

OCTOBER 2001

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

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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
INTEGRITY**

Recent readings in Proverbs are guides to the understanding and wisdom needed to make our living more pleasing to our Father. The book of Proverbs, written by Solomon who was granted great wisdom by the Almighty, helps us:

“To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;
To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment and equity;
A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.”

Proverbs 1:2-3, 5.

The word “proverb” is also translated as parable, which also gives understanding and wisdom to those who, in earnest desire, seek these gifts of God, as Jesus taught:

“All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.”

Matthew 13:34-35.

To those who truly listened, Jesus taught the gospel, which has been contained in God’s word ever since the time of Adam.

As we read, seeking spiritual strength in times of need, there are occasions when particular help seems to “jump out” for our attention. God knows what is necessary to lift up, to chasten, and above all to guide us in that strait and narrow way which leads to His kingdom, if our eyes and ears are open to that wisdom. In our reading in Proverbs, we find this help, as Solomon wrote:

“The integrity of the upright shall guide them . . .”

Proverbs 11:3.

Those who are striving to be “upright” — or as the word means: right, just, or well pleasing before God — can be guided in their struggle toward “integrity.” What is integrity? The concordance renders it as being full, perfect, coming from a root word to be whole or complete. The dictionary defines it as a state of being complete, unbroken, unimpaired, or having soundness. It comes from the word integer which designates a whole number to distinguish it from a fractional number. These definitions give the thought of being complete, whole, not marred or blemished. Let us

look at examples of integrity, which can help to a better understanding, and how it can apply to our living.

David was chosen of God from a youth, when he tended his father's sheep:

"He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:

From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.

So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands."

Psalm 78:70-72.

The Almighty chose David to lead his people, recognizing his integrity as a "good shepherd" — even in his youth. After his 40-year reign over Israel, God spoke to Solomon, who succeeded David to the throne of Israel:

"... if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments:

Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David, thy father, saying. There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel."

I Kings 9:4-5.

David's determination was to walk in integrity and uprightness all the days of his life. In pleasing God, he was promised a son, a throne, a kingdom, a house, all to endure for ever, to be accomplished when the greater Son of David, the Lord Jesus, returns. Solomon, David's son and heir to the throne, began his reign in humility and fear of the Lord, and was granted wisdom and understanding to rule in uprightness over Israel. He moved with integrity, subject to God's will. However, as he grew older, he became famous for his wisdom, and accumulated many wives and great riches; his heart became occupied with these worldly possessions, thereby losing the essential singleness of heart and mind. In contrast, David's mind was constantly seeking God's help to preserve his uprightness, as he prayed:

"O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee." Psalm 25:20-21.

David did at times fail to wait on the Almighty, as in the matter of Bath-sheba, and when he insisted upon numbering Israel. However,

when he realized that his heart was not perfect, whole toward God, he quickly and simply confessed:

“... I have sinned against the LORD.” II Samuel 12:13.

David’s mind is further revealed as he besought the Almighty’s help:

“Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide. Examine me, O LORD, and prove me, try my reins and my heart.”
Psalm 26:1-2.

His fleshly lust did allow his heart to be turned away from integrity for a time. When God in response to his prayer did judge him, did examine him, revealing his lack of integrity, David quickly turned back to the way of righteousness, saying:

“But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.”
Psalm 26:11.

In God’s mercy, He did forgive and continued to lead David in the way he desired to walk, in subjection to His word.

David suffered much as God tried his heart, as he wrote:

“Mine enemies speak evil of me . . .
All that hate me whisper together against me . . . they devise my hurt.
Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.”
Psalm 41:5, 7, 9.

These words also expressed the mind of the Lord Jesus. As Jesus’ enemies oppressed Him, he remembered David’s words that were fulfilled, enabling Him to continue in His way of righteousness (John 13:18-19). David continued:

“But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them. By this I know that thou favourest (hath delight in) me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.

And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.”
Psalm 41:10-12.

