

JULY 2005

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"

"BRIDLETH NOT HIS TONGUE"

"REPENTANCE"

"A BIBLE CLASS"

"GIVING IN SIMPLICITY"

"SIGNS OF HIS COMING"

"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

"ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD"

This week we finished our yearly schedule of reading the scripture, and the next day started again reading our daily portions from the word of God. Paul, in writing to his brother Timothy, spoke of the purpose of God's word:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." I Timothy 3.16-17.

God's word is provided for His people for their spiritual growth, helping them to know His purpose. This gift which we read each day helps us to be perfect, furnished with the instruction of God to all good works, through doctrine (teaching), reproof (correction), and instruction in righteousness - all requisites which can lead to perfection. There is only One who was perfect, the Lord Jesus, who never sinned, although tempted as we are. He died on the cross, crying out in triumph: "it is finished." What was finished? Was it not the end of His struggle to perfectly obey God, dying as the Lamb of God, unblemished as required by His Father? Brethren and Sisters, we fail, we sin and fall short of perfection, in need of that which is written under God's direction.

With this in mind, let us turn to that word written with the finger of God; that word which Jesus called upon in His temptation in the wilderness, when He spoke: "It is written ..." The first words of scripture tell us:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the waters." Genesis 1:1-2.

Out of this chaos, God created the earth as we know it today. How did He do it? We find the answer in the scripture:

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Genesis 1:3,

His first work was to separate light from darkness by saying: "Let there be ..." His word created the heaven and the earth in six days, as we discern from the record in Genesis. At the end of six days, it was completed:

"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Genesis 1:31.

His last act of creation was to make man.

"The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7.

The Almighty gave man dominion over all the beasts of the earth, and provided him with all that he required to be a living soul, that he might live and replenish (fill) the earth. To Adam God gave only one command - that he should not eat of the tree in the midst of the garden; if he did eat of that forbidden tree, he would surely die. We know what happened. Eve was deceived by the serpent's lie "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). Man became a dying creature when Eve ate of the fruit and gave it to Adam to eat. But God, in mercy, provided a means of escape from that dying nature through the promise of a seed of the woman (Jesus Christ), who would conquer His flesh nature by wounding the serpent in the head, as God promised to Adam and Eve:

"I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it (the seed of the woman) shall bruise thy head, and thou (the serpent) shalt bruise his heel." Genesis 3:15.

According to God's word, there has been enmity (hatred, hostility) between the seed of the woman (those who strive to serve God by submitting to His word), and the seed of the serpent (those who deny God's word, and instead serve the flesh and its lusts). God gave man the ability to have dominion over all beasts of the field, including the serpent; but man, tempted by the flesh, lost his dominion over the serpent, and thus became a dying creature. Our reading in Genesis reminds us of the power of the flesh which if not conquered, will cause the loss of eternal life promised by the word of God.

Our next reading is the book of Psalms, the expression of David's praise to God. David lived almost 3000 years after the

creation. He was king over God's people Israel, who had become a great nation, stretching from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates. The Psalms reveal David's mind as he contemplated God's mercy. His first words were:

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper:

The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous but the way of the ungodly shall perish." Psalm 1:1-6.

The enmity still exists between the faithful seeking to do God's will, and those who deny God in the worship of self. David was among those striving to be righteous, subject to God's word. At times he failed, but quickly acknowledged: "I have sinned against the LORD" and was forgiven by the merciful LORD of hosts. His mind is further expressed for us, speaking of God's laws, testimonies, commandments, statutes and judgments:

"... by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion (rulership) over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight. O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." Psalm 19:1 1-14.

David was greatly helped in his determination to remain subject to God's word. He was king over a great nation, but behaved

himself wisely, giving glory and praise to God by his obedience. He faced the enmity that exists between God's people (the seed of the woman), and the seed of the serpent who seeks to lure from the way of righteousness, to the evil deeds of those who rebel against God. His word was a strength to David as he prayed.

"Arise, O LORD, save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah." Psalm 3:7-8.

The Almighty saw David's faith and trust in His word, and gave him certain promises. These promises, recognized as "the sure mercies of David," were a covenant made with him, that there would be a son, a king, a throne, a house, a kingdom which would endure for ever. These promises are still to come to pass through the provision of Jesus Christ by the Almighty, who will fulfill His "sure mercies" promised by His word.

