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in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

and a warning against the deception in the last days
foretold by Christ

"Take heed ye be not deceived"

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

CHRISTENDOM – AND OTHERS – ASTRAY

THE VATICAN SMITTEN

I HAVE SURNAMED THEE, THOUGH THOU HAST NOT KNOWN ME

WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST
IS BORN OF GOD

THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD

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At the Table of The Lord

“THE LORD . . . KNOWETH THEM THAT TRUST IN HIM”

God in His infinite wisdom and mercy, provides much help for His people through His Word, whether given in the time of Adam, Abraham, David, Jesus, or when we read it today. The words of the prophet Nahum to Nineveh can perhaps illustrate for us the help contained in His Word for all generations. Nahum's message to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, came about 150 years after another messenger of God, Jonah, had been sent to Assyria. Through Jonah's message, the king and people of Nineveh repented of their evil ways, and were spared God's judgment at that time. In our portion for today, Nahum prophesies against Nineveh, speaking of its sure judgment to come. We know that Assyria and, therefore, Nineveh its capital, were arch enemies of Israel, of Judah, of Jerusalem. When we look at the chronology, we find that Nahum's words against Nineveh could have been spoken in 713 B.C. Looking into the history of Israel in II Kings, we find in Chapter 18 that about this time Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against Jerusalem and besieged it, seeking to take it and God's people captive, doing his utmost to discourage by dire threats. It is perhaps not without purpose that Nahum was told by God to prophesy concerning the coming judgment upon Nineveh, Sennacherib's capital city. It was to encourage God's people, to help them realize more fully that He was with them, and that even the great power of Assyria could be brought down under His Hand. Indeed, His judgment soon fell upon Sennacherib himself, as we read in II Kings 19:36-37:

“So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went
and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.”
And his sons “smote him with the sword.”

Does all this, brethren and sisters, help us to see more clearly how merciful and gracious is our God, especially in a time of trouble and distress? He is ever present to give assurance, just as He did to Judah, Jerusalem, and Hezekiah through His messenger, Nahum, even as the envoys of Sennacherib stood outside the walls of Jerusalem, threatening destruction. We find the word “Nahum” comes from a root meaning “to comfort,” as used in Isaiah 51:3:

“For the Lord shall *comfort* Zion: he will *comfort*
all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness
like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord;
joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving,
and the voice of melody.”

Again, as we look at the chronology and find that these words were written at about the same time, 712 B.C., is it coincidence? Hardly, for God knew the needs of His people, and sent these comforters; Nahum, Isaiah, Hezekiah, to strengthen and help in a time of peril. Can't His words help us today, brethren and sisters? Can't they bring comfort to us as we struggle to serve Him, to be not overcome by fear or anxiety in these present perilous times? What a help it must have been to our brethren in Jerusalem. We should, then, be able to turn to Nahum's words and find help for today's tribulations.

“THE LORD IS SLOW TO ANGER”

In Nahum 1:3-6, we are shown how wonderful is God's character:

“The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.”

How good that God *is* slow to anger, else we would surely perish, for we so often fail to honour and obey Him. If He were quick to anger, not waiting for repentance in His people, what hope would we have? In Exodus 34:5-7, we read of Moses coming down from Mt. Sinai and finding the children of Israel under Aaron's direction worshipping the golden calf. Yet, in God's mercy, Moses was permitted to take two more tables of stone, to replace the ones he had broken in anger, and return to the mountain. We read in verse 5 of what occurred:

“And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord . . . The Lord, the Lord, God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty”

This was Yahweh — His Name proclaimed — the Yahweh that Nahum knew. The Yahweh “who hath His way in the whirlwind and the storm.” We have this last week, seen the power of a great and devastating **ice storm**. It makes us realize more fully His power. He can bring destruction, and man is powerless and filled with awe.

“WHO CAN STAND BEFORE HIS INDIGNATION?”

Nahum continues, verse 6:

“Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?”

How like the words of Malachi 3:2:

“. . . who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?”

These questions fill our minds, as we know He *will* come; and fears are very real as we acknowledge how often we fail. Yes, how grateful we are that God is slow to anger toward those whose desire is to serve Him. And, these qualities never fail, never vary:

“For I am the Lord, *I change not*; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” Malachi 3:6

Being flesh, we change as our circumstances change. Sometimes, if we feel right, we may be tolerant, lenient, even lax; at other times, when sore pressed, we may be hard, vengeful, changeable in the extreme. How great is our blessing that God is not like that! David was one who knew the unchangeableness, justice, and righteousness of God. When he found himself in difficulty because he had numbered Israel, he cried out:

“. . . I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.” II sam. 24:14

Can we not, with David, turn to God in difficult, anxious, or perplexing times?