David’s hope was to be set before God’s face forever when Jesus Christ, who now sits before God, returns to gather those who have walked in integrity of heart and mind. There are few who so walk, as Solomon wrote:

“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?
The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are

blessed after him."

Proverbs 20:6-7.

Self-proclaimed goodness amounts to nothing in the eyes of our God. Those who walk in singleness of heart, in the fear of the Lord, will be proclaimed good by Jesus at His judgment seat.

Job was a man noted for his patience; like David, he "waited on the Lord." Yet we do not find the words "patient" — "patience" — "patiently" even once mentioned in the book of Job. Indeed, these words are only used three times in the whole of the Old Testament. However, Job's patience was spoken of by James:

"... Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."
James 5:11.

Was Job's patience — as well as David's — a part of their integrity? Of Job, the Almighty said:

"... Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?"
Job 1:8.

The word "perfect" is related to the one used for integrity. The Almighty, knowing Job's integrity, tested him by placing difficulties upon him which proved his integrity. Job endured, waiting upon the Lord, even when his wife urged him:

"... Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die."
Job 2:9

Job's upright reply was:

"... What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips."
Job 2:10.

His trust was in God, depending upon Him for deliverance when it was right in the Almighty's time, not his own. He answered his three "friends" who accused him of evil thinking:

"As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment, and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul; . . .

My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live."
Job 27:2-6.

Job was a perfect example, a man of integrity, of whom Solomon wrote:

"The integrity of the upright (righteous) shall guide

them: . . .

The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: . . .

The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them . . .”

Proverbs 11:3, 5-6.

All these qualities are involved in integrity, enabling those — who in spite of trials, hardship, illness — to retain their integrity, waiting, trusting, praying, looking to God for guidance in all their ways.

Further understanding of integrity is found in God’s instruction to Moses, regarding the breastplate worn over the heart of the high priest as he went into the holy place of the tabernacle. God said to Moses:

“ . . . Thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim: and they shall be upon Aaron’s heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually.” Exodus 28:30.

Urim and Thummim in Hebrew mean “lights and perfection.”

Thummim is the plural of the Hebrew word used for integrity.

Urim is the plural for the Hebrew word — light. The jewels which made up the breastplate over the high priest’s heart would reflect the light of the golden candlestick in the holy place — the only source of light found there — as the high priest mediated for his people. Those who are “children of light” and those whose lives reflect integrity are close to the heart of the High Priest, Jesus Christ, as Malachi wrote:

“ . . . they that feared the LORD, spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels: and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Then shall ye return, and discern (judge) between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.” Malachi 3:16-18.

Do our lives, Brethren and Sisters, reflect integrity — the oneness of heart and mind, dedicated to serving God and His people? Does our living — especially in times of testing, affliction, illness, or distress — evidence a reverence for God, in love for Him who knows our needs? He in wisdom and justice places upon us

that which molds us, making us closer to the Lord Jesus who never failed, never lost His integrity, His oneness of purpose. For He lived and died in this determination:

“... not what I will, but what thou wilt.” Mark 14:36.
J.A.DeF.

AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST

(Ephesians 6:20)

In a recent study of Ephesians, we read Paul's letter to his brethren in faith — exhorting, instructing and encouraging in the way of life. He felt a strong bond with those at Ephesus, having helped them to receive the Truth. He wrote, while a prisoner in Rome, not thinking of his own position in bonds, but mindful of his brethren and their present trials.

In the sixth chapter particularly he speaks to children, parents, servants and masters, that in whatever position they find themselves to do all necessary to walk pleasing before the Almighty. For himself, he asked for their prayers that he might be strengthened to carry on the work given him of God and particularly that:

“... utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” Ephesians 6:19-20.

What did Paul mean that he might be helped to speak boldly? The definition of bold is to be outspoken, confident, to speak openly and plainly. When we think of boldness today it may carry the negative suggestion of being arrogant however, Paul's manner would not be so. He knew he must speak before kings, magistrates, and those in power, without fear of personal consequence if he were to carry God's word as a faithful ambassador.

