

Denying the Truth

Geoffrey Bingham

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FOREWORD

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It so happens that on occasions a useful essay or article is found hidden away in a book packed with other articles and essays. This was the case with this present slim booklet. A reader who discovered the essay 'Denying the Truth' thought it ought to be taken out and made immediately available. Formerly published in the volume *God and the Ghostown*, it was in quite a catholic company of stories (true and fictional), poems and essays. It has now emerged with an identity of its own.

I believe it may prove to be quite useful. A significant passage quoted from the first Letter of the Apostle John triggers off the discussion. This passage deals with the Fatherhood of God, the divine Sonship of the man Jesus Christ, and the functional work of the Holy Spirit in bringing the heart of all truth to the Apostle's readers.

Far from being a subject unrelated to us today, it plunges into the debate which presently rages around the matters of masculinity and femininity. Even the matters of this debate are not the essence of the essay. What things are essentially is the foundation of the discussion. We may think all things are plastic, easily adapted to current conditions and present thinking. This may not at all be the case. If there is a case for regarding things as ontological, ie. as being essentially real and the very heart of the truth, then we must face the reality of the ontological. If not we are really flying in the face of reality, and ultimately reality catches up with us. If our thinking has been faulty then we face the retribution that reality always brings.

One, of course, does not commend one's own writing, but

Foreword

I believe the book small as it is may be stimulating to some who read it. At least it may cause some of us to question even a few of our present presuppositions. It may even be evocative of richer thoughts, but even if it only causes us to examine the matter of fatherhood and sonship both human and divine it can only be useful.

Geoffrey Bingham.

Coromandel, June, 1987

DENYING THE TRUTH (OR, AFFIRMING IT)

I guess the quotes I am about to make from one of the letters of the early apostles cannot be said to be—as is often said of certain passages—'hid in the text'. Generally nothing is tucked away in an obscure corner of the great inscripturated word. It is there—strongly obvious—for all to see, to read, to ponder and to be astonished.

John the apostle writes these words which for too many years met my eyes but were not perceived by my heart in their great and dynamic significance. So important are they that I feel like tolling every bell in every land, lighting beacons on all shores of all countries, even earth's remotest shores—be there inhabitants in those lands or not.

I prepare your heart as reader (whether you are familiar with this quote or not), so that as a person you will come with unaccustomed expectancy, enormous and grand anticipation, as well as with new astonishment and excited joy.

Even now you may be saying, 'This writer is exaggerating. He has found something which in his eyes is news-worthy. Because he is a prolific writer¹, he now seeks to induce his own excitement in our wearied minds, insisting that he is some gold prospector who has fortuitously happened upon a chance nugget.'

No, this is not so! I say this sharply, urgently. Often it takes many years—whether through human dullness, ensconced laziness, or just through unconsciously persistent

¹ This is true. Many of my literary critics complain that I write too much. Imagine that! How sad a thing to be a gluttonous writer, a bibulous scribe, a perpetual scribbler, loading my wares on unsuspecting readers!

obtuseness—before one sees a blinding truth, a brilliant revelation that causes one to say, ‘Of course! How stupid I have been! How could I ever have missed such a revelation?’ Then one groans at the understanding missed in all those years, an understanding which—had it been shared—could have been a source of powerful illumination and a dynamic motivation for truth; truth, I say, with a sharp cutting edge, and with an unrelenting penetration into the minds of men and women, so that their hearts were gripped strongly and their wills constrained by the immense grace now possessing them.

Do not think this introduction to my quote to be overly extended or exaggerated. I am aware that too often our eyes slide over the inscripturated word. Some have a reverence for it that is too pious to give it immediate dynamic. Some love the words, phrases, clauses and statements with a cloying love: so much so that they do not hear them as the demanding word of the Creator-Lord, as the trumpeted announcement of the prophet, the irreversible truth of the divinely accredited apostle. In their too easy acceptance of the sacred writer, they demean his utterance by a total refusal to be critical in thinking, thoughtful in sensible contemplation and discerning in meeting the direct word given by God Himself. In a sense the words’ read are not the immediate direct oracles of God. Were they so, then tears might suddenly start in the eyes, the emotions might be profoundly moved, and the heart might leap out at the living pronouncement of the God of love and action.

