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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

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

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At the Table of the Lord

“Thou savourest not the things that be of God”

OFTEN WE FIND MUCH in the experiences of our brethren of old to help in our time of probation. This seems particularly so as we think about Peter. Concerning him, we are given much detail in the record of Matthew, from the time of his calling by Jesus as a fisherman by the Sea of Galilee, right until the time of Jesus' resurrection.

The first particulars we are given other than his calling by Jesus, are found in Matt. 14 where Jesus appeared to His disciples as they were in a ship on the Sea of Galilee. He walked to them on the water as we are told. Peter, who was in the ship, spoke to Jesus:

“Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.” v. 28

Jesus' reply was simply, “Come.”

“And when Peter was come down out of the ship, *he walked on the water* to go to Jesus.” v. 29.

How marvellous, and how inspiring to Peter. But his walk was short-lived for:

“...when he saw the wind boisterous, *he was afraid*; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying Lord, save me.” v. 30.

We remember that Peter had been a fisherman on this very sea for many years and no doubt knew that it was treacherous, given to sudden and violent storms. As he observed the boisterous wind, this knowledge would cause him to be fearful. But Jesus moved in compassion:

“(He) put forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”

This word doubt conveys the thought of two, implying a wavering between two ways. This was what caused Peter to sink, a doubt that he could do it, even helped by the Spirit, for he knew how treacherous was that Sea of Galilee. Jesus, perceiving his failure gently rebuked him, “O thou of little faith.” Peter afterward would be greatly moved by his experience of walking on the water even for a short time, and he would examine the nearly disastrous result of his doubts.

He would remember Jesus' rebuke and would strive in the future to put away doubts and fears.

How true it is, Brethren and Sisters, that two minds can rob us of the Spirit's limitless strength and can under-mine our determination to obey Jesus and His Father.

“Are ye also without understanding?”

The next mention of Peter is found in Matt. 15:15 as Peter said to Jesus, “Declare unto us this parable.” Jesus' answer was, “Are ye also yet without understanding?” The margin renders Jesus' words as “Are ye *even yet* without understanding?” As we look at these words “without understanding” we find they are from the two words, *not* and *wise or prudent*. Again, Jesus in His love, found it necessary to rebuke Peter. Let us ask ourselves why Jesus on these two occasions felt He must rebuke Peter. The first time it was to help him grow in faith and to forsake doubting. The second time it was to help his understanding of Jesus' teaching, so important to the growth in spiritual strength and wisdom. Let us take heed to this. We need these reminders also as they touch on our own varied weaknesses and needs.

“Thou art The Christ”

Peter is next spoken of as he answered Jesus' question, “Whom say ye that I am?” Matt. 16:15. Peter's answer showed an increasing perception and reverence.

“Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.” v. 16.

He knew Jesus as the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Son of God sent by His Father to be man's Redeemer. No doubt Peter came to this realization because of his experiences with Jesus, by his walking on the water at Jesus' command, by hearing Jesus teach in parables and explaining them, and also by the miracles which Jesus did to show the power of God working in Him. Jesus was pleased with Peter's response and said to him:

“Blessed art thou Simon, Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”

verse 17

What joy these words must have brought to Peter and what reassurance after his failures. Also what hope and encouragement in the way knowing the marvellous purpose of Jesus.

Yet being only a man of flesh, as we are, Peter soon lost the reality of what was Jesus' work as the *Christ*. In Matt. 16:21-23, we have read:

“... Jesus (began) to show unto his disciples, how he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised again the third day.”

Peter's reaction was human, understandable, and perhaps ours would have been the same.

“Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.”

Peter “took” him — we find the word means, laid hold on, giving the sense of active restraint. The word rebuke means straitly charge. This was Peter's response to Jesus. If he recognized that Jesus was indeed the Christ, should he not have grasped at least in part of what was required of Him in order to fulfil the law, the prophets, and the Psalms? With understanding, would he not have trembled to lay hold upon Jesus and to hinder Him? Yet Peter did so. Why was it so? Was Peter overcome by the feelings of his flesh? Jesus knew and immediately rebuked Peter saying:

“Get thee behind me, Satan: — for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” verse 23

Peter was to Jesus a Satan. We find the word comes from a Hebrew root meaning an accuser, an attacker, and a withstander. For example it is found in Numbers 22:32, when the angel spoke to Balaam:

“Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to *withstand* thee because thy way is perverse before me”

The word withstand is the root word for Satan. The angel was an adversary to Balaam. His reply to the angel was:

“I have sinned for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me:” verse 34.

