

THE WORD

Despised
and
Rejected

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"Now go write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: That this is a rebellious people, lying children that will not hear the law of the LORD" (Isa. 30:8,9)

In the Book of Ecclesiastes it is written: "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be" (Eccles. 1:9) and in prefacing this article with the above text, one is aware that the modern development of *true* Israel will treat it in the same way as did their ancestors. However, no matter how much the Anglo-Celto-Saxon and kindred people may deny it and no matter how often their preachers and teachers may urge the non-efficacy of the Law, this God-given mechanism refuses to be subordinate to the theology of men. While Christians may speak of the "obsolete Jewish law", within Anglo-Saxondom the people are currently living under a situation which shows the continuing validity – despite verbal repudiations – of the Law of the LORD. It is stated in Deuteronomy 15:5 that if Israel hearkened to the voice of the LORD their God and obeyed His Commandments, nations would not rule over them and when one looks at the modern company of true Israel nations it must be agreed that national policy is dictated by the awakened "heathen" nations whose "wants" take precedence over Anglo-Saxon needs. Nations are indeed ruling over Israel today but, just as Isaiah wrote so long ago, they "will not hear the law of the LORD".

As has been stated above, the situation within *true* Israel today is precisely as was written in the Book of Ecclesiastes – "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall

be” — and for those who have been awakened to the urgent need within Anglo-Saxondom, attention is directed to the situation as it was in Israel when Isaiah wrote the above quotation.

In providing an eye-witness account of the disintegration of Israel in the land of Canaan, Isaiah began by directing attention to a lack of knowledge which had developed over a comparatively short time. He wrote: “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider” (Isa. 1:3). Something had indeed happened to a people so richly endowed with experience — which is knowledge — and lest they, or any future generation of Israelites who would read the prophet’s writing were left in any doubt as to the reason for this lack of knowledge, Isaiah highlighted the violation of the Law of the LORD as the main reason for it (Isa. 1:10; 2:3; 5:24; 8:16,20; 24:5; 30:9; 42:4,21,24 and 51: 4,7). Isaiah of course, was not alone in his twelve-fold indictment against Israel for their Law-violation — throughout the writings of all the prophets, both major and minor, there are one thousand, five hundred and thirty-one instances in which direct reference to Law-violation by Israel is made.

Israel had “despised the law of the LORD” (Amos 2:4); Israel had “done violence to the law” (Zeph. 3:4); Israel had “forgotten the law of thy God” (Hos. 4:6); Israel had refused to “give ear unto the law of our God” (Isa. 1:10) and consequently, “. . . there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20). The prophets did not leave the subject at publicising the fact that Israel had turned away from the Law — they detailed the consequences of this with Isaiah writing of

“trouble”, “darkness” and “anguish” descending on the people. Isaiah, in conjunction with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel and Obadiah were unanimous in declaring that the presence of “strangers” (Heb. *zuwr*: alien), in direct violation of the Law, was responsible for the anguish which permeated the cities of Israel and which contributed to the estrangement of the people from the LORD (Isa. 1:7; Jer. 2:25; Ezek. 16:26,32; Hos. 7:9 and Obadiah 11). Thus, as one looks at the writing of the prophets, one is faced with the inescapable fact that those servants of the LORD attributed the decline and fall of Israel in the land of Canaan to the violation of the Law of the LORD which, in turn, resulted in the free and unimpeded incorporation of aliens within the people whom the LORD commanded to be separate. Israel therefore had despised and rejected the Word which the LORD had given them for *their* good (Deut. 10:13).

There Was No Excuse for This

While the actual machinery which was responsible for this rejection will be discussed presently, it would serve to note something of the background to Israel’s experience which should have militated against the pernicious propaganda of those who thrived on religious unrealities in Israel.

Israel’s *national experience* may be said to have begun when in Egypt they passed from comparative luxurious living into the status of slaves. Some three hundred and twenty years earlier, the LORD had said to Abram: “Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict

them four hundred years" (Gen. 15:13). It has of course been said in modern times and this on the basis of the oft-repeated statement: "ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" — that the purpose for which Israel was sent into Egypt was that they should learn to have compassion on the alien in their midst but when the history of Egypt is considered, the whole story takes on a very different meaning. *In Egypt, Israel learned why it was that the LORD was opposed to an integrated society.*

Israel joined the mainstream of Egyptian history at a time when the ancient Empire was still at its height and they were to live through the process of change which was brought about when the disciplines of the makers of Empire were diluted and finally abolished by circumstances. The Empire, so reference books aver, was built when an unidentified, White-skinned people entered the Valley of the Nile and recognised the potential of this region. Settling themselves from the delta in the north to near the First Cataract — some 600 miles to the south — these people built settlements and co-operated in reaping abundant harvests from their knowledge of the annual flooding of the Nile. Co-operation meant organisation and it was the gift of organisation in those people — plus their other undoubted talents — which enabled them to create a dominant and stable State. Prospering in all their undertakings with trade in slaves, gold and ivory opening the door to even greater wealth, Egypt began to attract people from all over and modern reference books reveal the development of Egyptian society into several separate and distinct classes.