No, my introduction is far from being an exaggerated or unduly prolonged one. I want you to read with opened eyes, to scan the words of the prophetic apostles, for it could be that having done this a vista of the eternal truth could then open wonderfully before your eyes.

The immediate quote from the first letter of the apostle John is best read in ‘its true context, which is, of course, the entire epistle. When the entire letter is read and absorbed—as

much as is possible in one’s present reading—then our particular quote abstracted will be seen in all its importance. So then I quote, earnestly hoping that you as reader will have done it justice.

‘Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist is coming’, so now many antichrists have come; therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out, that it might be plain that they all are not of us. But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all know. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and know that no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. He who confesses the Son has the Father also. Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he has promised us, eternal life.’ (I John 2:18-25).

You have now read the quote. I would be greatly interested to know and gauge your reaction or response. Are you mildly disappointed, or even greatly surprised, that I should spend so prolonged an introduction on so ordinary and regular a section of Johannine thought? Do you fail to see any special significance in the passage? I ask this because one can easily miss the very heart of the matter. The apostle who wrote it had a deep and rich concept in mind. His concept is of immense significance, but to understand it one must look deeply into what he has written, and ponder it. This scribbler—your present writer—has an ache in his heart that this truth may not be overlooked, because its essence is indispensable to the functional nature of man. Only when one understands what John is saying can one’s emotional and relational needs be fulfilled.

The scribe—when paraphrased—is saying something like the following:

'My little children—those who have come into the family of God through the words I have spoken and the love I have given—I have written urgently to warn you that evil is on the march. It is not a crude evil which may be scorned, but an intelligent evil which—though totally wrong—is quite brilliant in the art of deceiving. This evil is called antichrist. It is evil which not only opposes Christ, but which also seeks to set itself up *in the place of Christ*. 'It seeks to wean men and women from God and His Christ and provide a substitute which will—ostensibly—satisfy the needs of man, and make him emotionally and relationally independent of God.

'Already some have been deceived by this antichrist. The question may be asked, "Were they ever truly of us? Did they ever genuinely experience God and His Christ? Did they ever know the grace of spiritual new birth (of which I speak much in this letter)?" Had they, they would have remained with us—adverse persecution notwithstanding. No, they-were not of us. It is a good thing that they have parted company with us. They have so easily been deceived, and claimed, by this antichrist evil.

'As for you, you have had the teaching, the anointing of God. He has poured out His Holy Spirit upon you and so led you into all the truth—as indeed His Son promised us would happen. It has happened. Because of this, you knew all the truth, ie. the only truth there is, the truth which *is* God, His nature, person, word and acts—for they are the sum of the truth.

'Observe then how antichrist approaches you. He is a liar, a deceiver, a seducer from the powerful and eternal truth. If you will (and you should), you should see through his subterfuges, you should unmask his lies, for his lie is of the most terrible order. He denies, with plausible arguments,' that Jesus is the Messiah. For Jesus to be Messiah is a claim that discloses the eternal love of God, and the complete salvation, not only of believing persons, but the whole elect people of

God, of whom I have also spoken in this letter.

'Now this antichrist is not content with denying that Jesus is Messiah. He goes on to even more terrible things; he sets out to subvert us from Jesus as the Son and God as the Father. This is a dreadful ambition, a despicable endeavour. He is seeking to put us back where God was not seen as the true Father of faithful men and women, and His Son not seen as eternal Son but as only a pretender messiah.

'If he should succeed—this evil antichrist—then he would banish essential Fatherhood (which is irretrievably and inseparably related to essential sonship) from all the earth. I tell you, let that which you have heard from your beginning in the Gospel remain, dwell, and abide dynamically within you. Namely, let the truth of His Fatherhood and His Son's Sonship be the truth which possesses you; otherwise you will be disenfranchised of this Father and the Son. You will not then live and dwell and have your being in them—the true Father and the true Son. To know them, to live in them and to have them live in you, is what He promised: the very possession of, the deep knowledge and experience of, eternal life. The knowing, the relationship, the living in the Father and the Son, is true life. It is eternal life.'

