

OCTOBER 1996

A Monthly Magazine issued by

The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

"Take heed that ye be not deceived"

"AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD"

"A PRAYER OF MOSES THE MAN OF GOD"

"HADES"

"THE HEAVENS ARE THE LORD'S"

"A BIBLE CLASS"

"THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

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

"NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS"

All Communications

D. Lancaster,
227 Moston Lane East,
New Moston,
Manchester M40 3HY,
England.

J. A. DeFries,
146 Gardner Street,
Fredonia,
New York 14063,
U.S.A.

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD
"THOU . . . SHALL NUMBER THEM"

How evident was the Almighty's care for Israel, His own people, as He led them miraculously out of Egypt, bore them as if on eagles' wings, releasing and redeeming them from their long years of hard bondage. They were "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (I Corinthians 10:2). In the wilderness God provided their food, manna, bread from heaven, as well as life-giving water from the Rock. He gave them the Law, not merely ten commandments written on tables of stone, but His whole desire for their manner of living. Why?

"... that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."
Romans 7:13.

By this word, Israel was shown His will and required to obey it if they were to know His blessing and honor His name. Additionally it was, as the Apostle wrote, a "schoolmaster to bring us (them) unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24). Therefore, those who in faith perceived and honored His purpose might have the hope of eternal life promised from the beginning through the Savior, Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman.

In Leviticus, we have seen God's ordaining of the sacrifices; also the instruction concerning clean and unclean, for His desire was that:

". . . Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy."
Leviticus 19:2.

He also revealed how, through obedience, they could work toward becoming more like Him, a godly people.

In Numbers we have seen His continued care and instruction for Israel as He spoke to Moses:

". . . thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies."
Numbers 1:3.

"Number" — this word is most significant and is used as visit, give a charge (responsibility), commit, or entrust. The Almighty did not need to count Israel, for He knows all His people. He thus visited them, giving a charge and a work to each. His people comprised over 600,000 men, 20 years old and over, able to go to war (Numbers 2:32). If all of Israel, including women and children, were to be counted, there would be over three million people, a vast number when we consider that only seventy originally came to Joseph to settle in Egypt (Exodus 1:5) almost 400 years before.

Let us for a moment try to visualize this vast multitude. If they

moved en masse past a given landmark, it could take up to four days for all to pass. What an impressive sight, especially to their enemies as they watched Israel approaching their land! First, there would be seen the pillar of cloud rising high above the horizon, than perhaps a cloud of dust, and as they drew nearer, a seemingly endless array of people. It was an orderly multitude for they marched as God directed, each group under the standard of their camp, by their families — each having an appointed place both in the line of march and later in positioning their tents when Israel camped. If each of the 600,000 men numbered were heads of families, there could be a like number of tents in orderly fashion, camped about the tabernacle, covering a very large area. It was awesome even as we, thousands of years later, try to picture it.

Looking further, the Lord God had given careful instruction (Numbers 10) as to how His children were to move when the pillar of cloud or fire went up, lest there be confusion and uncertainty. First went the three tribes under the standard of Judah in a column, followed by the Levitical families of Gershon and Marari carrying the pillars, curtains, boards, sockets, and all that was needed to assemble the tabernacle. Following them came the three tribes under the standard of Reuben. In the middle of the column came the Kohathites (also Levites) bearing the holy things of the tabernacle. And next, those under the standard of Ephraim and Dan. Each had his appointed place in disassembling the camp, in their march and in setting up the camp, so that there would be no mistakes or disarray. Significantly there was special care involved in taking down and setting up the holy and most holy places (Numbers 4). Before the mercy seat, ark, cherubim, candlestick, incense altar and the shewbread table could be moved, they were to be carefully covered and staves inserted by the priests, Aaron and his sons. Only then were the Kohathites allowed to carry them with the staves upon their shoulders. The divine instruction was very clear:

“... when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, . . . the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die . . .” Numbers 4:15.