We go next to our reading of God's word in the New Testament in Matthew. The first words written are:

"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Matthew 1:1

Abraham was also one of God's righteous people, to whom the Almighty promised that he would have a seed in whom all the people of the earth would be blessed. That seed would multiply into a nation whose numbers would be as the stars of heaven, and a seed that would possess the gate of his enemies. These promises are also to be fulfilled in the seed of Abraham - the Lord Jesus - who would be provided in God's time. It is not without purpose that the first words divinely inspired in the New Testament concern: "The generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." The record reveals:

"... the generation from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations." Matthew 1:17.

There were 42 generations from the time of the promises to Abraham until the first coming of Jesus Christ. It was a long period

of time, but it came about as God had spoken through the scripture. Almost 2000 years have passed since the Lord Jesus was born, preached the gospel, died in obedience to His Father, and ascended to the throne of God in the heavens, as prophesied by the law, the Psalms, and the prophets - the scripture of the Almighty.

We can see, Brethren and Sisters, the sureness of God's word which is still to come to pass. As we read the scripture over the next twelve months, we are reminded by His promises, that God's purpose will soon be fulfilled. We do not know exactly when, but He has given signs of Jesus' coming to gather His people to judgment. To those judged to be righteous, He will say:

“... Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation (conception) of the world.”
Matthew 25:34.

The scripture, written with the finger of God, reveals His purpose for those who in faith and love have submitted to His word from the beginning until the promised coming of the Lord Jesus. We, Brethren and Sisters, are greatly blessed to live in the time close to the end of God's purpose - a hope toward which the faithful have struggled since the beginning of time. As we see these signs, let us heed Jesus' words:

“... there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”
Luke 21:25-28.

This is the hope made possible by God's mercy and grace since the fall of man in the garden - **The Hope of Israel** - promised to Abraham, to David, and to all who rejoice in His scripture, His word, which leads the way into this kingdom soon to come! In this hope, let us lift up our heads, as our redemption draweth nigh.

JADeF.

"BRIDLETH NOT HIS TONGUE"

James 1:26

In the study of our consideration from the Epistle of James, he writes to his brethren, reminding that the word of God was given as a plan to live by - accompanied by trials and tests to determine if there will be an endeavor to overcome the natural tendencies of the flesh and cleave unto God's precepts. This is what he speaks of when he writes:

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:" James 1:17-19.

This knowledge from the word gives a means to combat every man's natural fleshly tendencies, which lean not to the Spirit's ways, but to its own.

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, And enticed.

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Do not err, my beloved brethren." James 1:13-16.

If that word is within the heart and used daily, it provides the help needed to govern one's living - teaching the man of faith to be "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath".

Our verse under consideration deals directly with one's manner of life as James writes.

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" James 1:26.

The word "bridleth" means to curb and makes us think of a bridle fastened to a metal bit placed in a horse's mouth. With the

reins attached, a small person (even a child) can control the actions of a much larger animal. The bit is such a small piece of metal in comparison to the size and weight of a great horse, yet guides and harnesses his strength and power to the rider's will.

Likewise, if we are to bridle our tongue, we must consciously think of what we are about to say, guiding and directing our speech according to the Word, that we not offend, for many offenses begin with one ill-advised word:

"For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"

James 3:2—5

What is natural in man must be curbed in order to grow spiritually with attributes pleasing to the Almighty. Once one has received the Word and pledged through repentance and baptism to abide by it, he cannot let his tongue be unbridled nor his fleshly tendencies to run unchecked:

"Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?

Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries?

Either a vine, figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you?

Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."

James 3:11-13.

A well or fountain cannot give forth both sweet and bitter water and so as a man speaks, he illustrates which spirit is within him. Without curbing the natural tendencies of the flesh and bridling his tongue, a man's religion is in vain, not honoring or pleasing the Almighty by not reflecting the Spirit's teachings.

Job is an example of one who bridled his tongue, especially when tempted by his own wife to disavow God and His precepts and end the misery he was undergoing:

“Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. 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 2:9-10.

David too was of a mind to bridle his tongue and not sin before God as he wrote:

“I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.”
Psalm 39:1.

There are many examples in the scriptures of David’s self-control as he used God’s word and wisdom to control his living. When he was afforded opportunity to strike back at Saul who pursued him with deadly intent, he refused to raise his hand against the Lord’s anointed - thus curbing or bridling his natural tendencies.

