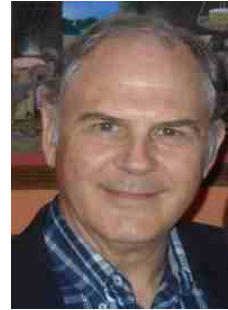


The Staff and the Rod of Iron in Divine Principle

By Regis Hanna, D. Min.

Whenever a new facet of the Providence presents itself, it is helpful to see it through the lens of Holy Scripture and the Principle. Recent confusion and questions over Hyung Jin Nim's suggestion that members acquire a "rod of iron," a semi-automatic rifle for their self-protection, protection of their family and neighbors has been hard for many of us to integrate into our conceptual framework of what life in the Kingdom of Heaven should be like. In this context we offer the following thoughts and considerations, drawing largely from both the New Testament and Divine Principle.



References to the "Staff" in the Divine Principle

In the Exposition of the Divine Principle, a staff is a symbol for the Messiah. In part II, Chapter 2, it says, "a staff, which smites evil, leads the way and provides support when one leans on it, is a symbol of the Messiah" and "Jacob crossed the Jordan River and entered the land of Canaan while leaning on a staff. This foreshadowed that one day fallen humanity will cross the waters of this sinful world and arrive on the shore of the ideal world by following the Messiah: smiting injustice, following his guidance and example and depending on him. Moses guided the Israelites across the Red Sea with a staff. Jesus at his Second Coming will guide humanity across the turbulent waters of this fallen world to reach the shore of God's ideal with the rod of iron, symbolizing himself."¹

Later in the chapter, Moses' miracle with the staff is explained further: "The staff symbolized Jesus. Just as a staff displayed miraculous power in front of Moses, who represented God, Jesus was to come with such power and perform miracles before God Himself. Moreover, a staff provides protection and support for people to lean on; it smites injustice and leads people on the right path. Symbolizing Jesus, Moses Staff disclosed the missions which Jesus was to accomplish at his coming."²

Christ is the incarnation of the Word as mentioned in the Gospel of John (1:1-4) because he is the first human being to accomplish God's Will, which is the Purpose of Creation, fulfilling the Three Great Blessings, mentioned in Gen 1:28 So Christ is our defender, as the Incarnation of the Word, and the Word is our defender as we wield as guided by the Holy Spirit of God, meaning with love and compassion as well as with wisdom and certitude.

References to the "Rod of Iron" in the Bible

What about the Rod of Iron? This is mentioned in Revelations 2:26-27 "To him who overcomes and keeps my works to the end, I will give authority over the nations— He 'shall rule them with a rod of iron; like the vessels of a potter they shall be broken in pieces'—even as I myself have received authority from My Father.

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How is that authority exercised? I myself am an imperfect person, and standing on my own, I have no authority because I am not a 100% incarnation of the Word. However as Christ's followers, we have been deputized, and given Grace by sharing in God's Lineage, in the hope and faith that we ourselves shall become and must become, secondary "fruits" as mentioned in I Cor 15:23 "But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming..."

In Luke 22:36, Jesus reminds his followers that when he sent them out before, he told them to take nothing, but this time he tells them to take a sword. Most ministers and pastors have never preached on this verse. A sword is for self-defense. It was the Rod of Iron of its time. Jesus understood that there was a time to only rely on the Word of God and a time to be prepared for times when the Truth will not be enough to defer predators.

In the first quote above, we see that the Rod of Iron is something which smites evil. One interpretation of the Rod of Iron as the Word of God is easily connected to the verse from Isaiah 11:4 "He shall smite them with the rod of His mouth, with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked." The Word of God divides things, making truth visible as well as falsehood, thus helping us to discern what God wants from us. At the same time, as James 3:6 says, "The tongue is a fire." As Unificationists we are familiar with these uses and interpretations of these verses.

Physical Salvation includes Ability to Protect Your Family and Nation

But as products of the New Testament age and NT thinking, we see them as elements from a time when only "spiritual" salvation was possible. So any "protection" or "smiting" we see in terms of "spiritual protection and spiritual smiting." Not physical. We tend to have all these illusions about the passive, peaceful Jesus that the King has pointed out. We forget that Jesus cleansed the Temple with a whip he made from his own belt.

To "smite" anything is a rather violent act. We encounter other images of God acting in a rather violent manner in the Old Testament.

In the above quote, the mention of the staff is as something "to lean on." We can relate to a staff or walking stick as something to lean on for support. Certainly Holy Scripture is something that provides support for us in times when we waver, feel low or need inspiration. It definitely guides us and leads us. In that sense we can see the staff as a symbol for the Messiah. Again, we see all of this from a spiritual perspective and not in a physical sense. A staff is not to be used as a crutch, but rather as a strong physical deterrent to any predator.

When Moses stood before the Red Sea, God told him to stretch out his staff and the waters parted.

As was explained earlier, Moses represented God before the Pharaoh and Moses' staff symbolized Jesus, who would manifest God's power in the future.

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Hence this miracle foreshadowed what was to happen when Jesus, came. Satan would pursue the faithful ones who followed Jesus in walking the worldwide course to restore Canaan, but Jesus would raise the rod of iron and strike the troubled sea of this world. The waters would divide and reveal a smooth path upon which the believers would walk, while Satan in pursuit would perish. (DP p 243)

Whereas in the past, we may have viewed these verses purely from the viewpoint of how the Word of God vanquishes evil in a spiritual sense, we see in the final chapter of DP, it is inevitable that a Third World War take place; however, there are two possible ways it may be fought.