Can we begin to see why Nahum tells us, verse 7:

“The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and *he knoweth them that trust in him.*”

Does He know us, brethren and sisters, because we *do* trust in Him? Let us recall the circumstances in which these words were spoken. Sennacherib’s army was at the gates, threatening God’s people with destruction unless they would serve him. What a test of faith for our brethren! What a temptation to give in to the adversary who seemed so all-powerful! But no, helped by Nahum, by Isaiah, by Hezekiah,

speaking to their hearts, we know they were delivered from the mighty power of Assyria, and Sennacherib was killed. All this, because God *knew* that they trusted in Him, that they recognized Him as their “stronghold in the day of trouble.” This is not easy, we know from experience. God knows, too, how difficult it is for us, and provides help in many ways, through many messengers.

“This is the Victory that overcometh the World”

We have read today the words of another messenger in I John 5:4:

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world:
and this is the victory that overcometh the world,
even our faith.”

We do not need to dwell upon faith; we know in a measure what it is, what it does, what it has done, what it can do. Can we sum it up in a word, as Nahum has — *trust*? Even as a little child, simply and with utmost confidence, turns to his father for help, so we, in trust must turn to our Father, if we hope to overcome the world. What a help it is to realize that God does, indeed, *know* those who do trust in Him; knows their needs, and provides for them. His provision may not be what we might seek, if left to our own devices; but He is an all-wise, merciful Father, who *knows* what is best for our eternal lives.

When our hearts are beset with great anxiety, doubts over what course to pursue, fears lest we may lose the race, or lose dear ones; it is then that we are given the opportunity to show our love and our trust. In helplessness, He is the help and the hope. We are required to have patience and to have courage — this is our part. Let us do it, and show our faith.

Further help is found in I John 5:5:

“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that
believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”

By belief that Jesus *is* the Son, the Redeemer, the Messiah, do we not evidence our trust in God, believe in His grace, His provision for us, to grant a means of mediation, of hope, of escape from death? How often our profession of belief is put to the test: *do* we trust in Him; *are* we aware that He *knows* us if we do; knows our needs, knows, too,

our failures, our faults? Can this knowledge make us more aware of His Presence? Does this help us to be more established in His way? more ready to serve Him as it must have done to those in Jerusalem, as they heard the words of Nahum, of Isaiah?

We remember Paul's words (II Tim. 2:19):

“. . . the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, *The Lord knoweth them that are his.*
And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

In the midst of an evil world, of adversaries who would pull us down to their level, we need help, brethren and sisters, the comfort of such messengers as our brethren Nahum, Isaiah, Hezekiah, John, the healing and strength which really comes from *The Comforter*.

J. A. De F.

CHRISTENDOM — AND OTHERS — ASTRAY

The Spirit of the Law the Spirit of Christ.

“This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood.” (1 John 5:6)

Although these words are from the New Testament, they throw considerable light on the law of God. The law is generally understood to refer to the Law of Moses. It must be recognised that even before the time of Moses the law of God was there to help His people; and indeed the law is in evidence from the beginning.

It is true that in different dispensations the ordinances of the Law have changed, but the spirit of them has been the same, showing: “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.” Truly, as the Apostle John says:

“It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.” (1 John 5:6)

Delightful is the blessing to be able to see the whole of the word of God pervaded by the same Spirit, declaring consistently the unalterable purpose of God in Christ. If this can be received (and there is no reason why it cannot be), then the fallacy of Christendom will at once become apparent, and abhorrent. And those who once

had the Truth will be found lost in the quagmire of their specious speculations. There will be no need to try to dispose of the Trinitarians by the outlandish suggestion that the verses in John 5 commencing with:

“For there are three that bear record in heaven . . .”

are not in the original. True, they do not appear in certain codices but God has seen fit to have them included in what is called the Authorised Version. Had they been spurious, would He have allowed this?