What care was required on the parts of Aaron and his sons that each of the holy things were securely covered and thus God revered. Aaron no doubt would carefully examine them before calling the Kohathites. They in turn would enquire of the priests if it was suitable for them to approach the sacred things. The penalty for

failure was death. As the Kohathites carried these holy things upon their shoulders with the staves, how watchfully they would march, lest they stumble or in any way touch those things and consequently die. What reverence, extreme care, and responsibility they would feel in this privileged part of the work. A further provision by the Almighty is seen in the going forth of the Gershonites and Mararites following the camp of Reuben, carrying the boards, the curtains, the sockets and all the parts necessary for setting up the tabernacle, preparatory for those bearing the holy things. By the time they arrived, the tabernacle would be assembled, and they would be able to place the holy things quickly, leaving them for Aaron and his sons to uncover and prepare for the services. All these instructions were part of "numbering" His people as they prepared and committed Israel to this hallowed work. How wonderful was God's plan that every priest and Levite had his designated work. Each would be in his appointed place, and each would be thoroughly taught to carry it out. Yet, as they continued in doing this for the forty long years through the wilderness, there could be a danger of becoming less attentive, less fearful, feeling less privileged, with the result that some might die through carelessness, the holy things could be defiled and God be dishonored.

Contemplating these detailed instructions and the great care needed by our brethren, let us be sure to keep the spirit of great concern in carrying out our own service to our Father. Each of us is privileged to have a part in the work of His house. Each must perform with alertness and with fear lest failure or lack cause disruption or disorder, bringing reproach and not pleasure to our Father. Let us, Brethren and Sisters, be determined that our work be done "decently and in order", each one diligently, willingly and carefully filling our appointed place, yet at the same time not reaching out through pride or ambition for more than is allotted. In such circumstances and with such perception of mind, may not our Father be honored and our service be acceptable? This can make possible for us a place of such eternal privilege in His kingdom when Jesus returns to gather His people to serve Him with joy and perfection for ever.

As the end of their journey through the wilderness approached, Israel's enemies, aware of their coming, would tremble at the prospect of having to defend their land against such a great display of divine power. Balak, king of Moab, was:

"... sore afraid of the people ... and was distressed because

of the children of Israel.

And Moab said unto the elders . . . Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field . . . ” Numbers 22:3-4.

In fear this king repeatedly sought out Balaam, a noted seer, to curse Israel. However, Balaam was prevented from doing so by the hand of God. On one occasion when King Balak had again sent the seer to curse Israel:

“ . . . Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him.” Numbers 24:2.

As he beheld the camp of Israel with the tabernacle and the pillar of cloud in their midst, and the great host encamped in orderly fashion around God’s dwelling place, rather than curse Israel, he was compelled to exclaim:

“How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!

As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river’s side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters.”

Numbers 24:5-6.

What a witness to the wonder of God’s presence with His people, guiding their going forth and their stopping to rest, exhibiting overwhelming force as long as they were subject to His all-wise “numbering”! This enemy of Israel, Balaam, was compelled to describe their camp as valleys (rivers or fountains) spread forth in the wilderness; as gardens growing, prospering by the river’s side; as lign aloe trees (noted for their sweet smelling spice), and as cedar trees whose fragrant wood was later used by Solomon for the building of God’s temple. Balaam was caused to see more than the huge camp of Israel. being shown a vision of God’s purpose with His chosen people, he was caused to exclaim:

“ . . . his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. . . . he shall eat up the nations his enemies . . . ”

Numbers 24:7-8.

All this will surely come about when Jesus returns to assemble His people, Israel of the spirit, into His house and kingdom accordingly to His Father’s plan and purpose.

Moses, inspired and guided in writing Numbers, has given us a gift of meaningful instruction, an inspiration to willingly give to

God our best in every way, who has so lovingly honored us in this calling. Brethren and Sisters, is this not our hope? Having been called, numbered, given a great charge, we must in obedience submit, and ultimately we hope to take our place in that blessed assembly of His Israel — saints of God with Christ His Son for eternity. Today we are few, far from a multitude, but we look with faith to the time when Jesus will gather His bride, of whom Solomon, the promised son of David, spoke in a figure:

“A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits . . . and aloes (lign aloes), with all the chief spices. A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.”

Song of Solomon 4:12-15.

It is a beautiful figure and one which we desire to rise up to with joy.