The originators of the Empire who showed a strong aversion for foreigners,

adopted the role of the aristocracy or ruling class while all others, depending on their contribution to the Empire, were professionally divided into six or seven roles ranging from peasants working on the land through the business sector of merchants to the priest class. Thus one finds Egyptian society clearly defined by the disciplines emanating from those who founded the Empire and it was only when *they* began indulging themselves with foreign wives thus diluting the original stock, that those disciplines became blurred over and the various classes which were maintained on a heredity basis, too began to merge with each other. To counter new trends which were developing, mercenaries were recruited and one finds a military caste comprising Nubians, Libyans, Ionians and Carians developing and it was at this time that Israel was injected into the situation.

Joseph was of course, the forerunner of Israel in Egypt and as all will surely recall, his term of imprisonment at the hand of the Egyptians was the result of his refusal to accommodate the lusts of his aristocratic master's wife (Gen. 39:7). Later, and when elevated to the position of being second only to the Pharaoh in the land (Gen. 41:44), one finds that Joseph, despite his exalted position as governor of all Egypt, was still subject to the disciplines which separated the various strata of Egyptian society (Gen. 43:32). When Jacob, at the behest of his son Joseph, brought his family to Egypt — and one should remember that they were a small minority numbering 70 (Gen. 46:27) — instead of integrating them among the aristocracy, the Pharaoh gave them the land of Goshen in the north

where they could be *in* Egypt but not of it.

Thus, the children of Israel, living separately within the Egyptian Empire, were able to see the changes that were taking place in the now heterogeneous Egyptian society and were certainly familiar with the power of the priests who were able to depose a Pharaoh because he repudiated polytheism and attempted to establish the worship of one god. They saw too the disintegration of the Empire when the Libyan mercenaries overthrew the government and placed their commander on the throne and within this, they the priests encouraging revolution in order to enhance their own particular position and that of the gods whom they professed to serve. Thus, in very real terms, Israel saw an Empire begin to dissolve as the tide of heterogeneity began to take its toll — a tide which swept away their separated status and forced them into the role of slaves, a role which was to be theirs for the next hundred years or so. And so, when the LORD told Moses to tell the children of Israel — “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle’s wings, and brought you unto myself” (Ex. 19:4) — He was not only calling their attention to His Power in their deliverance, He was reminding them of what they had been delivered from — an Empire in the final stages of decay.

Thus, as one looks at the reason — the logic — behind Israel’s sojourn in Egypt, one may see that it was their experience of and contact with an Empire which developed in an orderly fashion through the enforcement of strict segregation among its heterogeneous inhabitants but which crumbled when the wall of separation was broken.

While it is of course true that the generation which lived through those times did not live to enter into Canaan, it is equally true that, apart from the perpetuation of that Egyptian experience by word of mouth transmission among the families of Israel, the deliverance from that situation became enshrined in the weekly observance of the sabbath (Deut. 5:15).

Further Experience

Having been delivered from the convulsions of a dying Empire, Israel’s journey to the land of Canaan was not without further experiences which *could* stand them in good stead in later years. According to Exodus 12:38, a “mixed multitude” accompanied Israel in the first stage of its journey to Canaan — travelling with them from Rameses to Succoth -- with no further mention of them during the ensuing two years. Although the English translation simply indicates the presence of an unspecified number of divers people among the migrating Israelites, the Hebrew text is such that most theologians admit to a certain degree of ambiguity in it. The English word “mixed” is translated from the Hebrew *erebh* which even the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* admits as being of uncertain origins but which *appears* to be associated with the English “Arabia” and indeed is translated as such in 1st Kings 10:15. Whatever its true meaning, it is quite significant that after the announcement that a multitude of *erebh* accompanied Israel, the record in Exodus then proceeds to discriminate against the “stranger” (Heb. *nokriy*), the “foreigner” (Heb. *toshawb*) and an “hired servant” — none of whom were permitted

participation in the eating of the passover lamb (Ex. 12:43,45) while the "stranger" (Heb. *Ger*) in verse 49 was to be treated as one that was "homeborn". Was it these regulations that drove out the *erebh*? — one will never know.

In passing to Numbers 11:4, one reads that "...the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting..." and one is immediately confronted with the picture which has contradictions associated with it. In the first instance it will be noted that the children of Israel complained: "Who shall give us flesh to eat?" and yet if one goes back to the sixth chapter in the Book of Numbers, it will be seen that there was certainly no shortage of sheep, rams, goats or oxen. The next point to note is that Dr. James Strong in his *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, indicates that the text does not contain any word but that it has been added by translators as an adjective to "multitude" whereas Gesenius, in his *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, suggests that the inference both of the text and context is that the whole community began acting contemptuously. In the Targum (Tar. Jon.), while it admits to a certain confusion in the text, it is suggested that the term "mixt multitude" could indicate proselytes although where these would come from, particularly as the Law made no provision for them, is not stated.

