

"LET HIM BUY A SWORD"

WHY did our Lord say to His disciples, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one" (Luke 22:36,38), and then afterward say to St. Peter: "Put up thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword"? – Matthew 26:51,52.

We should remember the circumstances. Jesus knew that His hour was come in which He would be betrayed, made prisoner, and the next day be crucified. It was necessary to show that His capture was not made by force, but that He voluntarily permitted Himself to be taken and crucified. The Father might know, the angels might know, and His disciples might know that He had power to ask of the Father legions of angels for His defense and protection from the hands of His enemies; but others could not know this. It was desirable that it should be clearly manifested that Jesus and His disciples could have defended themselves, as St. Peter, indeed, started out to do when he drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus promptly healed the ear and instructed Peter to be non-resistant, and surrendered Himself, merely requesting that His disciples be not molested.

The circumstance demonstrated that our Lord surrendered Himself voluntarily, and therein was the lesson. Had there been no swords in the company of His disciples, it might have been claimed that no defense could have been made. The having of the swords made possible the exhibition of the courage of the disciples, and the willingness of Jesus to submit Himself.

When Jesus said that if necessary their garments [R5922 : page 207] should be sold to purchase a sword, the Apostles responded that they had in their company two swords; and Jesus answered, "It is

enough." They were intended merely for a demonstration, and not for a defense.

Nothing in this Scripture seems to give any warrant to warfare, nor to the implication of some that Jesus desired His followers to take the sword. True, not all who have taken to the sword have perished by the sword, and not all who have avoided the sword have preserved their lives, but it is a general principle which the Lord discusses. He who prepares himself for warfare and trouble will be pretty sure to get plenty of it, according to the general course of the fallen human nature. On the other hand, the Lord's disciples are enjoined to "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." – Hebrews 12:14.

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