A careful examination of our subject will not only show the shining light of Truth ever pointing to Christ, but will give a simple and clear meaning to the statement of John that “there are three that bear record in heaven”; and also to the “three that bear witness in earth”; and demonstrate the unity of God’s purpose in both cases. By no stretch of imagination can these “three” be referred to separate individuals, constituting what was at one time stoutly defended by the Churches as the Trinity.

To the contemporaries of John, having in mind the recent baptism of Jesus, it was important they should know that Jesus came not by water *only*. The work of God in Christ was planned by God from the foundation of the world; and so Jesus’ baptism, important as this was, did not represent the ‘beginning’ as might be supposed, but a step in the development of God’s work in Christ. There has been some hazy thinking about the baptism of Jesus, which it is important should be correctly understood, before proceeding to examine the full divine programme concerning Jesus. Ask the ‘others’—those who once had the Truth — why was Jesus baptised of John in Jordan? The answer will be given quickly in the words of Jesus. “Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” But what does this mean? What divine truth was it intended to show? Something very important surely, for immediately after the baptism the Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a ‘dove’ and God’s voice was heard saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Some in their despairing endeavours have said that since those coming to Christ are baptised into His death, Christ was baptised into His own death, a rather peculiar unintelligible view, for Christ had not died.

Help may be found in realising that many in Jerusalem and Judea went to John to be baptised of him. Not all were accepted for when John

“ . . . saw many of the Pharisees and Saducees come to his baptism, he (John) said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.”

(Matt. 3:7-8)

The sad and startling truth no longer appreciated by the 'others' is that the whole nation, although professing the Truth, were — **"lost"**.

Jesus said:

"I am not sent but unto the **lost** sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24)

The baptism of John was not into Christ, but was a 'baptism of repentance'. Had this been necessary before then the prophets would need to have been baptised, but it was a divinely appointed means of individuals showing God's condemnation of the 'lost' nation, and by being washed in the waters of repentance being reconciled to God.

Jesus was a Jew. He was one of the condemned nation. To show His dissociation he was baptised of John, not that He had sinned, but was part of a corrupt and evil generation. It was in this sense that He was baptised "to fulfill all righteousness." Perhaps it may now be clearly seen what righteousness Jesus fulfilled: the severance from those who had fallen away from the Truth, an act which merited the divine approbation: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

"By water and blood"

Going back to the beginning Jesus was seen in type. The covering of native nakedness was and is still felt as an essential, and is expressive of the Truth that those coming to God must be 'covered' in the appointed way.

Adam and Eve learned this lesson in a grievous way. Fig leaves would not do. God required that the 'covering should be of skins' requiring the slaying of an animal. In this was demonstrated that Christ who gave His life was the only acceptable covering. The hard lesson for humans was that "without (the) shedding of blood is no remission (of sins)".

May we not now see that Jesus came not by water only, but also by blood.

It provides a delightful divine itinerary to follow right through the scriptures and see how explicit was this teaching uniting believers of all ages in the "Spirit of truth".

to be continued

**“WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST
IS BORN OF GOD”**

The opening of the fifth chapter of John's first epistle contains some very thought provoking words. Verse one lays down some basic facts concerning God's work of begetting spiritual sons and daughters. Firstly is it not important that we do not forget what is involved in believing that Jesus is the Christ? Primarily, it means believing everything that Jesus believed and still does believe now, at the right hand of God. Not simply that Jesus will come to reign on the earth, and that there will be a judgment, and so on, for there are many people who are not in the Truth, who know these things. Believing that Jesus is the Christ, the anointed of God means believing in Him, and everything He says and does. This, of course, should mean thinking the same as He, and that means thinking the same as God. A mighty proposition! This is why such a simple statement as “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God” is not only true, but has to be the case. Superficially, we might have wondered how one needs to be born of God to believe that Jesus is the Christ. It is because so much is involved in thinking the same as God and His Son, that is completely beyond the best of unaided thinking. This consideration also covers another verse on the same lines:

“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.” (1 Cor. 12:3)

On the face of it, this is even more surprising, that one cannot even say “That Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.” Again, it is because so much is involved: no less than thinking with God — the same as He.