Let us now continue in our appointed places with renewed hope and faith, among those few visited by the Almighty, gladly serving, obeying Him and His Son. For we are sustained by the hope which God has so graciously extended to a chosen and particular people from the beginning of His creation.

J.A. DeF.

"A PRAYER OF MOSES THE MAN OF GOD"

In the Psalms we are granted an opportunity to reflect upon the life of Moses through David's words in the 90th Psalm, entitled, "A Prayer of Moses the man of God". David was inspired by God to pen these words, thereby helping us to learn from the experiences of those who have served Him, in order that our walk may be to His glory and praise. In verse 1 of this Psalm, his and Moses' appreciation for God's covering and care is evident:

"LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations."
Psalm 90:1.

A dwelling or habitation in the Lord gives the thought of being nurtured and covered through the covenant He has established with those who love Him. When the Creator made man in His image, He provided for all his needs — most important of these the opportunity for spiritual growth and redemption through obedience to His Word — resulting in the hoped for eternal habitation with the Almighty. David (as did Moses) recognized the power of Yahweh in the merciful provision of this opportunity for man as he wrote:

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."
Psalm 90:2.

Knowing the frail and feeble state of man, His love was seen in Eden providing succour and renewed hope even in the midst of failure. Thus began the generations of man recorded by Moses in the first five books of the Bible, a chronicle of those in covenant relationship with the Father as well as of those who fell from grace, unwilling to recover themselves through repentance.

The Almighty appeared to Moses first in a burning bush. While witnessing this strange phenomona he heard the very voice of God:

"And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God."

Exodus 3:4, 5, 6.

Moses in respect and fear bowed before the presence of God, hiding his face in awe, knowing no flesh could look upon the Almighty and live. At this time he was told of the work set before him — to lead

God's people out of the land of Egypt and deliver them from the cruel bondage of Pharaoh. He was granted a helper in this work, his brother Aaron, who would be his spokesman — a care granted from a kind and merciful Father:

“And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.” Exodus 4:15-16.

Going back to Psalm 90, David reflects upon man's history, recognizing it as just a brief moment in time:

“For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.

In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.” Psalm 90:4-6.

How perceptive David was of the time given — a brief period of probation in which to demonstrate a love and obedience for all God's provisions and care or be among the multitudes who refuse His outstretched hand and perish as the grass which is quickly cut down:

“For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are three-score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.” Psalm 90:9-10.

Our years are described as a “tale that is told” or as the margin says “as a sigh”, suggesting a brief stay. Should not then our communion with the Father be anchored and sure for whatever time we are granted? Is there fear, love and true respect for Him within our hearts, as Moses the servant of God displayed? How important then this 12th verse as David implores:

“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Psalm 90:12.

The margin renders this thought as, “get us a heart of wisdom” — helping us to achieve a better understanding and appreciation for our dwelling place with God.

“Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." Psalm 90:13, 14, 17.

Moses and David realized they could not overcome alone, only as God was established within their hearts and His hand upon them to direct their living could they hope to give honor and glory to Him.

David's words are an inspiration for us today as we seek His help to apply our hearts to God's perfect wisdom and understanding as did both Moses and David — two faithful examples from the generations of man, whose testimony is preserved for our help and admonition.

M.C.S.

HADES

The Church of England's General Synod met at York University during the Summer. The synod is Britain's only legislative body outside Parliament. Over 500 members, some elected, and others of the church hierarchy, deliberated on the doctrine of "Hell". Did it exist or not? They dismissed the idea of a fire and brimstone pit and decided that if it did exist it approached near to a position of "nothingness". Now these people are the cream of the intellectual world, but it has taken all this time for them to approach near to the truth of the matter.

Dr. J. Thomas on the subject of hell

(quoted in The Christadelphian May 1874)

"- - - Hell is a something that may be entered by digging. Thus in Amos 9:2 'Though they dig into hell — thence shall mine hand take them.' After they had finished digging, they would be in a cave or hollow, where they might become INVISIBLE — and be in INVISIBILITY — to mortal eyes; still, they were not hidden from the eyes of Jehovah, whose Spirit pervades every atom that exists. Hence SHEOHL and HADES are for corporeal souls, be they living or be they dead: if dead, and they be left there, destruction follows; but if they be taken thence by resurrection before decomposition, as in the case of Jesus, the words of the Psalmist are fulfilled concerning him, 'I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for Jehovah sustained me.' It is so also in relation to the brethren of Jesus, the difference being in the duration of the sleep, and their sleep being in dust, which his was not. But those who wake not to endless life, dust is their serpent-meat for evermore.