The Lord Jesus at His trial before Pilate did not speak - He held His tongue, knowing God’s will must be fulfilled and so executed restraint when it would have been natural to defend Himself in the face of false accusations.

Speaking to the Scribes and Pharisees, who being teachers to the people should have been examples of righteousness, Jesus did not mince words, labeling them as the seed of the serpent:

“O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”
Matthew 12:34-37.

The Lord Jesus’ teaching echoes James’ admonition to bridle the tongue, pointing out that one who seems to be a man of God but is unable to curb his tongue or actions, is not spiritual but fleshly, and deceives himself.

M.C.S.

REPENTANCE

In the history of the ecclesia there were some in the past who arose with an implacable stance towards several members that had been withdrawn from in fellowship but who later sought to be restored to the ecclesia. For example there was the trouble over "the binding and the loosing." It was affirmed that the scripture concerning "whatsoever is loosed on earth is loosed in heaven" declares that there can be no coming back to the ecclesia once withdrawal has taken place. These hard-liners left the ecclesia and set up their own meeting when they could not get agreement of the ecclesia with this belief. They obviously were not aware of what one of the pioneers of the Truth's revival of these last days had said (dated Feb. 1st 1872). Or if they were aware they had disregarded it. R. Roberts wrote the following:-

"Will they be forgiven?"

(Question) "If a man or woman having been baptized into Christ, walk unworthy for a time, will they be forgiven if they earnestly repent and pray fervently for forgiveness, and will they be accepted at the coming of the LORD?"

(Answer) "Whoso confesseth his sins and forsaketh them shall have mercy." (Prov.28:13) It is not sufficient to repent in the popular sense of being sorry. The original word for repentance carries with it the idea of REFORMATION. There must be an abandonment of our evil courses. Sorrow for past misconduct is more acceptably shown in a lasting amendment of our ways than in weeping and crying out. But the question of our correspondent is, how will God receive the petition of an enlightened transgressor? Well, the testimony is that God is gracious and long suffering (Psalm 103:8:9), and He is so to all men up to a certain point. He who forgives sinners when they believe in Jesus, and put on His name in the way of His appointing, is not slow to forgive saints when they make confession and prayer to Him through the Son of His love, whom He hath appointed a mediator and a high priest for this very thing. (Heb.2:17-18; 1 Tim.2:5). "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous:" (1 John 2:1). He who, by His son, exhorts us to forgive one another, is himself willing to shew the same grace unto "seventy times seven"; (Matt.18:22); but it depends upon how we act towards others. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither

will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matt.6:15). These are Christ's words, who taught us to pray "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." God will be to us what we are to others. Thus David says: "With the merciful man thou wilt shew Thyself merciful; with an upright man Thou wilt shew Thyself upright." (Psalm 18:25). If we are magnanimous and patient and forgiving with others, we have ground for confidence that God will bear with us and forgive us, even if we have fallen as far as our correspondent's question would suppose; that is, if we return with a true intent to an observance of His commandments. For the comfort of such as desire to amend, and yet scarcely dare to hope, we point to Christ's exhortation to the seven churches of Asia, to repent, even though so far down as Laodicea and Sardis. (Rev.2:5,16,21; Rev.3:3,19); also to the recognition of the possibility of re-instatement implied in 2 Cor.2:7; 12:21; James 5:15,19,20. The case mentioned by Peter (2 Pet.2:20) of being "again entangled and overcome", supposes a hopeless abandonment of godliness. Heb.6:6 and 10:20, are still more definitely of this class. At the same time, there is reason for great fear and circumspection. It is a fearful thing to trifle with God. Those only who overcome and keep the words and works of Christ patiently during their pilgrimage, will be accepted of Christ and receive the crown; but those will doubtless include many who at first stumble, and recover themselves, and are forgiven.

A BIBLE CLASS

**"PRAY THAT YE ENTER NOT
INTO TEMPTATION"**

Luke 22:40

Jesus spoke these words to His disciples as they entered the garden of Gethsemane shortly before His death. He knew He must soon die, in obedience to His Father's purpose. He also knew the weakness of the flesh to do as He desired, rather than what God required. And so he warned His disciples of the need for prayer to help in submitting to God's will. Having warned them:

"... he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

Luke 22:41-42.

He agonized, fighting against His flesh nature, three times seeking help to submit to His Father's will. We are shown the depth of His struggle:

'And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.'

Luke 22:44.

In the meanwhile, His disciples slept. Jesus again spoke to them:

"... Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

Luke 22:46.