Coming back now to 1 John 5 and the statement that this condition of believing in Jesus, and so thinking with Him, requires no less than a spiritual rebirth by God, by the Holy Spirit. Could we imagine a figure illustrating more of a fresh start than being born again? Being born is a completely fresh start to life; a completely **new creature** — not an old person amended — but an altogether new person: in the spiritual — a new way of thinking. As with the natural birth of a new life coming into the world, it is only the power of God that can do this — either of these things; the natural birth of a baby, or the spiritual birth of a new creature. Then if we move on with the apostle John, we see to where the development of these thoughts

leads. If we recognise the great personal work undertaken by God on our behalf to give us a new birth and a new life, it should instil a reciprocal love for Him. Not that we first loved Him, but He first loved us — when we were enemies in mind, and in our deeds. This love, rendered again to God, is because we recognise our own complete inadequacy to live as a new, spiritual creature, without that Holy Spirit of God continuing to work in us. Drawing from the natural again, it is just as impossible for us to continue growing after the birth, as it is for us to come to be born in the first place, without the marvellous operation of the power of God. He accomplishes the work — both natural and spiritual; bringing to the birth, and subsequent growth.

So then if we truly love Him that begot us, because we know we would not have been born and cannot do any good without Him, then it amounts to the same as believing in Him and thinking with Him. Now if God has so loved us to beget us into the Truth and belief in Jesus Christ, labouring with us, then He has shown similar love to everyone else He has laboured with, to do the same for them as for us, in bringing them to a belief in Jesus. This is where we come to the crux of the matter of loving God and the children of God. We have tried to establish that both love for, and belief in God and His Son involve thinking with them — like them. If they, then, have bestowed a great labour of love and patient and beneficial working with the other children as has been shown to us, then surely, with the same mind as God, with His loving kindness, we also ought to show the same patient, just, and beneficent working towards our brethren and sisters as do the Father and the Son. This accounts for verse two which is a profound statement and a little difficult to follow.

“By this we know that we love the children of
God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.”

This shows how essential it is to do to God's children as He would do, or in the same spirit, if we are to show true love to them. And to be able to do this, we must love God, keeping His commandments, which is love for Him. If we say we love the children of God and yet spoil them, or let them go on in a wrong way, without trying to give all possible help; or if jealous of another, or have any other form of hatred toward them, is it not obvious that we are failing to show true love, the love such as God would show toward His children? There are important differences between what we can do toward our brethren and sisters, and what God can do — though not different in spirit. We cannot chasten as God chastens, but we can warn. It is not for us to punish in the way that God does, but we can rebuke or entreat. If one is slipping into the enjoyment of vanities, we might seem very austere in not fellowshiping the vain pursuit.

But how could the love of God, with His children's ultimate welfare in mind, give encouragement to any practice or pursuit that could turn a child of God, born of the Spirit, back to the carnality of earth — spiritually dead?

A rather paradoxical example of failure to show true love by the disciple Peter, and the showing of true love by Jesus, though superficially appearing to be the other way round — is seen in the incident recorded in Matt. 16:22-23:

“Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: (His death) this shall not be unto thee. But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan — for thou savourest not the things that be of God but those that be of men.”

Though it may not be for us to rebuke so strongly, the spirit should be the same; for such is the responsibility toward our brethren and sisters that true love can demand a hard saying if, as in the above instance, the rebuke is for the welfare of a brother or sister at fault. The execution of such a difficult work, in adopting the right manner, and choosing the right occasion all depends on our loving God and keeping His commandments. Otherwise a rebuke is only likely to introduce a battle of the flesh.

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments.” (v 2)

There is no other way by which we can show true love for the children of God. Have we not seen and proved this in our lives? Love which is of the flesh spoils, and distorts judgment. Hatred, which is of the flesh, equally works evil towards one's neighbour — as well as himself incidentally. Loving the wrong thing or person is in vain for salvation, and has often taken people away from the Truth. Are we not even told “The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.”? This is because the wicked are harsh and neither know what to do, nor follow what God would do for a loved one. The result is that even tender mercies, if they are after the flesh, will not be for the good, but will only contribute to the harm, spiritually, of the loved one. This is not to say that natural love does no good; it is of great value up to a point, but is no substitute for godly love, which is unto life eternal. Arresting thoughts perhaps, but do they not help us to stand in awe and reverence of Him, whose love works only for the ultimate good of the one loved? Is not all the value of our work, therefore, consequent upon our love for God, and following His righteousness?

A.E.I.

THE VATICAN SMITTEN

The following startling report recently appeared in the English Press:

“Storm Damages Vatican Statue.

