserve a measure of order. This is necessary for the proclamation of the Gospel and for the carrying on of the lives of God's people. Even though a government is corrupt, it is God's will that it be supported insofar as it maintains law and order and enables its subjects to live peaceful lives. Jesus Himself paid taxes and declared that we should render to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar.

Some Christian interpreters have taken these passages to mean that a Christian must do whatever the existing government requires. Such a conclusion would go beyond the clear teaching of many passages of Scripture. Wherever God's Word and human authority clash, the Christian must obey God rather than man. It is not God's will that the Christian spend the bulk of his time trying to establish perfect government on earth, for such a thing is impossible as long as unregenerate men are here. It is God's will that the Christian should make his influence count for good order and for all that is just and right.

This brings us to the question about the use of the sword in Romans 13:4. Jesus told his apostles to do their work through the proclamation of the truth rather than to try to establish the kingdom of God by force. Christians are to avoid everything that would involve attempts to push themselves forward at the expense of others, or to rob other people, as was usually done by individuals who carried swords in New Testament times. However, the Bible clearly teaches that human governments may use force against evil-doers. Romans 13:4 expresses God's approval upon the use of the sword for the maintenance of order and the suppression of disorder. In Old Testament times God frequently commanded His people to make war, for the carrying out of His