An ambassador in today's world is a diplomatic representative for a specific government or country. Many countries send ambassadors to other countries whose work is to convey messages between the heads of their governments. These messages must be related exactly as given — the ambassador is not at liberty to alter the wording or give his own interpretation of the message. It may at times take courage and strength to deliver a message which will not be well received. In a delicate situation it may be tempting to soften the message's impact, yet this is not in the purview of a true

ambassador who faithfully serves. This too was Paul's position as an ambassador for Jesus Christ, a duty he accepted with all sincerity.

In Paul's letter to Philemon an example is seen of the spiritual boldness required of an ambassador of the Truth, as he says in verse 7:

"For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient,

Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me." Philemon 1:7-11.

Philemon knew Onesimus in times past as an unprofitable servant. Yet, Onesimus had embraced the word of God and had been received into the brotherhood of faith making them now brethren in Christ. Paul beseeched Philemon to put away his feelings of animosity towards Onesimus and embrace him in brotherly love. Knowing how Philemon felt about Onesimus, it was not easy for Paul to approach him, but he did with boldness — speaking plainly in order to convince Philemon of the error of his viewpoint.

Another example of boldness was seen in Peter and John, who before entering the temple, healed a lame man who was begging alms of those that entered. Seizing upon this opportunity, they preached Jesus Christ to those who had witnessed this miracle. However, the priests, Sadducees and other elders were desperate to stop their ministry for it drew the people away from following them. Yet they continued boldly in their witness, without fear of personal consequence saying:

"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Acts 4:10-12.

These were strong words. Peter and John did not hedge or hold back even though they were addressing men who held the power to persecute and imprison them. They proclaimed Jesus as the Christ, "whom ye crucified" with great spiritual boldness as true ambassadors. What was the reaction?

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it." Acts 4:13-14.

Paul knew how he ought to speak as an ambassador of Christ, but after suffering at the hands of those who sought to silence his ministry, he asked his brethren for help through prayer that he be strengthened to continue speaking boldly. In his closing words at the end of this letter to the Ephesians, he prayed that they might know the peace and love from God which unites brethren in the household of faith:

"Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen." Ephesians 6:23-24.

Only through fellowship with the Father and His Son, can there be granted the strength to speak boldly when we are called upon to do so. If we are to be ambassadors of Christ, we must as Paul, not fear what man can do unto us, but speak with sincerity and plainness His word entrusted to our care.

M.C.S.

**“--- A ZEAL OF GOD, BUT NOT ACCORDING TO
KNOWLEDGE.”**

(Romans 10:2)

Various religious sects exist who deceive themselves into thinking they have a heavenly power comparable to the special provision of the Spirit given to the immediate Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the United States there is the “Church of the Lord Jesus”. This sect once numbered many thousands of people, and even today, there are at least 30 churches of them in Appalachia. These people believe that every word in the Bible should be taken literally. Particular emphasis is laid upon the following New Testament passage:-

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” (Mark 16:17-18).

This sign was fulfilled in the early Apostles. The speaking with tongues was fulfilled at Pentecost as related in the book of Acts. Christ’s disciples did do works of healing. And it is to be particularly noted what happened to the Apostle Paul on the island of Melita:-

“And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

And he shook off the beast into the fire and felt no harm. Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.” (Acts 28:3-6).

The point here is that Paul did not go out of his way to handle the snake. But the “Church of the Lord Jesus” does. They cull rattlesnakes and copperheads from the surrounding mountains of Appalachia. These people, from time to time, purport to demonstrate their faith by not only handling poisonous snakes, but in order to closely follow the written word, they also drink strychnine (which is used

as rat poison).

