

# Civil-Disobedience by Henry David Thoreau

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I Adverb accept the motto, "That Noun is best which governs least"; and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe - "That government is best which governs not at all"; and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have. . . . The standing army is only an arm of the standing government. The government itself, which is only the mode which the Noun Plural have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it. Witness the present Mexican war, the work of comparatively a few individuals using the Adjective government as their tool; for, in the outset, the people would not have consented to this measure . . .

But, to speak practically and as a Noun, unlike those who call themselves no-government men, I ask for , not at once no government, but at once a Adjective government. Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it.

After all, the practical reason why, when the power is once in the hands of the people, a majority are permitted, and for a long period continue, to rule is not because they are most likely to be in the right, nor because this seems fairest to the Noun, but because they are physically the Adjective Ends in EST. But a government in which the majority rule in all cases cannot be based on justice, even as far as men Verb Base Form it. Can there not be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience

?- in which majorities decide only those questions to which the rule of expediency is applicable? Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislation? Why has every \_\_\_\_\_ Noun \_\_\_\_\_ a conscience, then? I think that we should be \_\_\_\_\_ Noun Plural \_\_\_\_\_ first, and subjects afterward. It is not \_\_\_\_\_ Adjective \_\_\_\_\_ to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right. . . Law never made men a whit more \_\_\_\_\_ Adjective \_\_\_\_\_; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. A common and natural result of an undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys, and all, \_\_\_\_\_ Verb Present ends in ING \_\_\_\_\_ in admirable order over \_\_\_\_\_ Noun \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Noun \_\_\_\_\_ to the wars, against their wills, ay, against their common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart. They have no doubt that it is a \_\_\_\_\_ Adjective \_\_\_\_\_ business in which they are concerned; they are all peaceably inclined. Now, what are they? Men at all? or small movable \_\_\_\_\_ Noun Plural \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Noun Plural \_\_\_\_\_, at the service of some unscrupulous man in power? Visit the Navy-Yard, and behold a marine, such a man as an American government can make, or such as it can make a man with its black arts- a mere shadow and reminiscence of humanity, a man laid out alive and standing, and already, as one may say, \_\_\_\_\_ Verb Past Tense \_\_\_\_\_ under arms with funeral accompaniments, though it may be,

"Not a \_\_\_\_\_ Noun \_\_\_\_\_ was heard, not a funeral note,

As his corse to the rampart we hurried;

Not

a soldier discharged his farewell shot

O'er the grave where our hero we buried."