As no further reference is made concerning the "mixed multitude" insofar as Israel's journey to Canaan is concerned and if both accounts are correct, it would appear that Israel, through experience, learned that the *erebh* — whoever they were — were not prepared to abide by the regulations which were in force in Israel and were

therefore no asset when it came to the implementation of the whole Constitution which was to be Israel's "wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations" (Deut. 4:6). Thus the first lesson that Israel learned was that the *erebh* were not prepared to be part of Israel in terms of the regulations which had been laid down. In the second instance, if the account is accurate and not an interpolation by the scribes (Jer. 8:8), Israel learned that while they limited their complaint to the verbal area, the "mixt multitude" fell "a lusting", indulging in contemptuous action to express *their* complaint.

Israel Conned

In returning to the time of Isaiah who wrote during and of the disintegration of the northern kingdom of Israel and Jeremiah who recorded the demise of the kingdom of Judah, as has been stated earlier, both these prophets, in addition to charging that *all Israel* had despised and rejected the Law-word of the LORD, drew attention to the presence of "strangers" in Israel who were the mechanism of the decay among the people. Isaiah wrote: "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers" (Isa. 1:7). Jeremiah wrote: "Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst: but thou saidst, There is no hope: no, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go" (Jer. 2:25). So then, according to these two major prophets, the demise of both kingdoms — Israel and Judah — was attendant on the presence of "strangers" in the land

and one's mind naturally goes back to the regulations in Exodus where, although the "stranger" was not permitted to participate in the eating of the passover lamb, there appeared to be no restriction against *them* being in Israel.

However, in passing to the Tabernacle, which was the housing for the Ark of the Covenant which contained the tables of the Law and which was the place where the LORD met with His Covenant People, one finds a specific regulation which has a direct bearing on those "strangers" which devastated the land and caused Israel to be removed into captivity. It will be noted in Numbers 1:51, the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Tabernacle in which He said: "And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down: and when the Tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: *and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.*" The word "stranger" in this instance and in the Hebrew text, is very different from those which have been discussed as being relevant in Exodus 12 namely, *Nokriy, Toshawb* and *Ger*. In this instance it is written as *zuwr* and its usage in the Hebrew text indicates one who is a racial alien. Thus, in terms of the Command of the LORD — and no matter how much this may be resented — the *zuwr* who came near to the Tabernacle was to be put to death. The simple expedient of using a reliable Concordance will show that the word used by both Isaiah and Jeremiah in identifying the "strangers" who were the cause of Israel's downfall in Canaan is *ZUWR* — the very people who, on the pain of death, were forbidden to come near to the Tabernacle. Something had indeed happened in Israel whereby they were

conned into admitting the *zuwr* believing that this would be acceptable to the LORD.

In looking at the great "con game" that was practised on Israel, there can be absolutely no doubt that the people believed that what they were doing, was fully justified. If one considers Jeremiah 7, which is the account of the LORD'S indictment against the surviving remnant of Judah in Jerusalem just prior to its destruction by the Babylonians, one finds Jeremiah standing in the gate of the temple — which was Solomon's replacement for the earlier Tabernacle — and demanding that the people amend their ways. He accused them of trusting in "lying words" which immediately suggests that the people were the victims of some confidence trick, and as one proceeds, it becomes obvious that the Law of the LORD was the area in which the trick was being played out. Jeremiah said: "For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; If ye oppress not the stranger (Heb. *ger*), the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place (the only blood shed in the Temple was sacrificial), neither walk after other gods to your hurt: Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers for ever and ever." From this indictment, it is patently obvious that the LORD was contrasting the people's behaviour with the Disciplines which He had given at the nation's foundation.

The indictment continues: "Behold ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal (violating the 8th Commandment), murder (the 6th Commandment), commit adultery (the 7th Commandment),

and swear falsely (the 3rd Commandment), and burn incense unto Baal (the 2nd Commandment), and walk after other gods whom ye know not (the 1st Commandment); And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, WE ARE DELIVERED TO DO ALL THESE ABOMINATIONS." In other words, the LORD accused that remnant, not because of their belief, but because that belief was centred in "lying words" which suggested that they had been "rescued" from the consequences of violating the Law. In a nutshell, this belief was centred in the total efficacy of "shedding innocent blood" which "delivered" (Heb. *nâtsal*, rescued) and absolved them from any consequences for Law transgression.

This, of course, in the New Testament is known as "grace" and it may come as a surprise to many to learn that *true grace* – not that invoked by the inhabitants of Jerusalem – was operative in Old Testament times. All in all, there are thirty-eight references to "grace" (Heb. *chên*, kindness, favour, beauty) in the Old Testament but in each case it is used as the consequence of obedience to what the LORD had commanded and not as a justification for disobedience. "Noah found grace (*chên*) in the eyes of the LORD" (Gen. 6:8) – why? "... and Noah walked with God." He was obedient to the will of the LORD and was doing it – hence the "favour" of the LORD. Noah and a multitude of others in the Old Testament "found grace" as a result of their obedience to the Will of the LORD and certainly never attained His Favour through disobedience. That remnant of Judah, "trusting in lying words" and "shedding innocent blood" in

the temple, believed that this obtained the "favour" of the LORD and yet, as the history of the Old Testament makes abundantly clear, this belief did not absolve them from the consequences of Law transgression and they followed the northern kingdom into captivity.