With Pagan mythology and the Jewish opinion about HADES, to which Shephard refers, we have nothing to do. With "the taught of God" they are of no more value than the opinion of Gentile theologians of the present age. The Jews had made void the word of God by tradition, and fables borrowed from the Greeks, with whose mythology they were perverted long before Jesus brought life and incorruptibility to light in the gospel of the kingdom which he preached. LIFE MANIFESTED THROUGH AN INCORRUPTIBLE BODY is the immortality offered in this gospel to those who become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus: and to them only, as part of the recompense of reward. This great doctrine is fatal to mythological soulology; and consequently, utterly subversive of my friend's receptacle for the departed spirits of his creed - - - ."

The view of the Papacy

"The problem of hell has always disturbed great thinkers in the Church beginning with Origen and continuing in our time with Mikhail Bulgakov and Hans urs von Balthasar. In point of fact, the ancient councils rejected the theory of the "FINAL APOCATASTASIS", according to which the world would be regenerated after destruction, and every creature would be saved; a theory which indirectly abolished hell. But the problem remains. Can God, who has loved man so much, permit the man who rejects Him to be condemned to eternal torment? And yet, the words of Christ are unequivocal. In Matthew's Gospel He speaks clearly of those who will go to eternal punishment (CF.Mt.25:46). Who will these be? The Church has never made any pronouncement in this regard. This is a mystery, truly inscrutable, which embraces the holiness of God and the conscience of man. The silence of the Church is, therefore, the only appropriate position for Christian faith. Even when Jesus says of Judas, the traitor, "It would be better for that man if he had never been born" (Mt.26:24), His words do not allude for certain to eternal damnation.

At the same time, however, there is something in man's moral conscience itself that rebels against any loss of this conviction. Is not God who is Love also ultimate Justice? Can He tolerate these terrible crimes, can they go unpunished? Isn't final punishment in some way necessary in order to re-establish moral equilibrium in the complex history of humanity? Is not hell in a certain sense the ultimate safeguard of man's moral conscience?

The Holy Scriptures include the concept of the PURIFYING FIRE. The Eastern Church adopted it because it was biblical, while not receiving the Catholic doctrine on purgatory.

Besides the bull of Benedict XII from the fourteenth century, the MYSTICAL WORKS OF SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS offered me a very strong argument for purgatory. The "living flame of love", of which Saint John speaks, is above all a purifying fire. The mystical nights described by this great Doctor of the Church on the basis of his own experience correspond, in a certain sense, to purgatory. God makes man pass through such an interior purgatory of his sensual and spiritual nature in order to bring him into union with Himself. Here we do not find ourselves before a mere tribunal. We present ourselves before the power of Love itself.

BEFORE ALL ELSE, IT IS LOVE THAT JUDGES. God, who is Love, judges through love. It is love that demands purification,

before man can be made ready for that union with God which is his ultimate vocation and destiny.”

The Remnant's comment

As the words of popular religion are examined is it not evident that the mark of simple truth is missed? Religious leaders attempt to adjust their thinking to a more reasonable viewpoint, but they still fail to perceive the true position shown from the very beginning of the Word of God, to those who have ears to hear, that “hell”, the grave, is man's lot or punishment for his sin. From this place where man is hid, there is no escape except by resurrection of those whom God condescends to restore. Adam was told he would die when disobedient, and when he did sin he was told that there would be ultimate deliverance through the ‘seed of the woman’, Christ. But such deliverance was not to be extended to the ‘seed of the serpent’, for dust would be the meat of such. This profound yet simple truth concerning the justice and judgment and yet mercy of the Most High was perceived by Dr. J. Thomas in these last days. His coming, and his perceptive work has been a marvellous provision.