What I have made here is of course an extended paraphrase. Having read John's writings for a period of over fifty years, I suppose I can make some moderate claim to being conversant with his mind. So then, I know that behind the eight verses I have abstracted from his letter lies a most powerful understanding of the Triune nature of God and His actions as Creator, Father/Son/Spirit, and Redeemer, to say nothing of His work of regenerating His creation which has endured a certain spoiling from evil powers and human sin.

I am now going to attempt to give some of the thinking of John which is behind his warning to his readers. At the same

time, I am bound to say that this thinking is not only Johannine. It is Pauline. It is Petrine. It is more—it is the ethos of all Scripture, the true genus of the word. It concerns God Himself.

John is really teaching us afresh what he knows the Holy Spirit has already taught us—that God is Father, that Jesus Christ is His Son, and that the Spirit has impressed this upon our whole being, starting from the inward man (or, the ‘secret heart’²) and moving out into every part of man’s humanity.

In the same letter, John exclaims, ‘See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called the children of God; *and so we are...* Beloved, *we are God’s children now*; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is’ (I John 3:1-3). John is exclaiming out of some astonishment as also comprehension of what it means to be God’s children. He understands the basic principle of Fatherhood and Sonship.

What he really knows is that God’s Fatherhood is not figurative, not analogical, but actional. We say in today’s language that the Fatherhood of God is ontological. This Fatherhood is true Fatherhood. It is of the essence of God’s being. He always was (to context it in our time-grid) Father. There never was when He was not Father. This presupposes that there never was when the Son was not Son. The categories of Fatherhood and Sonship are innate in the Godhead. The New Testament indicates that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and at once also the Spirit of the Son. Hence the social integrity of the Triune Godhead. God is Father before He creates, and His Son is Son also before he participates in creation.

² See Psalm 51:6. This translation of the RSV. is especially descriptive. See with it Psalm 1:2 and Romans 7:22.

The implications of this are enormous. I trust that you, as reader, do not give way to the contemporary custom of getting a headache when a few demanding thoughts are presented to you, and that you will persist with this trifle of theological reasoning. Yes, the implications are enormous. One of them is that God did not become Father when He redeemed man and so opened up to him the way to sonship, the authority to become sons (or, children) of God. No, God was always Father.

Patti calls him ‘the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Ephesians 1:3). This means that God is the Father, uniquely, at the level of Godhead, of the one (unique) Son who became man. In this vein, John says, ‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory as of the *only* Son of the Father, full of grace and truth’ (John 1:14). In eternity then—before our ‘true beginning’—the Father was Father and the Son, Son.

When then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image’, it must mean He allotted a likeness to Himself that involved the reflection of His own Being. Christ the Son is called ‘the likeness of His glory and the express image of His person’ (Hebrews 1:3). Doubtless in this—as the Son—he was (is) unique, but for man to be ‘the image and glory of God’, he must have been like the Son, ie. in the image of the Father. He must then have been creationally a son.

Without doubt, he abdicated or forfeited his sonship in the Fall, but the ontological lines or elements of sonship must have remained. For him (like the prodigal son) to come back to the Father must surely mean that there had once been a Father and a home, albeit the elder brother was—in character-incongruous in that family. When man is regenerated, he is not given a *new* category as a son, but a *renewed* category which is filial. The dynamic significance of this is that God is actually Father to His new (renewed) children, and not merely figuratively (or analogically) a Father, for this

would make His children merely figurative. They could not ontologically cry ‘Abba!’, ie. ‘Dear Father!’

The implications and ramifications of a human person now being permitted—indeed motivated—to cry ‘Father’, are powerful and numberless. The most significant *personal* implication is that *the filial* nature of man is wholly fulfilled in *the paternal* nature and love of God. Without doubt Paul teaches that our *personal* sonship is a participation in the actual sonship of the Son: ‘... for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith. For as many as were baptised *into* Christ, have *put on Christ*’ (Galatians 3:26-27). Paul then explains (in Galatians 4:4-6) that this sonship comes to us existentially in and by the presence of the Spirit. God sends ‘the Spirit of His Son’ into our hearts, and the Spirit in our hearts cries, ‘Abba!’ In this sense we receive the sonship, especially the functional Sonship of Christ from his conception to his ascension. ³

We can conclude then that *personally our* sonship arises from participation in, and the resources of, Christ’s Sonship, these being communicated by the Holy Spirit, ie. the Spirit of Sonship.

