

save, never destroy (DA 487.2). At the end, He said, "Peter, put away that sword. Those who live by these principles die the same way" and later, to Pilate, "If my kingdom was of this world, my servants would use violence" (John 18:11, 36, paraphrased).

Again, keeping the principle in mind that God's Character is always the same; He has no variableness nor shadow of turning in His methods; and that the principle of love is always the same (Mal. 3:6; Jas. 1:17; Heb. 13:8; 1 John 4:18), we read:

***"It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, that seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederate with evil angels bring suffering upon their fellow men, in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love. There can be no more conclusive evidence that we possess the spirit of Satan than the disposition to hurt and destroy those who do not appreciate our work, or who act contrary to our ideas"*** (DA 487.3).

If it were God's idea to kill babies and sheep because the responsible adults of that nation were evil toward His people or, if it were God's idea to cull the membership of the church of those holding dissenting opinion, by putting their heads on poles, then we surely have an irreconcilable situation on our hands because *this same Jesus was the God of the Old Testament*. Paul, who learned directly from the personal teaching of Christ, told the people that their ancestors "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea...and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and *that Rock was Christ*" (1 Cor. 10:4).

It was this same Jesus who said:

*"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*

*But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also...*

*Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

*That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust"* (Matt. 5:38-39, 44-45).

We can see the problem here, can't we? We need not belabor it any further by contrasting the Old Testament with the New Testament Jesus. We must spend the rest of our space making some sense out of this. The fact is, it was not God's will that Israel should have taken up the sword. God was against it, for he outlined a number of abominations of which His people were guilty, among them being, "Ye stand upon your sword...and shall ye possess the land?" (Eze. 33:26). Also, David, who in his time of penitence and contrition was called "a man after God's own heart," could not build the temple for the Lord, because, in David's own words:

*"But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou [hast been] a man of war, and hast shed blood"* (1 Chron. 28:3).

Yet God instructed David in what he must do in his career of warfare: "

*"Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines....*

*So David and his men...fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter"* (1 Sam. 23:2, 5a).

What can it all mean? Why is Christ giving them instructions in the use of the sword?

God never intended for it to work out this way. He brought them up out of Israel unarmed and untrained in warfare.

*"And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not [through] the way of the land of the Philistines, although that [was] near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt"* (Ex. 13:17).

This was not only because they were not skilled in war. It simply was not God's way:

*"Moreover the LORD thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed"* (Deut. 7:20).

The principle here is that God would see His people into the promised land according to the unchanging law that when wickedness *pushes God out*, the evils that destroy *will come in*, according to the Biblical definition of Divine wrath (Deut. 31:16-18). The "hornet" is a symbol of how this happens. When God "sends" an evil, it is simply saying that He "gives over" and no longer intervenes to protect and sustain.

*"I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way: They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reproveth, and points out the only path of safety; then, if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course, independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them.*

*"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress and sweeping*

off multitudes to make sure of his prey.--14MR 3 (1883)" (LDE 242).

God lets humans have their own way because of the "hardness of their hearts," because of free choice under carnal mind. So, as the people came out of Egypt they were dark in their minds. They did not yet know God nor trust in His ways. Their way was to defend themselves and fight their way to the Promised Land. The morning after their exodus from Egypt came their opportunity to acquire weaponry, as they saw the remains "of the mighty foes—the mail-clad bodies cast upon the shore" (PP 287.5).

Having taken up the sword with intent to use it, God would not utterly abandon them. He worked with them in their faulty choice, just as He does with us, today. Now that they had taken it upon themselves, they would have to follow instructions if they were to survive. This is known as God's "Permissive Will." This mode is only an interim measure. It is not God's perfect will. It is only given to preserve His people until they grow up into the full knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6).

If God had given them the sword and then later Jesus would have come teaching the principle that to live by the sword was to die by the sword, He would have been establishing that it was His purpose to destroy them by the sword. But *they* desired a Messiah that would come to conquer their enemies, the Romans, *by military might* and because He was not that Messiah, they rejected Him. The result was that they were given up to the Roman sword in A.D. 70.

God gave ancient Israel a civil code that was not according to His way of thinking and acting, but their own. The civil laws of the heathen lands they lived in were completely ingrained into their way of thinking. They had been slaves for hundreds of years, ruled by fear. They were used to being governed by human laws with human penalties, with the predominate system of law being the *Code of Hammurabi*, instituted by a Babylonian king of

centuries past. Therefore, the Israelites chose their own system of civil law early in their freedom when Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, advised him to put into effect a legal code with additional judges to help judge the issues of the people. Note that this was "Permissive Will"—not God's idea!

*"The Lord permitted Moses to choose for himself the most faithful and efficient men to share the responsibility with him. Their influence would assist in holding in check the violence of the people, and quelling insurrection; yet serious evils would eventually result from their promotion. They would never have been chosen had Moses manifested faith corresponding to the evidences he had witnessed of God's power and goodness"* (PP 380.2).

When we read the Bible through our own way of thinking, our own ideas of judgment, justice and punishment, we have the same veil on our face under which the children of Israel hid, refusing to see God as He is (2 Cor. 3:13-15; 1 John 3:2, 3). It is time for the light to rise upon us that the glory might shine through! (Isa. 60:1-3).

*"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither [was any] deceit in his mouth"* (Isa. 53:9).

God does not use violence, humans use violence. His ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts. Meditate deeply upon this theme.



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## *Israel and the Sword: Was That God's Idea?* Tract #4CGA, by 4<sup>th</sup> Angel Publications

*“Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember [that] which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid [wait] for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.*

*Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass”* (1 Sam. 15:2, 3).

How's that for loving your enemies? God gave a clear instruction that they were to thoroughly decimate them. Don't leave even one sheep. Don't leave a single suckling human infant, either. Kill them all!

*“And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.*

*And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel”* (Num. 25:3, 4)

Ouch! That's quite the way for the church to keep its members in line! The papal church of the Dark Ages did these kinds of things. In modern times, we have also extreme religious elements that have employed similar tactics. Why should we rail against such? If that is God's way, then embrace it, we must! For "The LORD [is] righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works" (Ps.145:17).

But Jesus didn't say to use the sword, did He? When the disciples were spurned by the Samaritans, they wanted to protect their and Jesus' interests, so they asked if it would be an appropriate time to call down some holy fire on the heads of their enemies (Luke 9:51-56). But Jesus, "pained by their words," told them that this was the way Satan operates, that God's method is only to