“ - - - THE HEAVENS, ARE THE LORD’S - - - ”

(Psalm 115:16)

At the time of writing news headlines make the claim “Life on Mars”! Scientists at the U.S.A. space agency NASA have been speaking of finding a six-inch fossil embedded in a meteorite discovered in Antarctica. They believe the rock had been knocked off Mars by an asteroid storm. It has been declared that “If it is proved to be a fossil from Mars then this will be the most sensational scientific discovery of the past 1000 years.” Experts went on to say it could prove to be “the most important in scientific history.” “It brings the theory that we might find more intelligence elsewhere a great deal closer.”

An astronomer of repute declared:-

“The martian fossil discovery is a message from space. It is saying to us there is not just one place in the Universe where life exists — but two.”

“And these two places are in the same planetary system and very close to each other. What this could mean is that life was common at one time and NOT rare — we are not alone.”

In 1976 the Viking space probe landed on Mars and sent back pictures of a rubble-strewn landscape. It was also revealed that the temperature on Mars is very cold at minus 23 centigrade, even though the sandy surface is bathed in ultra-violet radiation from the sun. The sun’s rays however do have an effect of raising up huge dust storms that rage across the surface. This information of a dead planet however, does not seem to have dampened the ardour of those who wish to prove by additional evidence the theory of evolution. One United States scientist said, “What seems to have been found are the chemical elements which on Earth would be part of the process by which life is formed.” A British scientist in a similar reference declared, “I am not talking about ammonites or corals but something incredibly primitive such as micro-fossils from highly primitive organisms - - - . It is absolutely fascinating to find these.” This scientist explained that the climate of Mars when the rock in the meteorite was forming was warm and wet making the evolution of life possible. What foolishness it is. All this scientific jargon now emanating is based on a rock found in frozen Antarctica, purported to have come from the planet Mars, and yet there is no real proof that it originated in that place.

But men prefer to bring out such findings which in actual fact

have no real basis, for they are built upon theories. The simple truth is that theories are imagined things, which men attempt to bolster by very inadequate evidence.

How powerfully clear is the Word of God about the truth concerning life, creation and man.

“The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD’S; but the earth hath he given to the children of men.”

(Psalm 115:16).

The earth has been created by the Most High for man. That statement immediately denies that man evolved to eventually take over the earth, or that man exists anywhere else. It does not need a scientific mind to perceive the clear proof of the hand of God in His earth design which has blessed and benefitted man. On every side is seen the marvellous works of creation, whether on land, in the sea, or in the air. The abundance of life of fauna and flora is infinite. All these life forms are designed in a wonderful and intricate way. Each are programmed according to the course set out for them from their very origin. To say they evolved, is to say they designed themselves. It is a foolish theory in the very extreme, and reveals how inadequate is man to find out on his own the work of God and its meaning. How true and apt is the witness of God’s word:-

“Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea, farther, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not able to find it.”

(Ecclesiastes 8:17).

A BIBLE CLASS

“Do All Things Without Murmurings”

Philippians 2:14

Paul’s words to his brethren at Philippi teach about the importance of love and fellowship within the household of faith. Endeavouring to follow the example of the Lord Jesus in all things he reminds:

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Do all things without murmurings and disputings:”

Philippians 2:13-14.

Backing up to the first part of this 2nd chapter, we are told how this fellowship one with another is possible through Christ and the grace of God:

“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Philippians 2:1-4.

The word “murmur”, from our consideration means to grumble or complain. The Dictionary defines it as “a mumbled indistinct continuous sound — a mumbled complaint”, giving the thought of one with not enough strength of character to speak out openly yet persisting in complaint. This is a stark contrast to the Spirit’s teaching which promotes denial of self and the acceptance of circumstances with a cheerful, hopeful outlook.

All are aware of how young children often react impatiently, grumbling and complaining when things don’t happen quickly or to their liking. Our flesh is like that without the Spirit’s quieting restraint. The Lord Jesus could have complained about the magnitude of the responsibilities set before Him, yet submitted willingly to His lot, becoming our ensample as Paul records:

“ . . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sin-

ners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Hebrews 12:1-3.

How mundane and insignificant our own trials are in comparison, yet how prone we are to grumble and complain. How can one fight the flesh's inclination to murmur, recognizing it is not pleasing to the Father? John explains:

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." I John 5:1-3.