Paul also teaches us that the *corporate* sonship is immensely significant. In a number of passages he shows us that ‘we are all one in Christ Jesus’, that we are a new humanity, and a family, ie. ‘the household of God’. What he is really saying is that there is the ontological family, the true family of God under the Fatherhood of God, and this is through the Sonship of Jesus Christ, as also through his (Christ’s) ontological brotherhood.⁴

³ The Spirit is present in Christ’s conception, birth, baptism, ministry, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, as the Gospels and Epistles indicate.

⁴ See Galatians 3:26-29, I Corinthians 12:13, Colossians 3:11, Romans 5:12-21, Ephesians 2:11-22, I Timothy 3:15, cf. Hebrews 3:1-6, I Peter 2:4-10.

Now I will try to work out—as it has come to me—the urgency, power and message of John’s exhortation to his readers against antichrist. John is saying, in effect:

‘If, for any reason, you forget or refuse to believe that God is Father and Jesus Christ is His Son and you are the Father’s children, then you will fail to have the personal fulfilment of sonship. The emotional needs you have, which pertain to your *creational and redemptional* sonship, will be wholly denied. The *functional* nature of your sonship will be impeded. You will have the *drive* of sonship but not the fulfilment. You will have to live a life which is malfunctioning, dysfunctional, disorientated and dislocated. *You will be denying your own personal essential sonship.*

‘The second great and deleterious effect will be that you will lose your participation in functional familyhood. You may imitate familyhood with others, in the context of their fraternal response, but it will be empty. *Them can be no true family without the Father, without the Son.*’

The implications are even wider, even more serious. The Gospel of Christ, if it does not peak and climax in the Fatherhood of God, is truncated. It is virtually useless. True, it can give man what is called ‘salvation’, but then what is salvation—except an escape from penal judgement and punishment—if the redeemed person merely bows in gratitude to the Judge for pardon and cannot stretch forth his arms to Him as his Father? What is the system of creation if it is not headed up by ‘the one God and Father of us all, who is above all, and through all and in all’ (Ephesians 4:6)? Indeed, what kind of a God is He of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is *not* named (Ephesians 3:14-15)? Paul says, ‘There be gods many, and lords many, but for us there is *one* God, the Father... and *one* Lord, Jesus Christ’ (I Corinthians 8:5-6). Now the implications for the human race are many and

most powerful. If God is Father—and He is—then man can have his personal fulfilment in sonship under the Father, brotherhood under the Elder Brother, and in the familyhood of all the children of God.⁵ What we need to say is that God's Fatherhood, Christ's Brotherhood, and the being of the Family of God are indispensable to the functional, relational, emotional, vocational and personal fulfilment of man.

This is most important, for the grace that redeems man is at once Fatherly, Filial, of the Spirit, and Familial. If it is not seen in this light then we have a church which is not the family, not the household of God, but *the aggregate* (not even the congregate) of 'saved' persons. It is not constitutionally the functional family, fulfilling the emotional needs of its members. No matter what New Testament doctrines there are of 'family', 'household', 'body of Christ', 'people of God', 'the bride of Christ' or 'the temple of God', it will remain an organisation, fragmented as it is into denominations, experimental units, and sects.

The functional over-all bonding of the people of God lies in His essential nature of Father. The *accession* of sinful men and women is through the Son, via the revelatory ministry of the Holy Spirit. The ontological basis of Familyhood is the nature of the Triune Godhead as Father/Son/Spirit. The essential love of God is required for the relational fulness of man as son and familial creature.

No wonder then that antichrist wishes to obscure the nature of God as Father, as Son! No wonder that this truth which has been made innate within us by what John calls 'the anointing' is a deadly threat to all antichristlikeness. It is a threat to the pseudo or mock familyhood of the Evil One.⁶ Antichrist must kill the truth of God as Father, Christ as Son,

⁵ To cry 'Abba!' is also to cry 'Brother!' and 'Sister!' and to have brotherly love: cf. I Peter 1:22, I Thessalonians 4:9, I John 2:7ff., 3:10ff., 4:20-5:2.