The Third World War, Spiritual and Physical

“One way to bring Satan’s side to surrender is through armed conflict. However, at the conclusion of the conflict, there should come an ideal world in which all humanity is to rejoice together. This can never be built merely by defeating enemies in battle. Afterward, they must be brought to submission internally, that everyone may be reconciled and rejoice sincerely from the bottom of their hearts. To accomplish this, there must come a perfect ideology which can satisfy the desires of the original nature of all people.

“The other way this war may be fought is as a wholly internal, ideological conflict, without the outbreak of armed hostilities, to bring Satan’s world to submission and unification in a short time. People are rational beings. Therefore, a perfect, unified world can be established only when people submit to one another and participate in unification through a profound reawakening.

“By which of these two ways will the Third World War actually be fought? It depends upon success or failure in carrying out the human portion of responsibility.”³

As Hyung Jin Nim has repeatedly pointed out, the entire message that Christ preached 2000 years ago was about a physical kingdom on the earth. Jesus commanded us to pray every day for that physical kingdom. It still has not come. However, it MUST come some day, as a physical kingdom on the earth.

Thus, “supporting, and leaning and smiting” become functions which need the “accoutrements” of a king, the staff and the Rod of Iron, which have the royal power over life and death. These accoutrements are symbols of authority and sovereignty, which at this point we are allowed over our own homes under the US Constitution as stated in the Second Amendment of the Bill of

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Rights. This right is a kingly, sovereign right given by God, the right to self-defense. After all the U.S. Declaration of Independence asserts that we are not slaves and hence have the rights of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

We must also remember that the Pre-Old Testament and Old Testament Eras were the times when God took 100% responsibility for Man’s restoration.

During the New Testament, Jesus and the Holy Spirit (and the True Parents) took responsibility for Man’s restoration.

However we are now in the Completed Testament Era. Now, and it is the Children’s time to take responsibility for Man’s restoration.

You Must Fight Evil At All Times, Whether You Are Asleep Or Awake, And Be Victorious

How are we to defend God’s children and families? Only with words? What if people are unwilling to listen? This is the pathway which opens up when people are ready to persecute or violently destroy God’s sons and daughters. You can tell somebody coming to rob you, “Stop! Please stop!” But they will be much more likely to listen to you if you have a Rod of Iron in your hands.

You must yearn to become a husband in the Kingdom of Heaven, to receive a wife, to form a family and to have children as a citizen registered in that kingdom. You must always be conscious of this. You must remember that it is an established understanding that you must fight evil at all times, whether you are asleep or awake, and be victorious. This is the way you should live always. CSG 1424-1425

Predators have no place in God’s Kingdom but until the entire world is restored, they may appear from time to time and we must be prepared to protect ourselves and our neighbors from them. This is the meaning of the Peace Police and Peace Militia. True Father talked about these more at the end of his life. Could that be because he realized that the world was not responding to his message?

The King has given us an amazing Constitution of Cheon Il Guk and explained what the “Freedom Society” of the future will look like. God’s Spirit is moving and working through His Central Figure for this time. It’s our job to unite with that vision and be prepared to carry out our own responsibility. Sovereign Kings and Queens must be ready and equipped to defend the lives of their children, neighbors, communities, and “nation.”

True Father rejected the view of a God who magically rules and protects his sons and daughters. The revelation at the core of the Divine Principle is the insight that men and women from the beginning to the end of history must always exercise freedom and responsibility, not simply waiting for God to save them. Even in an ideal world, vigilance will always be required.

As stated by True Father in 1976:

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You have to have enough power to defend yourself even if Satan attacks. Because the communists are making guns and coming after we Unification Church people, I will also have to make guns. That's why I'm making guns now. We have to make guns – that's what I'm telling you. Do you want to be attacked and just die? (“No.”) So, then how about you just die, because God wants you to? You just sit there, and get hit, and then die. How about that? Why don't you just do that? (laughter) Until now, God had to just put up with being attacked, because he was in no position to respond, or deal with it. But I know what is going on. I know everything really well.

If the communist party invades the entire world, I will become an army commander and begin issuing orders. “Attention! March!” That's what I'll be saying. Where to? Towards the communist party. I cannot put my trust in the United States Army to do this, and I cannot simply trust in the Department of Defense. Do you trust that they will do what's necessary? I'll give the orders, and we'll march out to the whole world. When the rogues and villains in the communist party start creating mayhem and chaos, I have to block them and stop them, with my own resources and on my own steam. That's what I'm thinking.

So, our young people have to learn Karate, and they have to learn Tae Kwon Do, and they have to do gun practice, too. I myself am very good at shooting. Why? To protect Heaven's nation, to protect Heaven's people, and protect Heaven's ideal. Satan always attacks once he gets strong enough. When evil thinks that they are strong enough, they attack. That's the very nature, the essence of Satan. So, is it a bad thing if we do that? (“No, it isn't.”) Centering on a decadent form of Christian love? No, we have to practice love, not in Satan's realm, but within God's realm, right? Or are you saying we should also love Satan? So that's how God is.... God is only God because he has the ability to defend himself when Satan attacks. If God doesn't have the ability to defend himself against Satan, then he isn't God.

In the future, centering on Unification Thought, our Unification Church has to have the power to be able to defend ourselves even if the evil people attack us with force. We have to have that kind of power in order to qualify as Heaven's side. From that perspective, you have to realize that I am a forward-thinking, advanced kind of religious leader. Do you see? Do you get it? (“Yes.”) It's only because of this that I was able to stand in the position that rose above the judgment.⁴

¹ Exposition of the Divine Principle, part II, Ch. 2, p. 229.

² Ibid, p. 238.

³ Ibid, p. 376.

⁴ “The Era of Judgment and Ourselves”, Belvedere, USA. November 21, 1976. <http://www.unification.net/1976/761121.html>