An eye witness account reads as follows:-

“A makeshift band let loose with electric guitars, drums and keyboards, filling the room with a deafening ‘rockabilly’ version of REACH OUT AND TOUCH THE LORD. Other people pitched in with cymbals and tambourines. The congregation was on its feet and clapping. Men and women rushed on to the floor and launched into a freestyle, foot-stomping dance with such energy and abandon that the building trembled. - - - The pastor invited the congregation to ‘do what God would have you do’. After a few minutes, a young man broke off and approached a snake box inscribed, ‘A Believer is a Doer’. He undid its brass clasp and lifted out two 5ft. long rattlers. Soon other worshippers followed suit - - - pirouetting and gyrating with serpents in their hands. They gently caressed them, passed them from hand to hand, wrapped them round their necks. - - - The handlers believe God protects them. - - - The noise and heat grew overpowering. Women were quivering and weeping. People were talking in tongues, babbling incomprehensively. Some dancers seemed to be in a trance. - - - A woman approached the lectern, seized the strychnine jar and took a swig, then handed it on to others. They drank and barely grimaced.”

There have been deaths resulting from this practice, both from the snakes and from drinking poison. The answer to the question, why did God allow them to be bitten? is as follows:-

“They were being tested, they were being punished for transgressions, they picked up the snakes BEFORE THE SPIRIT MOVED THEM. Or, God was showing unbelievers that the snakes have not been doctored.”

Snake handlers refuse medical help when bitten and rely, instead, on prayer. They insist that deaths strengthen, rather than shake their faith!

What deluded people, with a spurious faith that God sends down the power of His Spirit upon them. They choose to pick out scriptures to suit their own distorted interpretations.

A recent case in the United Kingdom showed similar delusion. A preacher, referred to as a Devout Christian, faced motoring charges. He told the police, “I travel with God as my passenger”, going on to say, “The Lord told me I no longer need car insurance.

Instead he would bless me with divine protection." On the charge of not having a motor vehicle licence, he countered by saying, "The Road Traffic Act is surpassed by the law of God and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency does not compare." Another of his infringements, was a false car number plate. (DEUT 8:18). He explained, "I was told by the Lord to take my number plate off and to put Deuteronomy chapter 8 verse 18 on it. I have been licensed from heaven. I will be giving the word of the Lord in court." He has now changed his number plate again to JOHN 3:16, saying this quotation indicates those who follow God will come to no harm.

The confident boastfulness of this preacher is revealed in his assertion "I am sure he (God) will not let me down now." He obviously has no thought for the command:

"- - - be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates - - - ." (Titus 3:1).

And the "Church of the Lord Jesus" has certainly ignored Christ's example:-

"And (the tempter) saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down (from the pinnacle of the Temple) for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." (Matthew 4:6-7).

Christ revealed the balance of the Spirit, not magnifying the quotation from the Psalms, to the detriment of the Law, requiring reverence for God.

A BIBLE CLASS
"GOD CAME FROM TEMAN"

Habakkuk was a prophet sent to Judah and Jerusalem, probably in the time of Josiah, king of Judah. He was distressed by the violence and unbelief among the people of God and cried unto Him:

"O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save!

Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention.

Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth." Habakkuk 1:2-4.

The Almighty answered the prophet's cry:

"Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.

For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces that are not theirs."

Habakkuk 1:5-6.

Shortly thereafter (606 BC), Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar's command, began to invade Judah, ultimately destroying Jerusalem, taking captive its people, and ending the existence of Israel as a nation. Josiah, king of Judah at the time of Habakkuk's prophesying, was a faithful king, one who feared God. Because of his trust in God, he was told by Huldah, God's prophetess:

"Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, . . . I have even heard thee also, saith the LORD. Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place . . ."

II Chronicles 34:27-28.

Josiah died before the sure judgment of God came upon Judah, during the reign of the sons of Josiah — ending in its destruction in 588 BC.

As Habakkuk finished his prayer, he said:

"I will stand upon my watch . . . and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved."

Habakkuk 2:1.