Jesus, knowing the great struggle between the flesh and the spirit, and also knowing the power of prayer to "enter not into temptation," sought to help His followers to pray more earnestly. He perfectly overcame temptation as He submitted to God's will - the only One to never sin. It was only a short time after this warning that Peter entered into temptation when he denied the Lord Jesus three times; even though having been told he would do so. John, in heeding Jesus' warning, closely followed Jesus into the high priest's palace, and even went out to bring in Peter. After Peter had denied Jesus:

“... the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.” Luke 22:61-62.

Peter had been warned; yet, in spite of his determination, he entered into temptation, and realized his failure.

Being flesh, all are tempted to respond to fleshly lusts. Must we not then pray earnestly in our struggle against that inclination?

James, one of Jesus’ disciples who heard Jesus’ words in the garden, helps us as we struggle to “enter not into temptation”:

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

James 1:13-15.

It is our own lusts that can draw us away from what the Almighty requires. One can be enticed to enter into temptation, to succumb to it., and thereby lose the hope of eternal life. We might ask: What is temptation? The concordance tells us that it is a test, to prove, to try, to assay our faith, our trust in God. It is a struggle to do His will, to get victory over our fleshly lusts. Temptation, then, is a putting to proof by experience. James, recognizing the need for prayer in temptation, further guides us, as he exhorted his brethren:

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations:

Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience”

James 1 :2-3.

It may seem strange that we should find joy in temptations. However, when it is recognized that temptation is a test, a proving of our faith and trust in God that He will answer our prayers, we can rejoice that we have an Advocate who endured a life of testing

and overcame all temptations. He now sits at God's right hand to convey our prayers that we "enter not into temptation" by not allowing our flesh to govern our living. James' help continues:

"Blessed is the man that endureth (abideth) temptation: for when he is tried (approved), shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

James 1:12.

If there were no temptations, there would be no opportunity to prove one's trust in God, no need to "pray that ye enter not into temptation." God in His mercy and grace grants the needed help for those who strive to follow the Lord Jesus, as He said to Peter, and His other disciples:

"... If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

Matthew 16:24-25.

J.A.DeF.

GIVING IN SIMPLICITY

Paul's letters to his brethren are known for their practical guidance, helping the man of faith walk in the spirit and not in the flesh, to become a living sacrifice, pleasing to God by not conforming to the world.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul explains how in God's household there are many members with differing gifts, but joined in unity, serving God through service one to another. In doing so, all must work together to submit themselves one to another in love and humility:

"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Romans 12:3-5.

Paul goes on to explain that not all are blessed with the same gifts, but as these various talents are used to the benefit of the entire house selflessly, God is glorified:

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness." Romans 12:6-8.

Giving with simplicity or singleness, whether it be a practical or spiritual help, is to do so without self-gratification - focused solely on the need of others, that the giving be done to the glory of God. Paul wrote a similar thought to the Ephesians saying:

"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men." Ephesians 6:5-7.

Also to the Corinthians, Paul speaks of the importance of simplicity or singleness, in giving one for another. Done not expecting anything in return but solely for the simple pleasure of bringing joy to another because a need has been filled. He goes on to thank those in Corinth for their support of his labors in the Truth:

"Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward." II Corinthians 1:11-12.

The Lord Jesus openly criticized the Scribes and Pharisees for their habit of doing good deeds to be seen of men - not done with simplicity or sincerity from the heart:

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." Matthew 6:1-2.

Christ taught the spirit of love - doing for another not with fanfare to be noticed, but giving help quietly behind the scenes so to speak, without bringing attention to self or to the act of giving.

Paul was one who gave himself willing to the service of others - focusing his life on preaching the gospel that others may know Christ, at great personal cost to himself. Yet he did not complain, but cheerfully executed his charge from God:

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more." I Corinthians 9:16-19.

God who has bestowed bountifully, expects His servants to respond in kind, giving of themselves, whether it be practically or spiritually for the benefit of others, giving cheerfully with simplicity and sincerity of heart.

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:" II Corinthians 9:6-8.

M.C.S.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb. - - -”

(Revelation 13:11)

Dr. Thomas writing on the above subject said:-

“ - - - So long as Italy remained a province of the Greek empire it was politically allied with the Eastern Roman Horn of Daniel 8:9; but as the power of this receded, that of the Universal Bishop advanced; until Constantinople losing all dominion in Italy, the Bishop became the Eyes and Mouth of the Little Western Horn of Daniel 7 v 8; when, in its after growth, it reached the fullness - - -. The development of this Lamb Horned Beast and the Image of the Wounded Head, would consummate the healing of that head.