Lightening struck in the Vatican on Saturday night and chopped an arm off one of the 140 marble statues topping the famous colonnades in St. Peter’s Square. The storm also damaged other Papal ornaments including the coat of arms of Pope Alexander VII. Fragments of Marble were strewn about the Square.”

God is no respecter of persons, and has revealed what is to happen to the perversion of His Truth at the end of the present dispensation. The greatness and apparent invincibility of the pseudo institutions are to be exposed for what they really are; and the retribution on the power which as Jesus says has “deceived the whole world” will undoubtedly come to pass.

Jesus has declared concerning His judgments which will destroy all false institutions:

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.”
(Rev. 16:17-18)

The striking of the Vatican by lightning may seem a natural phenomena, but is it? Does it not show that the almighty power is there, and can be directed to achieve the purpose Jesus declared? If the palace of the one claiming to be the Vicar of Christ now can be stricken by heavenly power, does it not show that the doom of this great apostasy will be accomplished by a power greater than any human power, and will not fail to bring about the end.

“It is done.” (Rev. 16:17)

These are ominous words, and spell the finality of the Kingdoms of men in their national and religious aspects.

The words have a special scriptural connotation. Just before Jesus died upon the cross He said:

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, *It is finished*, and he bowed his head, and gave up the spirit.” (John 19:30)

The death of Christ upon the tree, showing the condemnation of all human nature opened the basis for redemption. Recognition of this by believers, and obedience to God's requirements united them (as it does today) to the promise of salvation, so unmistakably seen when Jesus rose from the dead. Truly, the death of Jesus closed a chapter in the divine dealings with men, and opened a new one. In this sense, what was required was achieved, so that Jesus could say: "It is done."

The closing of the final chapter is revealed as declared by the Apostle Paul:

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power:

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints"

(11 Thes. 1:7-10)

It is "finished", Jesus said. He died, but rose again. "It is done", and will just as certainly be the case very soon. A foretaste of Almighty power which struck the Vatican, helps appreciation of these few momentous words.

W. V. B.

"I HAVE SURNAMED THEE, THOUGH THOU HAST NOT KNOWN ME." (Isaiah 45:4)

What a sudden turn of events is recorded in the following verses:-

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus King of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah." (Ezra 1:1-2)

In the very first year of Cyrus king of Persia there was this complete change of circumstances, for the benefit of faithful Jews. Sudden, and perhaps unexpected as it was, it was something that faithful Jews could have expected. But human nature being what it is, the tendency in difficult circumstances is to feel doubtful about any sudden deliverance.

Daniel, however, had expected that God would be mindful, hence his prayer:—

“In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.” (Dan. 9:1-2)

Jeremiah had been quite specific as can be seen from his prophecy:—

“And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.” (Jeremiah 25:11-12)

Jeremiah’s message therefore helped Daniel to have expectation, though in the land of captivity. This enabled him to pray in hope to God. Just as God’s prophecy can help the mind to pray in hope in these times.

These events of old help to an understanding that at the time God has appointed for the latter days, a captivity will again return to Zion “with everlasting joy upon their heads.”

“The Lord God of heaven”, said Cyrus, “hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.” God can turn the hearts and minds of the mighty ones of the earth, so that His people may be favoured and protected. This is a never failing provision of God, which has been experienced by the people of God throughout the ages, even to these last days. God had been mindful of the outcome long before the days of Daniel or of Cyrus. It was nearly 200 years earlier when Isaiah had prophesied of Cyrus.

“That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:

That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundations shall be laid.”

(Isaiah 44:26-28)

“Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;”

“For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou has not known me.” (Isaiah 45:1 & 4)

Cyrus had been surnamed by God: before he was born and though he had known God. Here in the divine record is the evidence of how God overrules events long beforehand. But oh, the foolishness of men! Their blindness in their proclaimed estimations of the Scriptures. The learned of this world speak of a first and second Isaiah. They cannot believe that Isaiah could name Cyrus nearly two hundred years beforehand. So it is assumed another one, termed a second Isaiah, wrote the above words, many years after the days of the prophet Isaiah, which have been incorporated in Isaiah’s book. The implication is that the writing about Cyrus was not recorded until there was a Cyrus.

How vain is the unbelief in such a suggestion, which nevertheless in its apparently scholarly exposition has deceived almost everyone professing to be religious. If true that Cyrus was not spoken of by God’s messenger until there was a Cyrus; or a situation had arisen in the earth which gave opportunity to write in the style of the latter parts of Isaiah’s prophecy which scholars imply Isaiah himself could not have described. Why then did Cyrus say:—

“The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem . . .”