And the Lord answered:

“... Write the vision ...

For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come ...”
Habakkuk 2:2-3.

God required His prophet to wait for His appointed time when He would bring judgment upon Judah for refusing to turn from their evil ways. In obedience, Habakkuk prayed and waited:

“A prayer of Habakkuk, the prophet, upon Shigionoth.”

Habakkuk 3:1.

The word “Shigionoth” comes from a root meaning to wander or stray. It is also used in the Title of Psalm 7:

“Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the LORD, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite.”

Title — Psalm 7.

It was Cush the Benjamite, who brought word to David that Absalom his son had been killed in battle. David’s mind wandered, looking for help, and found it as he expressed:

“O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:

If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; ... Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.”
Psalm 7:1, 4-5.

David’s mind was to trust in God, even in the midst of great tribulation, and added the word “Selah” — which comes from a root meaning to value, as used by Job as he spoke of God’s wisdom (Job 28:16-19). In distress, David trusted in God, valuing His word as he looked to the end of God’s purpose. This also was Habakkuk’s mind as he pondered God’s message, and prayed:

“O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years ... in wrath remember mercy.

God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.”
Habakkuk 3:2-3.

The prophet’s mind was going back to the time when Israel, led by the pillar of cloud and fire, was delivered from Egyptian bondage. They travelled through the wilderness for 40 years, and then entered the land. Their route was through Teman and mount Paran. Then they moved up the east side of the Dead Sea toward the river Jordan. God was with them, helping them to destroy the nations

which stood in their way. As Habakkuk remembered through his mind's wandering, he prayed: "... revive thy work in the midst of the years." He asked God to repeat what He had done, and once again bring the promised kingdom of Israel, to be a reality when Jesus returns to establish it for a thousand years. Truly Habakkuk "selahe'd" — valued that work done under Moses at God's command, looking to the eventual fulfilling of His promises to Abraham, David, and all who in faith value His Word.

Teman was a part of Edom, the territory of Esau's descendants. God spoke of Edom through Jeremiah:

"Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Edom; and his purposes that he hath purposed against the inhabitants of Teman; . . . surely he shall make their habitations desolate with them." Jeremiah 49:20.

Moses spoke of mount Paran:

". . . The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir (Edom) unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints (holy ones): from his right hand went a fiery law for them."

Deuteronomy 33:2.

Habakkuk remembered and valued Israel's conquering of the nations under God and Joshua, as they came from the wilderness into their promised inheritance. As he valued it, he prayed: "... revive thy work" (make it live again), as Jesus (Joshua) comes to restore the kingdom of Israel. He will gather His people to judgment at mount Sinai; and with those judged faithful, His saints, travel through Teman and mount Paran, up the east side of the Dead Sea, crossing over Jordan, defeating the city of the Gentiles (Jericho). He will enter Jerusalem in triumph to make it the center of His worldwide kingdom, as promised from the beginning. Habakkuk knew God's purpose with the earth, he valued it, and prayed that God would bring it about.

It will be done in God's "appointed time." God said to Habakkuk:

"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Habakkuk 2:3.

Waiting can be a trial, as the Almighty knows. We must wait on Him, trusting in His word, valuing the sureness of His promises, and looking with hope, yet with fear, for the appointed end of His purpose, soon to come.

J.A.DeF.

GLOBAL WARMING

The latest news on the above subject is that:-

“The planet is warming even faster than climate experts feared.”

The danger is more floods, and in some places droughts, as a result. The world's poorest societies, who greatly depend upon their water and agriculture, are likely to be the losers from the effects of climate change. A graph of the Earth's surface temperature shows a remarkable climb in the figures over the past 140 years. This phenomenon is caused by gases emitted from the tremendous use of fossil fuels.

Let us note what the scriptures foretold about these times:-

“MANY shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.”
(Daniel 12:4).

Anyone living on the side of a motorway will understand this description of running “to and fro”. The pounding along of large commercial vehicles and the undending hum of the smaller ones, never ceases. Only in the remote areas can the peace of earlier times be found.