Into the New Testament

In passing to the New Testament when, as John establishes "the Word was made flesh", one finds the Lord Jesus Christ declaring His Advent in a specific context which was: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24) and "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do ... For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me and they have received them ..." (John 17:4,8). Israel, without the Law of the LORD is nothing – a feature which is made abundantly clear as one researches the Law itself and the God-stated reason for giving it – and if the Word Incarnate came to reinstate the WORD in Israel (John 17:4,8), would He teach that they should indulge in a belief which earned the LORD'S indictment for that remnant of Judah and which resulted in removal from the land? Surely not.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17) – if one "fulfils" the Law, one is obedient to it and certainly does not invalidate it. "... it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail" (Luke 16:17) and as "heaven and earth" are very tangible realities today, it is impossible to see how the Law has been abrogated. In a further incident related by Luke, one is able to see

the importance of the Law to a subject which has been wrenched out of its scriptural context and given a meaning far removed than originally intended. It will be recalled that when the Lord visited Jericho, a man named Zacchaeus climbed a tree to see the Lord as He passed by and that seeing him, the Lord called him and stated that He would abide in his house, whereupon the charge was made that He had gone to be the guest of a sinner. "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Even those with an elementary knowledge of the Law will surely recognise that what Zacchaeus was saying was that he repented his violations of the Law and instead of offering propitiatory sacrifice, he fulfilled his obligations as required in the Law. The statement: "I will restore him fourfold" was made against the Law recorded in Exodus 22:1 and which certainly operated in David's time who, faced with theft, said: "And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and because he had no pity" (2nd Sam. 12:6).

Because of the *repentance* expressed by Zacchaeus, the Lord said: "This day is *salvation* (Gr. *soteria*, deliverance, healing, soundness and safety) come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." From this it is patently obvious that the Word Incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ, linked repentance and conformity to the Law with *salvation* and yet scarcely thirty years later it was being taught that "... ye are not under the law (Gr. *nomos*, administrative, civil law), but under grace" (Rom.

6:14). It should be clearly understood that the scripture teaches that "grace" whether in the Hebrew *chên* or the Greek *charis* is no substitute for the Law, but is a condition of "favour" achieved because of obedience to it — the Lord in His statement to Zacchaeus confirming this.

Into the Christian Dispensation

As one passes into the Christian Dispensation one finds a theology developing which despite the evidence of Christ the Word, avers that the positive obligation of the Law, as such, passed away and that every revelation of God's Will as propounded by theologians in the context of righteousness and love becomes a moral obligation to all believers. In this, and by contrasting this theology with what the Word, Christ Jesus the Lord taught during His Ministry, one finds a continuation of the despising and rejection of the Word which characterised Israel prior to its removal into captivity.

Throughout the centuries which were dominated by the ritually-orientated Roman Church, theology on the Law was that as God had written His Law in the hearts of men this gave them the ability to reason and to discover a moral code which was not an affront to human conscience and by which all men could reasonably live together. Although Roman theology does not say so in so many words, it is patently obvious that the Law of the LORD which made it impossible for that *erebh* multitude to continue with Israel to the land of Canaan, was not suitable for the universalism which dominated the new theology. Thus, in place of teaching — "Thus saith the LORD" — and insisting that the moral code as laid down in

the Law of the LORD should be the yardstick for human behaviour, Roman theology emphasised the importance of "regulation by conscience" as its substitute. "Sin" of course, had to be re-defined for while the Old Testament record positively defined the subject as being a violation of the Law and while John in his first Epistle, categorically stated: "... for sin is the transgression of the law" (1st John 3:4), as the Law in theological opinion was no longer valid, a new definition had to be provided.

In the new "regulation by conscience" theology the notion of specific norms became anathema and in a type of permissiveness it was held that if one person viewed something or some behaviour as wrong despite the fact that others viewed it in an opposite light, this was quite in order. In other words, norms and principles became a matter of individual conscience irrespective of whether or not those norms and principles were in direct conflict with what the LORD had provided for His people. Thus, "sin" ceased to be the "transgression of the Law" in the opinion of the "opinion makers" and "anything which does not arise from conviction is sin" (Rom. 14:23 N.E.B.) took its place. Needless to say, such a definition despises and rejects the Law-word which the LORD gave to His people for right and wrong — good and evil. These are not negotiable terms subject to the perception and conviction of individuals. "Right" is that which conforms with what the LORD establishes as right and "wrong" is its opposite. Thus, in establishing what is right and what is wrong, the LORD certainly never gave permission to anyone to make a mockery of His Law by claim-

ing that its application is subject to the fickle "conviction" and ever vacillating "faith" of men.