Was Cyrus deceived by a contemporary? Or rather was he caused to marvel that he should be so accurately spoken of all those years before his time? This potentate was moved to make his proclamation glorifying the God of Israel in his admission that he could see an overruling of a higher power which had enabled him to be successful in his campaigns to found the Persian Empire. This does not mean that Cyrus was a godly man. But rather that the divine working caused him to have respect for God’s people. Even as in later times an undoubted heavenly working is evident in such things as the

“Balfour Declaration” and other events since. Also in events that gave the brethren favour and protection in two world wars.

If the scholars are right about two Isaiahs what of Jeremiah’s prophecy; over seventy years before the overthrow of a power which must have seemed invincible at the time he foretold the doom of Babylon? If it is accepted Jeremiah’s was a true and accurate prophecy, which Daniel also corroborates, why deny Isaiah’s wonderful testimony? Also, what of the ancient prophecy concerning a king of Judah long before he was born as in the following quotation:

“And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.

And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men’s bones shall be burnt upon thee.”

(1 Kings 13:1-2)

Let it also be noted that when the inspired Apostle Paul quotes from the early and latter parts of the prophecy, he clearly states that Isaiah has said it.

The brethren are not the wise of this world; but have been helped to understand the sublime and simple truth, which those with “higher education” are denied. Such are blinded by their own “wisdom”, and therefore their faith is undermined.

That Cyrus made his dramatic decree cannot be denied. Though some years after the decree of Cyrus the enemies of the Jews, who wanted to stop their building could not believe the great potentate could have been so concerned about the Jews. Hence their question:-

“Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king’s treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.”

(Ezra 5:17)

The indisputable confirmation however is seen in the Jews’ return to their land, and their commencing the work of building

again, through the initial help received from the Persian monarch. Thousands of Jews heeded the summons, realising it was God who was helping them. So it is recorded:—

“Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.

And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with bessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered.

Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his bods;

Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.” (Ezra 1:5-8)

They rose up, whose spirit God had raised. This is an exhortation from days of old. When the faces of God’s people are set Zionwards, rather than upon the things of Babylon, their spirit is raised (for such a desire elevates the thoughts and feelings to a higher plain).

May some capture such a spirit of revival in these last days. May the words from the book of Ezra bring more forcibly home the thoughts expressed in the Anthem number 1:—

“The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south.”

D.L.

“The Signs of His Coming and of the end of the World”

“... THE NATIONS WERE ANGRY, AND THY WRATH IS COME, AND THE TIME OF THE DEAD, THAT THEY SHOULD BE JUDGED, AND THAT THOU SHOULDEST GIVE REWARD UNTO THY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS, AND TO THE SAINTS, AND THEM THAT FEAR THY NAME, SMALL AND GREAT; AND SHOULDEST DESTROY THEM WHICH DESTROY THE EARTH.”

(Revelation 11:18)

Never has there been such a time of anger. Nationally and internationally. Wherever attention is brought to focus there is trouble and anguish. British industrial relations finds much publicity in the reports of strikes: political affairs are shaky with a tendency towards a break-up of the United Kingdom in the devolution movements gaining momentum in Scotland particularly, and also Wales. The Ulster troubles spill over into England with repeated bomb outrages killing or maiming unfortunate members of the populace who happen to be in the vicinity of the explosions at the time.

The British industrial troubles however are not confined to this country. Industrial unrest is now a feature of most of the western European countries. But unrest and anger is not merely to be found in the factory or workshop. It is unsafe to walk about at night in some cities and towns, for violence is ever present, ready to boil up and spill over.

The British Police Superintendents Association has recently complained that successive governments have failed to show sufficient concern about rises in crime and violence. The following statement has been issued by this police organisation:—

“It is our desire to bring to the attention of the public that the life style in this country has been allowed to deteriorate over the past thirty years to such a degree that the stability of our nation, upon which our national heritage has been built shows visible signs of decay”

“We have a duty to tell the people that unless some positive steps are taken by Government, whatever its political persuasion, to cut down the level of crime and violence . . . the situation for the law-abiding, respectable citizen is bleak indeed.”