The pattern of living today is totally different to what it was a little over a century ago. The success of Nation States is now linked to the success of the motor industry. C. E. Wilson, a president of General Motors made the comment:-

“What is good for the country is good for General Motors and vice-versa.”

Two German pioneers, Karl Benz, and Gottlieb Daimler launched the first two working cars in 1885-1886. The French firm De Dion Bouton followed with small efficient petrol engines. These were used in motorised tricycles in the 1890's. Later came the lightweight motor car with tubular steel frames, and wire-spoked wheels. Another French design was the Panhard-Levassor of 1891, with its engine in front of the driver, a style which has predominated ever since.

Soon there was the Rolls-Royce “Silver Ghost”, a luxury vehicle. But the Model T Ford was a success for the lower end of the market. By 1927 more than 15 million had been built. Only surpassed when the German Volkswagen “Beetle” came onto the Market in the early 1970's. The motor-car brought about a national pattern of highways. It also brought about the mass production methods of the United States which has made America the most powerful economic and industrial country in the world.

But the fuel crisis of 1973-1974, when Arab oil-producing countries cut off their supplies, showed that there is a degree of vulnerability to the great motor vehicle enterprise. That fuel crisis resulted in a 50 mile per hour speed limit being brought in to reduce fuel consumption. The reduction in road casualties when this was enforced, so impressed the Authorities, that the United States held on to a 55 mph limit after the oil crisis was resolved.

However, faster and faster cars continue to be produced, with drivers disobeying the necessary speed limitations. What a sad retaliation the Authorities have had to take, in building humps on the roads of inner-city areas, to slow down vehicles, for the safeguarding of the pedestrian population.

The words of the book of Ecclesiastes raise a question about mans' cleverness:-

"Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."

(Ecclesiastes 7:29).

Man is upright in his stance; so different to the beasts of the field. But in his superior position, is he always as responsible to the part that the Creator has give to him, as he ought to be? Some inventions are very injurious. One thing is certain. The Kingdom of God will not tolerate the vexation of road-rage and noise pollution. The change that is coming is prophesied:-

"--- the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come. ---

The people shall weary themselves for very vanity. --- But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him."

Habakkuk 2:3, 13, 20.

As for travel in the future age. This will certainly not depend upon fossil fuel. An account in the book of the Acts, gives us some inkling. Philip the Apostle, was sent along the road going down from Jerusalem to Gaza, there to meet an Ethiopian for the purpose of preaching to him the Gospel. The Ethiopian responded to the preaching, and was baptized immediately by Philip (the respondent being in a journey). But what is also so significant is what followed:-

"And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

But Philip was found at Azotus ---."

(Acts 8:39-40).

Azotus (Ashdod) was some 20 miles north of Gaza, along the old Philistine coast line. To be so "caught away", shows how God gave swift travel, as appropriate, to His servants of the past. And that same power will be abundantly ample for His Kingdom.

A BRIEF NOTE ON REPENTENCE

From: Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come (1855)

"Repentance towards God", and "unto life", is a change of views and affections, resulting from belief of his promised goodness. Such an one hates sin, and does his best to keep from sin; but forgets the things which are behind for which he has obtained pardon in the act of putting on Christ. The change of views and affections is synchronical with the truth heartily and lovingly believed. The excellency of this knowledge, which announces present forgiveness and eternal glory in God's kingdom, excludes sorrow or remorse by the joy it creates. What sort of sorrow is there in that heart which rejoices "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."?

The repentance of the world is sorrow for sin in view of hell-torments. Not knowing the gospel, its piety is surcharged with doubts, and fears, and sorrows. There is no real joy in it; for it can rise no higher than a dubious hope of pardon. With such a repentance the gospel of the kingdom has nothing to do.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

“- - fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.” (Luke 21:11).