Where is our faith if it is done grudgingly with bitterness and murmuring? He wants our service to be done in love — offered from a willing and cheerful heart, grateful for the many blessings He has provided, and facing the trials of this life with a firm resolve to avoid dissatisfaction and complaint.

Paul goes on further in Philippians to explain how the example of the Lord Jesus can help us avoid such fleshly behavior:

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:" Philippians 2:5, 8.

Fashioned as we are, liable to sin, tempted but never succumbing, He was victorious over His nature, thus appearing before His Father pure and blameless. Never murmuring or complaining about His lot, His example should encourage us to endeavour to do the same.

We think of the children of Israel, delivered from Egypt and from Pharaoh's army through God's power alone. In gratitude, Moses and the people sang this song praising His might:

"Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea.

Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy."

Exodus 15:1-2, 4, 6.

However, shortly after singing this song of praise and deliverance, they journeyed into the wilderness of Shur and complained upon finding no water:

“So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they sent out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying What shall we drink?”

Exodus 15:22-24.

They murmured within days after coming through the Red Sea and witnessing first hand the miraculous parting of the deep, ushering them to safety and dry land, while those same walls of water destroyed Pharaoh’s army.

Even the disciples were guilty of murmuring and disputing as the Lord Jesus, aware of the argument amongst them, asked:

“... What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.”

Mark 9:33-34.

They “held their peace” no doubt ashamed to have been discovered in such an unprofitable discussion. In order to teach and correct, He brought forth a child into their midst saying:

“Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.”

Mark 9:37.

He was speaking of the need to develop the simple, innocent faith of a little child, who looks to his parents for guidance and direction — not relying on his own strength. To be humble and meek, not murmuring or disputing but cheerfully accepting with maturity and forbearance the circumstances God has sent is a victory over our flesh.

It is easy to fall into the flesh’s trap of murmuring and complaining when things do not suit us — perhaps the first step our carnal nature takes in attempting to overcome the spirit man we struggle to keep alive. Let us be warned, remembering the example of the children of Israel, who because of their murmuring and complaining, died in the wilderness, failing to enter their promised inheritance.

M.C.S

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

One of the false ideas that has been circulating amongst ecclesias in recent years is:-

“That the Kingdom of God is ‘within you’ and is the ‘Church’ - - - .”

This a teaching far removed from the “foundation work” of the pioneers of the Truth of these last days.

The following writing that was concerned with this subject was written by R. Roberts in 1864:-

“Is there not such a thing as a true church? Obviously, but it is a mistake to suppose that we are in it to find the kingdom of God. While it is true that in the church-ideal, God is the only authority recognised and consulted, yet it is far from being true that the administration of that authority as to its form and objects constitute it the kingdom of God; and to take such a view of it indicates an entire misapprehension of God’s procedure in the present dispensation. God’s purpose in preaching the gospel is briefly and pithily stated by James — “To take out of the Gentiles a people for his name”, (Acts 15:14) not to organise a kingdom, but to select a family on the principle of obedience and conformity to himself. The people so selected are styled an ecclesia (translated church) because ‘called out’, which is the meaning of the word, not called to be a kingdom, but called to INHERIT a kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him (James 2:5). Hence they are styled “joint heirs with Christ” (Christ being THE HEIR — Luke 20:14), and aggregately, “the bride, the Lamb’s wife”, to be married to him as “the King of Kings and Lord of Lords”, and therefore to share his authority. With this, most strikingly agree the words of Jesus in the Revelation: “To him that overcometh will I grant that he sit with me in my throne even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father on his throne.” The song of this community when they attain “the prize”, is “Thou hast made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign with thee on the earth.” In accordance with this destiny in reserve, Peter addresses them as “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9). In view of this, it will be understood in what sense the Thessalonians were “called unto the kingdom and glory of God.” (1 Thess. 2:12). They were called to the kingdom because the “call” they had obeyed was an invitation to possess “the kingdom and the dominion under the whole heaven” in the future age (Daniel 7:27); and hence their spiritual position and prospects were based entirely on the king-

dom of God's purposed establishment, prospectively contemplated. And this is the case with all true Christians. They are not the kingdom themselves, but a prospective element thereof — from all which it must appear to be a great mistake to look for the kingdom of God in any "spiritual" organisation that may exist on earth."