The Police Federation have issued a leaflet which declares that school-children and recent school-leavers are now committing crime “with impunity”. The statement went on to say “It must be recognised that there is a hard core of young offenders who are depraved and not deprived. Juvenile apprenticeships in crime must be stopped.”

A Scottish High Court judge has recently attacked “sociological nonsense” on crime, punishment and the upbringing of children. Theories that have arisen have been idiotic, he said, which has caused much harm. His comment was:—

“I have been much struck by the frequency with which advanced thinkers invite us to adopt measures developed in the United States, which country, judging by results, has coped even less effectively with a mounting crime rate than ourselves and, indeed, most other Western Countries.”

Continuing, he said that his knowledge of crime and its consequences led him to conclude that the present was bleak, and the future threatened to be worse. Scottish criminal statistics gave a “totally discouraging picture.”

These people, from their practical knowledge, obviously can be taken seriously. The outlook nationally is indeed dark.

What of the international situation? What an angry condition prevails! Everywhere there is trouble. Bad feelings prevail on the Russo-Chinese borders. Sporadic fighting is still occurring in Vietnam. India and Pakistan are far from being amicable neighbours. The Lebanon is deeply involved in civil war. A hostile situation continues to prevail between the Arabs and Israel. Britain and Iceland are embroiled in “the cod war”. In South America, as a consequence of rampant inflation, governments are insecure. In the great African continent disaster threatens. The Angolan war has seen the uprising of communism, with the help of Russian supplied Cuban troops. Rhodesia, hitherto feeling quite confident of its ability to defend itself against the numerically superior coloured people indigenous

to the area, is beginning to have a feeling of uncertainty. Even South Africa with its unpopular, yet apparently successful policies of white supremacy, is becoming more cautious in its policies generally, and in its relationship with Rhodesia particularly.

Russia has supplied or promised to supply during the past two years over a billion pounds worth of military equipment, including fighter planes and tanks to ten African states. Soviet military advisers have been sent into these countries, according to latest United States Secret Service reports. It is an **angry** situation. South Africa is not only divided between the white and coloured people, but there is also division between the Dutch originating Afrikaaners and the English speaking population.

Recently the Israeli Minister of Defence voiced his fear of Russia in the following terms:—

“We hope the West will awaken, because the prospects are not very funny if the Russians move on. The problem is not ‘What will Israel say to the West?’ but ‘What is the West today, and if there is a choice in the West?’ ”

Recently the Soviet Defence Minister spoke at a meeting of the military and said that Russia’s power in the world had never been greater than it was at the present time. But he urged an ever larger build-up of Soviet forces by saying:—

“ . . . at the same time there still exists a military danger that demands constant concern for the strengthening of our defences and for an increase in the might of the armed forces, keeping them in a state of constant readiness . . . we Communists cannot stop there, for to stop would be to lag behind . . . That is why our achievements in all spheres of military build-up have to be looked upon as a stage in the further strengthening of the military might of our armed forces.”

Russia and its satellites are tutoring their young people in all sorts of military instruction. Russian secondary school education has “National Defence” as one of the subjects on its curriculum. In Poland scholars are taught the subject of psychological warfare and subversion. Rumania teaches its young in national defence and military communication. Czechoslovakia has lessons in “civil defence” supplemented by lectures given by Army officers. East

Germany has what is called “military athletics”. Target Shooting, theory and practice, is a compulsory subject for school children in Hungary. What are these children, who are just commencing their teens, going to be like in outlook as they grow older when so instilled in their young receptive years?

Yes, the nations are angry. Never has there been a time like this. The pre-Second World War situation was nothing like it. Yet there is hope; though men and nations are angry. Though God is forgotten by them, He certainly cannot be kept out of human affairs. The day of His holy wrath against such a godless, violent age, will soon be here. Then **the dead will be raised**, and the reward will be given to all those who have separated themselves from such an evil world. In that day those who would “destroy the earth” will themselves be destroyed. This will mean an end of the “**angry nations**” and those who are embroiled in their affairs.

Economic experts have recently published a report predicting a better outlook for Britain due to North Sea oil, warning however that material gains will probably have to be offset by increasing

strains on the quality of life. The report said:—

“Violent crime, diminishing respect for the person, as well as for private property, will make many of the material advantages sources of anxiety as much as pleasure.”

No solution is offered; nor can be. Incipient violence and anger is too ingrained in world society. It is truly a time of anger which will justify divine wrath to bring about peace and tranquility which is such a sore need.

D.L.