

## **"ART THOU HE THAT TROUBLETH ISRAEL?"**

These were the words of Ahab, king of Israel, to Elijah. Ahab, it will be remembered, was the husband of Jezebel, the wicked woman, who persecuted Elijah, and from whom he fled into the wilderness for three and a half years. (See 1 Kings 18:17.)

We have heretofore seen that all three of these Jewish characters were types or figures of classes in the Gospel age, and that their actions were such as to illustrate the actions of those classes which they represented: Elijah represented the church – the true and earnest teachers of God's Word; Jezebel is used to represent the false church, Papacy, and which came into power by marriage with the Roman Empire, which is represented by Ahab.

As Papacy used the Roman army and power to persecute the true teachers of the Lord (and slew many) for three and a half symbolic years, or twelve hundred and sixty symbolic days; so Jezebel used Ahab's power to persecute Elijah and slay the Lord's prophets for three and a half literal years. During those years there was great drouth in the land; so, too, during the 1260 years of Papal persecution, ending in 1798, there was a great spiritual drouth and "a famine, not of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord." Amos 8:11. Then the false teachers of Baal (Papacy), being refuted, an abundant shower has come; Jehovah is again recognized. But Jezebel and her daughters still hate the Elijah class and seek their destruction.

It is about this time that Ahab said to Elijah: "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Elijah troubled them because he was a true prophet and opposed their sins; so too with those now who remain true to God, who will not bow to the forms and customs of this perverse age, but rather reprove them. Sorely vexed by these reproofs, those at ease in

Zion use almost the words of Ahab to Elijah: "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?"

Yes, we would trouble Israel. God has said: "He that hath my word let him speak my word." "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet and show my people their transgressions...yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways [R235 : page 5] as a nation that did righteousness and forsook not the ordinances of their God." This was applicable to fleshly Israel (the "shadow") and to the nominal Gospel church as well. There never was a time in which the Jewish laws and ordinances were more faithfully observed than during the seven years of their "harvest." Every form and ceremony and tithe was scrupulously remembered. The Temple just finished by Herod was the grandest in which they had ever worshiped. Their religious system was gaining a worldwide reputation. Missionary enterprises were on foot for Judaising the world, and so zealous were they that Jesus said of them, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte." Yet of all this grand display – zeal, pomp, and seeming success – it was said, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Matt. 15:8. Of their religious observances Jesus said: "Ye make clean the outside – like whited walls and sepulchers clean and beautiful outside, but full of decay and corruption within. [R235 : page 6]

That church, that age and that "harvest" were but the shadows of this age, church, and harvest. As then so now, prosperity and seemingly great success attends both at home and abroad the church's efforts. Magnificent temples of worship, grand music and costly apparel, seem to stamp the present time as one of unparalleled success; yet now as then, it is mostly on the outside that the beauty is seen, for inwardly the church seems daily to become more corrupt and worldly. "Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of

godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

Jesus said the converts to Judaism were really injured by being brought into that corrupted church, and we believe that the same thing is true here since the degeneracy of the Gospel church. The man of the world is injured more than benefited. While of the world he was open to conviction of sin, but the church has said to him: You are a moral man, and hence not a sinner; if you have any secret vices let them go, and come join our church, then you will be one of us in "good and regular standing." The man is surprised at the liberality of the view, always thought he was as good as the majority of the church members and better than some, and is pleased to know that the church recognized his worth; pleased, too, perhaps, to enter into organized respectable society. He joins the church, and is now a church member in name. He is benefited by being kept from some outward and shameful sins, but he is injured in as much, as he is now persuaded by the church that he is a Christian while in reality he has neither part nor lot in the matter.

He is injured by getting the form without the power of Christianity. He now falls fast asleep – at ease in Zion; he awakes only when a criticism of the church is made; he then feels himself a "defender of the faith."

And not only is the man injured, but the church is injured yet more, for who can estimate the weight and effect of every such "tare," every such sham Christian, every such self-deceived deceiver? But the Lord's wheat field (Matt. 12.) is overrun with such tares, which choke the wheat and almost hide it from view. Now that we are in the "harvest" and the sickle of truth is doing its work, what wonder if there be some commotion?

Zion is at ease and self-satisfied, and when we cry aloud and spare not, but show God's people their sins and their forms of godliness

without the power thereof, they become enraged and complain that we are troubling Israel. When this same charge was made against Jesus, our head – that he was opposing and hindering the God-appointed leaders and teachers, the Chief Priests, Scribes and Pharisees, he said: "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword [Truth is a sword]. For I came to set...at variance...and a man's foes shall be they of his own household...and he that doth not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me." (Matt. 10:34.)

## **TRUTH NEVER HAS LED**

the majority, during this time when evil is permitted to reign, and hence always has had as a large part of its work to reprove darkness. Reproof is never pleasant, but is especially unpleasant to those who most need it. [Of the saints it is written: "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them."] It was because he thus reproved sin and error that Elijah was hated and called Israel's troubler; for the same reason Jesus was denounced, and for the same reason all who will live Godly are similarly offensive.

But if any man will reprove, let him speak as an oracle of God, and let nothing be done or said, through bitterness, strife, or vain glory; but let him by a meek and quiet spirit show forth in love the power, as well as the form of Godliness to the praise of Him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Jesus in his day called the attention of the Jews to the judgments of God about to come upon them, saying: "These be days of vengeance that all things written should be fulfilled." (Luke 21:22.) Elijah gave warning of the death of Jezebel and Ahab, that dogs should lick his blood and eat her flesh. So here it becomes our place to speak the word of God as declared by him, that Ahab and his successors (the Roman and succeeding empires) shall be slain – i.e. destroyed. (Dan. 2:44.) Also, that Jezebel shall be "eaten by dogs" (the degraded), i.e. Papacy,

and in fact the nominal church, as it represents the same church and world-united system, shall be cast down and consumed.

Elijah further represents the "little flock" of despised ones, by being highly exalted, caught up in a whirlwind. Oh, that we may be among the little company now separating, who shall soon be changed in a moment into the perfect likeness of our Lord and head!

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