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"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down"
(Matt. 24:1,2)

Although specific historical evidence may be lacking, it is more than probable that several of those listening to the abovequoted statement by the Lord Jesus Christ actually witnessed the fulfilment of His words when both the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed in A.D.70. It is quite probable too, that they lived through the warfare, famine, disease and earthquakes which He said would precede the destruction of the city and as one reads through the first six chapters, of Book Six, in the *Wars of the Jews* by Flavius Josephus, one can truly appreciate the reality of the Lord's prophetic word. However, the Lord's description of the events which would precede the destruction of the temple was not limited to the physical conditions — tremendous though these were — He added a further dimension to the tribulation of that time by drawing attention to the mental assault which would accompany those dramatic events. His first response to the enquiry by the disciples — "Tell us, when shall these

things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming again, and the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:3) — was: "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am (the) Christ; and shall deceive many." Thus, in the midst of the physical trials and tribulations of that time, the Lord warned of a battle for the mind which would centre on the utilisation of His Name as the basis for the battle and which, He said, would be aimed at deceit and deception. As the physical events which the Lord described were accurately fulfilled to the letter, it would be totally illogical to aver that His warning words against deceit and deception — using His Name for this — too was not fulfilled

Just as Josephus recorded, with dramatic clarity, the fulfilment of all the physical trials which came upon Jerusalem and its environs, so too, later historians were to record the accurate fulfilment of the Lord's warning against what can only be called, "religious or doctrinal deceptions". According to the historical evidence provided by such writers as Irenaeus, Epiphanius, Hippolytus and Clement of Alexandria, one is able to discern these doctrines in effect and although not specifically expressed in so many words, it is patently obvious that changes had taken place and that men had departed from what the Lord Jesus Christ had taught. These historians wrote of situations which arose because men believed — had faith in — what men said *about* the Christ of God rather than in what He Himself had said and taught. In other words, men believed in the doctrines which were formulated about the Christ and being totally engrossed in these doctrines, they failed to see that they were pawns in the

very game of deceit of which He had warned in the Olivet Discourse.

Deceptions

It may be recalled that the LORD, at the commencement of His Ministry, had said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17), and His statement: "Think not", is surely an indication of His foreknowledge that men *would* be induced to think along these lines. This, of course, is precisely what happened after His Ascension and not only were His words — "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24) — totally rejected, His contention — "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:18) — too was rejected. Thus, within a very short time after His Ascension, it was popularly taught *and accepted*, that He not only abrogated the Law which gave content and meaning to Israel and the LORD'S purpose in the nation, but that the prophets who spoke of Israel's national resurrection, too had been nullified in a new dispensation of universalism in which proselytism and non-Israel people, were the most important.

The "Stranger" in the New Dispensation

As has been noted previously, Israel paid the penalty for transgressing the Law of the LORD and the one area which occupied the attention of the prophets, was the fact that despite the prohibitions in the Law, Israel seemed to be obsessed with the need to have "strangers" in their midst. Small wonder that the Lord warned against "thinking"

that He had come to destroy the Law and the prophets – for it was from the writing of the prophets that Israel would know that the “stranger” was a disaster in the nation. Whether one reads the indictment of the LORD against Israel in Isaiah, Hosea, Jeremiah or Ezekiel, one finds that the “stranger” (specifically the *zuwr*, the racial alien) originated the catastrophe which overtook Israel and while their relationship with the LORD as a whole was one of total disobedience, this area of the “stranger” was singled out for special mention.

At the time of the First Advent when Pharisaic Talmudism was taught in preference to the “law and the prophets”, one finds that despite the much vaunted “purity” (?) of the Judaeans, the scribes and the priests had evolved a new teaching about Israel which demanded the abrogation – if not of the Law, certainly of the prophets. This teaching centred on “the Israel community of God” which was open to all and sundry provided they conformed with the trilateral formula of circumcision, sacrifice and baptism. This, so it was claimed, was the true purpose of God in creating Israel – the encouragement of all to become part and parcel of the universal family of God. That Israel paid the penalty for allowing “strangers” into its community and were removed from the land in captivity, certainly gives the lie to this contention and it is small wonder that the Lord Jesus Christ emphasised the importance of both the Law and the prophets for it was in these, that true Israel could learn its national lesson.

If one considers the Law which Israel received at Sinai, it will be seen that it specifically militates against proselytism which places *Talmudic opinion* very much

in opposition to the Law of the LORD. Further, before Israel occupied one square inch of Canaan, the nation was reminded what the LORD required of them and here again, no provision was made, for them to “convert” the Canaanites nor to adopt them as “spiritual Israelites”. After telling Israel to make “no covenant with them”, the instruction continued: “Neither shall thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly” (Deut. 7:3,4). If it had been part and parcel of the LORD’S purpose with Israel to proselytise all and sundry, why place these restrictions on the nation for surely, integration at all levels would have accomplished this? Why then did the LORD punish Israel for allowing the “strangers” in and why speak of the “stranger” presence in the land of Israel as a catastrophe? It was small wonder that the Lord Jesus Christ insisted that He had not come to destroy the Law or the prophets – it was only in the writing of the prophets that Israel could see the reason why the LORD was so insistent that no covenants nor marriages were to be made with the “strangers”.

Despite the Lord’s most emphatic contention that His Mission was not at variance with the Father’s Old Testament Plan and despite His statement that He could not do anything of Himself but was limited by and to what He had seen the Father do (John 5:19), *it became evident that men did not believe Him*. Doctrines began to circu-

late which made His contention null and void and one finds that a universalism with the greatest effort toward proselytism or conversion dominating all efforts made in His Name. "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24) was now by-passed and instead of acquainting those same "lost sheep" with what the LORD had taught concerning the Law, the main concentration was on others to whom the Law was totally irrelevant.