⁶ I John 3:10-11, John 8:39-47, Ephesians 2:1-3.

or he is doomed.

For what we are pleased to call 'missiology', the implications are on a grand scale. First let us say that the ultimate of the Gospel is not simply eschatological. It is immediately Pateriological.⁷ That is, for man the ultimate is coming to the Father through the Son and through the Spirit.⁸ When man has thus come he is complete. If the Gospel—either seen as *evangelion* or *kerugma* is not Pateriological, then it is not truly Christological, nor for that matter truly Pneumatological. Hence it will be deficient and *it must inevitably produce deficient churches*. History has shown that missionary churches have concentrated on salvation, on the Lordship of Christ, and have neglected the truth of 'the Father and the Son'.

This means that the functional nature of the Church as the Family of God will receive little or no recognition. Therefore the problems of the churches so formed will be many. The call to love in the New Testament is structured in the following way: (i) God loves us, ie. as Father, Son and Spirit; (ii) we love both God and others because He first loved us (I John 4: 19-20); (iii) our love vertically is to God and horizontally it is brotherly, ie. *family* love. We need to note again that if God is not authentic (ontological) Father, and Jesus authentic (ontological) Son, then there can be no authentic (ontological) Family.

The true witness to God as Father and Christ as Son must be the presence of the Family—the Household of God. Any

⁷ N.B. The three divisions of theology of Godhead are, (i) Pateriology, the Person and Work of the Father; (ii) Christology: the Person and Work of the Son; (iii) Pneumatology: the Person and Work of the Spirit. Ideally they are the one study and system.

⁸ Access to God as Father must be by the Son (John 14:6, Matthew 11:27, Ephesians 3: 1, Romans 5:2), but *revelation and application* of this must be by the Spirit (John 16:12-15, Ephesians 2:18).

proclamation of the Gospel must be in the authentic sating of the Family. If we are to talk about evangelism (does the New Testament talk about evangelism?), then we must talk about it in the familial structure of the proclaiming church. Even the small teams which were apostolic in their proclamation were known as 'the brethren'.⁹ The term 'disciples' seems rather to be one used by those outside to describe followers of Christ. John makes it clear that our nature as sons (brethren) is greatly hidden from the world (I John 3:1, cf. John 15:21-26). Whilst it may be said on one score that the world will not recognise our (unique) familyhood, yet the witness of this familyhood is 'necessary as the true witness and proclamation of the Gospel. The first chapters of Acts have abundant proof and demonstration of this. 'Family' commenced at Pentecost and showed itself in the oneness of all.

Students of missiology of a certain school will acclaim much of what I have said. Some—who are gripped by the principle of 'peoples' movements'¹⁰—will exclaim, 'Ah! This is what we have said!' However, it may not be what they have said. In seeking to get whole tribes or peoples to come to Christ, they are endeavouring to preserve the nature of human families, trying to bring them as whole families or peoples to the Gospel and the church. This must be seen as highly commendable. Unnecessary fragmentation of families is most undesirable. However, the preservation of already formed families must not militate against the unique nature of the Family of God. We may seek to preserve the interests and integrity of the lesser to the detriment of the greater.

We must therefore in no way give in to the spirit of anti-

⁹ I believe the stern insistence on the term 'discipleship' is an unconscious endeavour to escape 'family'. See my book, *Discipleship: Doom? or Delight!* (NCPI, Blackwood, 1978).

¹⁰ See the writings of Donald McGavran, namely, *Understanding Church Growth* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1970) and *The Bridges of God* (World Dominion Press, London, 1957).

christ. We must teach to persons—as to tribes and people—the Gospel of the Fatherhood, Brotherhood and Familyhood. It alone will break down caste, tribal pride and exclusivism. It alone will destroy the spirit of elitism. It will naturally cause the families and tribes to find their true identity in the Family of the Father.

Before we draw our appreciation of John's revelation to a close, let us take an even closer look at elements of his text. He says, 'Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?' He later amplifies this in his letter (4:1-6). Now is it possible not to deny Jesus is the Christ, and yet to deny the Fatherhood and Sonship? I am sure that biblically to accept Messiahship but to deny Fatherhood and Sonship is incongruous. The passage under consideration surely indicates this.