SIGNS OF HIS COMING AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD

"And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence - - - ."

(Genesis 6:13).

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

(Matthew 24:37).

At the time of writing there is considerable controversy in Britain over the keeping of hand guns. A cry has been raised that these weapons should be banned from being kept by the general public. Yet members of the Government Party in the Parliament have been resisting this demand. More than 700,000 people have actively campaigned for a radical move to prohibit such dangerous weapons. They have good cause for doing so. Daily there is news of violence on the streets, of knife attacks and shootings. There have been some horrendous events of children being shot down or hacked with a sharp implement while attending school.

Writing in the National Press one commentator declared:-

"The victims were so young they had not even started school. They had gone along there for a tea party — a teddy bears' tea party — so that they would learn that school is not frightening. But it was frightening. A madman with a machete attacked them. Hacking and stabbing at those tiny little ones."

It is a very evil situation. As one writing about this wicked trend commented:-

"We are talking about men with a violent, revolting sickness that is simply evil. But they were bred by the Britain we live in - - - . If this goes on, our grand-children will grow up living in fortresses. Parents will hand them over to their teachers like prisoners. But they will think that is better than the alternative. The next generation will not be free to enjoy any of the simple pleasures of childhood - - - . Children will go on being prisoners until they grow up and become jailers themselves. Unless we can turn back the tide. Unless we can stop these killings and attacks. How many more will there be before we refuse to go on living - - - ."

This statement is sombre and depressing, but there is every reason for such a comment. The machete wielding villain in the Midlands cut down two four-year-old girls and a boy of three, also injuring four adults, one seriously. Earlier in the year sixteen children and one teacher were shot down in the school in Scotland. Before that a headmaster was stabbed to death while going to the aid of one of his pupils at the school gates. Earlier still a masked man burst into a school in the North of England and stabbed to death a twelve-year-old girl; and what of the evil man who entered a school in Ireland with a flame-thrower, inflicting terrible injuries on pupils?

Daily, news from towns and villages is of violence and killings. Years ago a murder was a seven day wonder, making headlines in the national Press. But not now! Killing is such a common occurrence that often the details occupy three or four lines at the bottom of the news sheet.

The situation on the roads of the country is also a disgrace. A majority are driving in excess of the lawful speed, and at times getting exceedingly angry in what is termed "road rage", sometimes resulting in a fight at the side of the road and in some instances the rage has led to killing.

Then there is the terrorist bombings of town centres, or the blowing up of aircraft with explosive devices. It is killing for the sake of killing in some instances, especially when the victims are unknown to their assailants. How mindless it all is. A very evil situation. Children growing up in such an environment, themselves become hard and uncaring and ruthless.

It is as Jesus forewarned as a sign of His coming, "as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

In the days of Noah, at that early time of the history of mankind, an impossible situation of violence occurred. The Merciful and Just Almighty saw that the only solution was to deliver His creation from the violence. This meant the elimination of those causing the violence.

After all the years that have ensued since that time a similar development has occurred in these days. It is no use some commenting that there has always been violence, and that it is no different now than in former years. This is not so; older people can emphatically confirm that in their earlier years behaviour was much better. There is no comparison to the safety so evident then, with the danger, the unconcern, and the dishonesty so very evident now. The future would be very bleak indeed except for the divine solution to this state of things.

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

HAMBURG, NEW YORK, Corner Southwestern Blvd. and Pleasant Ave.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m.
Sunday Afternoon Class 1.45 p.m.
Midweek: Bible Class: Forestville, Hamburg and Fredonia
Every Third Week: Revelation Study

The Sunday afternoon class, having finished the study of Elpis Israel, has been changed in content. It is now a time when opportunity is provided for study and discussion of appropriate questions raised by its members. Initial reaction has been favorable and with good participation. We pray for continued guidance and blessing in this work.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.
Thursday: Bible Class 7.15 p.m.

Communications are still being received from at home and abroad. One recently from Africa stating appreciation for our magazine. We are mindful of some with limitations due to difficulties with limb movement, praying for their strengthening.