The Lord's Approval?

In His Revelation given to John some sixty-three years after His Ascension, the Lord Jesus Christ made it very plain that that which was being taught in the assemblies which had been formed in His Name, was *not* what He had taught. In the Message to the assembly at Pergamos, He said: "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast them there that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication" (Rev. 2:14). This Balaam-inspired stumblingblock which was held by those at Pergamos is only fully appreciated when one considers the account in Numbers 25 and in which Israel was induced into immorality with the Moabite/Midianite prostitutes who were consecrated to the worship of Baal. In the Law, the Moabites and Ammonites — the by-product of incest (Gen. 19:31-38) — were the *nokriy*, the "stranger" who under no circumstances were permitted to participate in the Passover (Ex. 12:43) nor could they "enter the congregation of the LORD for ever" (Deut. 23:3 and Neh. 13:1). Thus the Lord's indictment against that assembly at Per-

gamos, was that they had adopted an anti-nomian (Lawless) attitude and were practising that which the Law had stipulated as positively forbidden.

In addition to condemning the holding of the "doctrine of Balaam", the Lord continued by referring to another development which was newly sprung up as there is no evidence of it having been practised by Israel during its Moabite experience — the doctrine justifying the "eating of things sacrificed unto idols". This, of course, was the infusion of Hellenistic practices wherein that which was offered, whether "clean" or "unclean", whether offered to the gods of heaven or the gods of hell, all had now become acceptable IF the appropriate thanks were returned for it (1st Cor. 10:23-30). The things which were offered to the gods of the under-world were totally burnt thus there was no danger of these appearing in the market places for sale but those offered to the gods of heaven, with blood still in the veins, was so offered which brought those purchasing and eating in violation of Leviticus 17:10. Thus, at Pergamos there were those who believed — had indeed been induced into believing — that this belief together with a few words of gratitude, made right that which the LORD God of Israel said was wrong. Thus, the opinion-makers of that time had successfully engendered the belief that all men had been liberated insofar as the Law was concerned and that the only criteria which now obtained was belief itself — whatever form this took.

The "Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes"

In addition to His indictment against

those in the assembly at Pergamos who held the Balaam doctrine plus that of eating the flesh of animals sacrificed to idols, one finds a reference — the second to this subject — which calls attention to the “Nicolaitanes”. “So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate” (Rev. 2:15). The significant feature about this reference is that in an assembly which gathered in His Name, there were those who held doctrines which were contrary to what He taught and more, they sponsored a doctrine which He said He hated. Here indeed, one has the evidence of a Christian assembly despising and rejecting the Word Incarnate in the flesh. This being so, it would serve to take another look at this subject which the LORD said He hated and to ponder whether or not, the same “deeds” and “doctrine” of the Nicolaitanes obtains within assemblies today which proclaim the benediction of the LORD on their ministeries.

While the greater majority of the Book of the Revelation is undoubtedly symbolic, there can be very little doubt that the word or the sect called the “Nicolaitanes” was a real and tangible entity which had an adverse effect on the Christian Church in the early years of its existence. Irenaeus (circa A.D. 120-200) for instance, wrote of the Nicolaitanes as existing during his lifetime adding that it was the boast of this sect that their founder was Nicolas of Antioch, who was one of the seven deacons ordained by the Apostles in A.D. 33. Hippolytus (circa A.D. 170-235) too wrote of this sect and in addition to claiming that Nicolas was its founder, expanded on the man himself claiming that after his ordination, he sank

into the grossest impurity becoming not only the founder of the Nicolaitanes but the originator of other immoral sects as well. The same story is told by Epiphanius and Jerome — both of whom wrote of the Nicolaitanes as a disaster for the Christian Church.

Nicolas, of course, was a native of Antioch who had been proselytised into Pharisaism and then converted to Christianity and if the account by the above-mentioned Church historians is correct, not only had the Law been discounted by the opinion-makers, the message of the prophets too had been removed. Isaiah, who had warned that “adopted Israelites” were a disaster in the nation, wrote: “Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD” (Isa. 26:10). Here indeed was a lesson by a prophet which was ignored and the story of Nicolas and the Nicolaitanes showed the same disaster in operation as had overtaken Israel.

Dr. William Smith in his *Bible Dictionary*, wrote of the impact which converts such as Nicolas were making and his statement is well worth noting: “The controversy itself was inevitable as soon as the Gentiles were admitted, in any large numbers, into the Church of Christ. Were the new converts to be brought into subjection to the whole Mosaic law? Were they to give up their old habits of life altogether — to withdraw entirely from the social gatherings of their friends and kinsmen? Was there not the risk if they continued to join in them, of their eating, consciously or unconsciously, of that which had been slain in the sacrifices of a false worship, and thus of sharing in the

idolatry? The apostles and elders at Jerusalem met the question calmly and wisely. The burden of the Law was not to be imposed on the Gentiles. They were to abstain, among other things, from 'meats offered to idols' and from fornication, and this decree was welcomed as the great charter of the Church's freedom." From this statement, it is apparent that the "apostles and elders at Jerusalem" — after the Ascension of the Lord — *believed in the continuing validity of the Mosaic Law* and yet, within a very short period, the "favour shewed unto the wicked" — the absolution from keeping the Law — became the cornerstone of Christian doctrine with Paul stating: "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1st Cor. 6:12 and 1st Cor. 10:23). This is certainly *not* what the Christ of God said and very definitely *not* His attitude to the Law.