We have not yet quite arrived at that point in the vision. - - -”

Dr. Thomas wrote those words in 1868, but what a change has now taken place! The death of Pope John Paul 2nd, drew the attention of a billion people to Rome, with also a huge concourse of people assembling there. In Brazil, the home to the worlds' largest Catholic population, seven days of national mourning was declared. But attending the funeral in Rome were the leaders of the nations along with members of royalty; and the Square at St. Peter's was packed with people from all over the world. This was a revelation, indicating the favour and support which the papacy now has.

But soon a new Pope was to be elected, and again world interest was centred on Rome. A favourite was a former Cardinal of Munich. He once served in the German Army, but abhorring Hitler, he deserted in 1945 and was held as a prisoner of war by the Americans. This German - born eminent Catholic had the title “Head of Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.” This is the equivalent today of what used to be known as the Papal

Inquisition, which was greatly feared and respected. The cardinals met in the Sistine Chapel (built in the 15th century) supposedly having the dimensions of the Temple of Solomon as given in the Old Testament. Electronic experts swept the area first to ensure there were no hidden devices to eavesdrop on the deliberations. The cardinals then moved into St. Marth's House in Vatican City, where they relaxed between voting sessions. They had en suite rooms, which are air conditioned, and they were taken to the Sistine Chapel in coaches. In due course after initial failure to get a result, the former Cardinal of Munich was elected, and became Pope Benedict the 16th. The cardinals involved in this election had come from six continents, and were responsible for acclaiming the 265th pontiff. Outside, in St. Peter's Square 40,000 people watched for this result.

Soon the new Pope signified what his stance was to be; he said he wanted to continue "an open and sincere dialogue" with other religions, and said he was specially thinking about the younger generation. It is said that he will endeavour to follow on in the work of his predecessor of reimposing the Vatican's authority over the world church that was becoming increasingly fragmented and centrifugal, making the Church's views heard in a world increasingly at odds with them. This is a very significant development, it is a sign of the times. The Roman Church gains strength and confidence, a position far different from its low ebb of two centuries ago. The papal states were transformed into the Roman Republic in February 1798, when the Pope's temporal reign was declared to be at an end. On the 15th of February 1798, while seated on his throne, supported by his cardinals, the Pope was arrested by the French army of Napoleon, and was carried prisoner into France, where he died in August 1799. This was a low ebb indeed. However it was not the end. Napoleon being involved in Egyptian Military expedition, the Roman Church elected a new pope, Pius 7th. March 13th 1800, and the French leader made a concordat with him in 1801; but the Papal position continued to be shaky, the Roman State being abolished by the French in 1809; so there was neither republic or kingdom upon the Seven Hills. However by 1814 things began to "look up" for Rome. In 1814 came the treaty of Paris, which deprived Napoleon of his throne; and then the treaty of Vienna in 1815 reconstituted Europe, and the Pope was

delivered from captivity and restored to his pontifical throne. In May 5th, 1814, a little before re-entering Rome, the Pope characterized himself and his office by using the papal title of "the Vicar of the Deity upon earth". Gradually the Church of Rome established itself again. But over the years did not acquire the influence of earlier times. However now in these times it is acquiring some of its former respect, and this is a sign; it is something which Dr. Thomas looked forward to when he wrote of "the healing of (the) head", saying in 1868 "we have not yet quite arrived at that point in the vision - - -."

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS FOR MAY 2005

HAMBURG, NEW YORK, Corner Southwestern Blvd. & Pleasant Avenue.

Sunday: Breaking of Bread 11:30am

Sunday Afternoon Class: 1:45pm

Midweek Bible Class: Forestville, Hamburg & Fredonia

Every Third Week: Revelation Study

Work continues with one seeking the Truth, with the help of our brethren in Manchester.

As the summer weather is here, we rejoice at the opportunities to be together to enjoy its warmth after a cold and snowy winter and late spring.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 2.00 p.m.

Response from Australia for our magazine, so adding to our mailing list, indicates continuing interest in our endeavours.

Our thoughts and prayers are also with our Brethren and Sisters across the sea, for their help and guidance in personal contacts, which is another important aspect of the work, which we are privileged to share.