However, in what I am about to say I intend to be pragmatic, even—it might appear—a little untheological. It is this: 'Is it possible to think of God—as God, Jesus as Messiah, and so refer to them in these categories that we miss substantially, if not entirely, their being as Father and Son?'

I ask the further and most terrible question: 'Is it possible that antichrist has so worked on many that the truth of God's Fatherhood and Sonship has been obscured because the emphasis has come upon Jesus as the Christ and God as—God?'

I say this because John says, 'No one who denies the Son has the Father'. Whilst *nominally* we may not deny the Son, yet existentially we may not know and experience him as the Son. This would necessarily mean we would not know God as the Father. In turn, this would radically affect our way of our proclamation of the truth, and it would deprive us of true relational, emotional, vocational and personal fulfilment. Further, our church structure and life as the essential *modus operandi* of living would be affected.

I submit then that in subtle and insidious ways antichrist may have—indeed has—made inroads into the life and practice of the church. Doubtless the liberal teaching of the universal Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of man (a doctrine not found in Scripture) may well have provided us an opportunity to ‘throw out the baby with the bath-water’!

What then should we consider? What then ought we to do? How then should we be? The answer lies in the passage before us. John first of all affirms the following: ‘He who confesses the Son has the Father also’. To ‘have the Father’ must be a dynamic fact and experience. Already in this chapter John has said, ‘I have written to you, children, because you *know* the Father’. He has said previously, ‘Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ’. To confess the Son (ie. Jesus as Son) is necessarily to confess the Father—for how can you have the Son as Son unless he has God as his Father? John, of course, sees such a confession not merely as a *credal* thing, a matter of intellectual assent, but as a significant matter of life.

The next advice that John gives is ‘Let *what you heard from the beginning* abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you will abide in the Father and the Son. And this is what he promised us, eternal life’. An examination of these words will show us that what John’s converts had heard from the beginning was the Gospel of Fatherhood and Sonship. Of course it entailed the Messiahship, Cross and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet it did not stop at these foundational things. The grace of God (‘the God of all grace’) sprang from the Father and the Son; hence his own epistolary salutation: ‘Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, and from Jesus Christ the Father’s Son in truth and love’ (II John 3). This of course was the salutation (in substance) of all Paul’s epistles, and in essence of the

Petrine epistles.

John’s exhortation then is to let this truth which came from ‘the anointing’ abide in us. By ‘abide’ he means ‘Let its dynamic possess you. Let it be the basis of your life and faith. Let the truth of Fatherhood and Sonship possess you, then you will consciously and existentially abide in the Son and the Father.’ John has, in this manner, put us on a living course of action, a course which is experimental and experiential. He is speaking of something which is not only cerebral but also visceral; indeed, both elements are one.

Let us see then what this will do in our lives in giving us comfort and security in the Father and the Son; what it will do in meeting our basic emotional needs in a world where we confuse our true Father with our earthly father and mother, where we have lesser relationships than we ought to have with the family of our blood. Elevation into the true Fatherhood and Sonship will rehabilitate all earthly relationships—with earthly father and mother, brother and sister, and our earthly family as a whole. Not only wit abiding in the Son and the Father be remedial in these relationships where required, but it will be fruitful for all living. John says a little later in this letter: ‘We know we have passed from death into life because we love the brethren’. Brotherly love is one of the fruits—and parts—of eternal life. Jesus had said (and John had recorded): ‘This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent’. John from himself, has also written in this very letter: ‘And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, to know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life’.

True eternal life, *now*, is to know the Father and the Son, to be in them, and to have them in us. It is to love the brethren in the Family of God.

It is no wonder that the antichrist is dismayed at this truth and fearful of its propagation and acceptance, for such spells

doom to the rebellion of evil powers against God and errant children aghast the Eternal Father.

It is not to be wondered at then that I made an extended introduction to this text, a plea for true examination of it, and an exhortation to come to true knowledge of the Son and the Father. One word of the prophet keeps ringing in my ears. I leave it with you, for it was applied by the angel of the Lord to John the Baptist, and thus—by extension—to Christ himself.

‘Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse.’