Did the "Gentile" converts learn righteousness? Dr. Smith had this to say of the Nicolaitanes for whom the Law was abandoned: "They, like the false prophet of Pethor (Balaam), united brave words with evil deeds. They made their 'liberty' a cloak at once for cowardice and licentiousness. In a time of persecution, when the eating or not eating of things sacrificed to idols was more than ever a crucial test of faithfulness, they persuaded men more than ever that it was a thing indifferent. This was bad enough, but there was a yet worse evil. Mingling themselves in the orgies of idolatrous feasts, they brought the impurities of those feasts into the meetings of the Christian Church..." Having compromised the Law in order to accommodate the

"stranger" converts, the "apostles and elders at Jerusalem" had opened the flood-gates and as Dr. Smith observed, that which the Lord Jesus Christ had taught was mingled and integrated with the customs indigenous to the converts. It is small wonder that the LORD castigated those who held the "doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" for, in a nutshell, it symbolised the rejection of both Him and His Authority; it characterised the reversal of priorities which He had set and established; it was a form of Christianity without Christ — "*He that rejecteth me, and receive not my words, hath one that judgeth him: The word that I have spoken shall judge him in the last day*" (John 12:48).

Rome!

Eusebius, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (Book III, Chapter 32) wrote: "But when the sacred band of the Apostles and the generation of those to whom it had been vouchsafed to hear with their ears the divine wisdom had reached the several ends of their lives, then the federation of godless error took its beginning through the deceit of false teachers, who, seeing that none of the Apostles still remained, barefacedly tried against the preaching of the truth the counter-proclamation of knowledge, falsely so-called." This, in conjunction with the increasing number of proselytes who seemed to have become an obsession in the post-apostolic era, created a situation of which the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* wrote: "Nothing, perhaps has tended more thoroughly to corrupt Christianity than the introduction into it of superstitions which are really pagan themselves, or have been suggested by pagan practices. Paganism, unable to oppose

Christianity successfully, has done much to corrupt it . . .” In a further quote from the same *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and dealing with the channel through which paganism was infused, it states: “The propensity of the rude and uneducated converts from paganism to cling to the festival rites of their forefathers proved to be invincible, so that it was seen necessary to seek to adopt the old usages to the new worship rather than to abolish them altogether; moreover, although the empire had become Christian, it was manifestly expedient that the old (pagan) holidays should be recognised as much as possible in the new arrangement of the calendar.”

This, of course, is a reference to Rome which, under Constantine and during the second decade of the fourth century, blended much of the Babylonian religion which was practised with that which had evolved of Christianity. In considering the *Life of Constantine*, one finds that he was more of a politician than a Christian for it was through his efforts to consolidate the empire that a blend of Babylon-cum-Christianity became a national sect which was rigidly enforced and with all opposition to this new formula ruthlessly dealt with.

In looking back to those early centuries of the new dispensation (?) one naturally asks what had happened to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” to whom the Lord Jesus Christ had claimed He had been specifically sent (Matt. 15:24)? It is purposeless to contend that the Jews in Judaea at that time represented the “lost sheep” to whom the Lord was sent for He quite categorically repudiated this identification when He said: “But ye (the Jews) believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I

said unto you” (John 10:26). This being so, one is compelled to search the scriptures for a clue as to what happened to the true Covenant People of the LORD during those times when proselytism included not only people but religion as well.

The “Place Prepared”

In returning to the prophets whose writing and message the LORD very positively stated He had not come to destroy nor invalidate (Matt. 5:17), one finds that Amos was used to convey a post captivity development in Israel under the guidance of the LORD. “For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth” (Amos 9:9). This theme was picked up by the Lord Jesus Christ in His Revelation to John and in the context of the “Israel woman” who is identified as being clothed with the “sun, moon and stars” (Rev. 12:1 and Jer. 31:35), indicated that “. . .the woman fled into the wilderness (see Hos. 2:14 and Ezek. 20:34-37), where she hath a place prepared of God (see 2nd Sam. 7:10 and Deut. 32:7,8) that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days” (Rev. 12:6).