The above sign, which Christ gave, is very pertinent. It means a revelation in the sky above, for all the world to see.

In former ages the heaven above was remote and unobtainable. But there were rocket probes of very limited attainment from quite early times.

It was China which developed gunpowder and at the siege of Kai-Fung-Fu (1232) this was used in their arrows of flying fire. An Arab book of 1285 refers to “arrows from China” indicating these were launched from ramps. Some time later (1650) Casimir Siemienowicz, a Polish writer, depicted in a book, rockets with wings, and even in clusters. In that same century, Friedrich von Geissler of Berlin constructed 50lb and 100lb rockets.

Then in 1780, Hyder Ali of Mysore (India) used iron tubes of about 10lb in weight, guided by 10ft. bamboo poles, to fire at the British in a conflict at Guntar. This weapon had a range of just less than two miles, but was not accurate, but nevertheless had a frightening effect upon the opposing forces.

It was William Congreve, son of the Director of Woolwich Arsenal, London, who produced the first rocket to be widely used by Western armies. It was fuelled by gunpowder contained in a sheet-iron construction. At Boulogne in 1806, 200 rockets were fired from ships into the town in half an hour. Britain then began to increase its production of this weapon. At the British siege of Copenhagen they launched 40,000 of them into the city.

At the Battle of Waterloo, Wellington had a “Rocket Troop” section in his army. However, he thought the rocket to be an unreliable weapon; sometimes the missile veered round and hit his own men.

In the American War of Independence, the British ship Erebus fired rockets into Fort McHenry, which guarded Baltimore, but it was an ineffective attack. Francis Scott Key referred to this in “The Star-spangled Banner”, speaking of “the rocket’s red glare”.

Rocketry eventually fell into disuse, because rifled breech-loading artillery was favoured as being more accurate. But nations began to change their minds again during the Second World War. Germany and Russia began to develop rockets fuelled by smokeless-powder mixtures. These were used for mass bombardment. Russia had received advice from K. Tsiolkovsky, who had theorised on

long-range devices.

In the United States R. Goddard had developed liquid-fuelled rockets. Germany also was scientifically advancing with a solid-fuel rocket engine. Wernher von Braun was one of Germany's leading scientists. At Peenemunde, on the Baltic coast, he developed the "Wasserfall", a supersonic radio-guided missile. Also the A-4 long range rocket, the first man-made device to exceed the speed of sound. This was named the V2 rocket, having a range of 200 miles, and able to soar 60 miles into the sky, descending at 3,500 m.p.h. It was the origin of all space rockets, and strategic rockets that have followed since.

Note how rocket development made only slow progress for several hundred years, and then suddenly in the 20th century there was this spate of development which has brought about aerial devices of supersonic speed.

Christ's warning shows this is the time of the end of which He spoke.

So now there is "Star Wars". Recently, as developed by United States scientists, a device with blinding flash swept across the sky; it was an interceptor missile, which hit a space target at 16,000 m.p.h. It had travelled 4,800 miles in 10 minutes. A Minuteman 2, inter-continental ballistic missile had been launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base, in California. Just over 20 minutes later the interceptor rocket was fired from Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. Within minutes the ballistic missile target was completely obliterated from the sky. What a fearful sight of devastating power. It has frightened China, who sent its president to Moscow, to sign a treaty of friendship with Russia, with whom it has not always been on favourable terms. Washington regards space as a legitimate battle ground. But what does this development portend? especially when the horror which nuclear weapons can bring about, is considered. So this "great sign" is seen in the heaven, so pertinently foretold by the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

Gratitude is felt for thoughts and prayers on behalf of those in illness, as well as for those who have faced uncertainty over repeated postponements of needed surgery for one closely related.

In the conviction that all things are in our merciful Father's hands, we strive to submit to whatever is His will.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

As the work continues and as we receive the guiding help of the Word, this is a cause for comfort; and also an assuring provision to help our faith.

How sublime are His benefits which have always been there to those who strive to please Him.