Israel is here said to have been “fed” for one thousand, two hundred and sixty days and if this period is intended to be on the “day for a year” (Ezek. 4:6) prophetic time scale, it would appear that Israel would be nourished on Roman/Babylonian doctrines — the “they” presumably indicating the Roman priesthood — for 1260 literal years. Being “nourished for a time, and times and half a time from the face of the

serpent” as is stated in the 14th verse of the same chapter is merely an indication of Israel, living under the lies and deceptions of Rome, posing no threat to satanic dominion and therefore left unmolested to wallow in this mire. What, in point of fact, was happening during this period was that Rome was becoming aggressive in its proselytism and one surely remembers the history of Cortes who conquered the teeming of the Aztecs. Following on this victory, the Franciscan missionaries began to preach their Romanism and while glowing accounts of “conversions” were sent back to Spain, these reports omitted to mention that the Spanish cannon was more effective than the sermons as was the ruthlessness of Spanish soldiers who slew the Aztec priests at their own altars and toppled the idols from their sacrificial pyramids. Being part and parcel of this system, Israel escaped its horrors. However, if one calculates Israel’s “feeding” on this system as beginning with Constantine when Rome was used to propagate this “fodder”, the one thousand, two hundred and sixty days would run out in 1573 when the spirit of Reformation began to “throw up” the polluted food and began metaphorically devouring the “little book” – the open Word of God (Rev. 11:8,9).

Being protected from the “face of the serpent” by being part of that satanic system, Israel’s Reformation rejection of both the Papacy and its doctrines removed this protection and engendered confrontation on an unprecedented scale. Apart from having arrived at the promised “raising up” period (Hos. 6:2). Israel now entered the phase of “singing the song of Moses” (Rev. 15:3) which in the symbolic language of the Revelation, indicated the enactment of that

“song” which was fulfilled when, from Britain and Western Europe, the sons of Jacob spread abroad (Gen. 28:14) and took possession of lands which, as Moses said, had been appointed to them (Deut. 23:7,8). This was the time when the flood of satanic propaganda was spewed out (Rev. 12:16) and while guaranteed survival by the Promise of the LORD God of Israel, the Covenant People, foremost among the nations of the earth, were eroded by the identical doctrines which had resulted in their historic removal from Canaan.

The “Tail and Not the Head”

During the early nineteenth and early twentieth Centuries, the Anglo-Celto-Saxon and kindred European nations were, what could be called the “head” in world politics but within a quarter of a century, this company of nations has swung to the other end of the pendulum and has become the “tail” acting as servants to the newly liberated but under-developed nations of the world. When the LORD God gave His Law to His people, He categorically stated that if they obeyed His Word they would be “the head” and “not the tail” (Deut. 28:13) but conversely, if they disobeyed – and with specific reference to the “stranger” – they, the stranger, would get above them and Israel would be the “tail” (Deut. 28:44). *This has happened in true Israel today.* Although having come out from Roman dominion, the true modern Israel nations continue with the legacy of post-Ascension doctrines of antinomianism in which the Law, which gave credibility to Israel’s national existence, was compromised and

abolished by the early theologians. Strange to say, the Law takes no cognizance of theology and even though the majority of true Israelites today believe that they are under "grace" and not the Law, the Law takes its toll as laid down in the Books of Moses.

The priests in Israel, in the days of the national existence in Canaan, were the source of the break-down in observance of the Law being accused of allowing strangers into the sanctuary of the LORD (Ezek. 44:7). The same situation obtains today and one has only to consider the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches held at the Northwestern University at Evanston, Illinois in the United States in 1954, to realise this. In its *Ecclesiastical Dogma, A.D. 1954*, this so-called world Christian Body which purports to speak in the Name of God stated: "All political, social and economic segregation based on the grounds of race, colour or ethnic origin in all its forms is contrary to the Will of God and in conflict with the Gospel and must be regarded as irreconcilable with Christian teachings about man and the essence of the Church of Christ . . ." This, of course, is popularly held today but "what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deut. 10:12). It is obvious from the *Ecclesiastical Dogma, A.D. 1954*, that the World Council of Churches and those subscribing to this, are disobeying God and *not* doing that which is required of Israel. Small wonder that Israel has becoming the "drooping tail".

Israel, both nationally and spiritually,

continues to reject and despise the Word and, blind to its identity and deaf to any message calling attention to this, is now passing through the convulsions which Jeremiah called "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). This "trouble" it should be noted, is "stranger" trouble (verse 8) and Jeremiah's description of it is an accurate depiction of what is transpiring in true Israel today.

The overall picture resulting from Anglo-Saxondom's despising and rejection of the Word is both gloomy and depressing and if one is entirely honest, the situation today must be admitted as devastating in the extreme. However, there *is* a silver lining to this dark cloud which hangs over God's People today and that is that He *knows* the situation and *knows* that all the current "woes" are the by-product of a belief which was engendered after His Son had finished the work given Him to do (John 4:34). He *knows* that His people have been deluded into believing that the only defence mechanism which His Son used against the adversary — the Law (Matt. 4:3-10) — is currently held to be of no effect, but in His Wisdom and Foreknowledge, He has ordained that His despised and rejected Word shall go forth from His People. So, at this time when "darkness" covers the earth and "gross darkness" His People, the word of the LORD through His servant Isaiah is: "Awake, awake, put on strength" — "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee" (Isa. 60:1). The deeper the current gloom, the nearer the coming of He Whose Name is called THE WORD OF GOD — the name which no man knew but He Himself (Rev. 19:12,13).



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