Peter likewise stood in the way against Jesus' determination and struggle to go up to Jerusalem to die there as God required. Thus Jesus spoke to Peter, “Get thee behind me. (don't stand in front,

blocking my way, don't be a Satan to me.) How easy it is to be an adversary, to stand in the way of a brother who may be struggling. Why is it so? Jesus' words made it clear to Peter and can to us.

“Thou art an offence unto me: thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” Matt. 16:23.

Offence means a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall. We know how God regards those who put stumbling blocks in the way of a brother. Yet here was Peter, who had been quick to acknowledge that Jesus *was* the Christ, being a stumbling block to Jesus. For when he said, “Be it far from thee.” was he not hindering Jesus who probably was struggling against the same thinking in His own mind — “be it far from me.” What Peter did, though he may have felt it was in love for Jesus, turned out an occasion to fall instead. Why was Peter so unperceptive? Jesus was clear in His words “Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” To “savour” is to set the affection on, be careful for, or give regard to, and it comes from a root word meaning, the mind. The mind of man naturally thinks of the things of men, — what man likes, wants, needs. The natural mind is not careful for the things of God. Indeed the things of God compel one to crucify or mortify in the mind, the things upon which men set their affections. It is likely that Jesus was struggling to crucify in Himself this mind when along came Peter and augmented the thinking of Jesus' natural mind. Can we see why, though well intended, Peter was an offence, an adversary to Jesus? How easily we can find ourselves in the same case, Brethren and Sisters, if the things of the flesh are uppermost in our minds. There is a very powerful lesson here for us which we need to apply to our work together.

Did Jesus have this in mind when he immediately said:

“If any man will come after me, *let him deny himself* (savour the things of God, not of men) and take up his cross and follow me.” Matt. 16:34.

How necessary that we be ready to say NO to the impulses of the flesh which so readily come to mind and can be stumbling blocks to ourselves or to others. Jesus was about to take up His cross in reality, to crucify His flesh thus wounding the serpent in the head, as purposed by God from the beginning. We are striving to be followers of Jesus as His brethren. Can we not be helped by Peter's experience — helped to more faithfully savour the things of God and, by putting our affections upon them, take up our cross and follow Him.

Let us try to enter into Peter's mind as he began to realize that he *was* an adversary to the One he loved, hindering Him rather than helping. Would he not be ashamed, grieved, contrite, determined? Yes, all of these as Jesus again rebuked him, seeing the need in Peter.

Shortly after this, Jesus took Peter, along with James and John, up into a mountain where He was transfigured before them, so that they saw Him in all His glory as He will be in the Kingdom of God. Moses and Elijah were there in the vision talking with Jesus. Peter said:

“... let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias, not knowing what he said.”

Luke 9:33

also in Mark 9 we read Peter's same words and there is added, v. 6

“For he wist not what to say: for they were sore afraid.”

If Peter knew not what to say or did not realize what he said, how much better had he said nothing. Peter was failing to perceive, acting rather with his mind on the things of men. While Jesus, having His mind on the things of God, said, “Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen.” Matt. 17:9. Remember, God's words had just been heard by Peter, James, and John:

“This is my beloved Son, — hear him.” Mark 9:7.

Though Peter knew much help from Jesus and by it grew in spirit, he, like ourselves, Brethren and Sisters, had failed again.

“Peter — wept bitterly”

When Jesus, near to the end, was brought unto the high priest, it is recorded:

“But Peter followed him *afar off* unto the high priests palace.”

Matt. 26:58.

He was *afar off*, not near to Jesus in His time of testing. Indeed, he did not go into the palace until pulled in by John.

“But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple — and brought in Peter.” John 18:6.

Was he reluctant, fearful, still savouring the things of men? A natural reaction — perhaps if we were in Peter's position we might also have hung back. We know how, just a short time after this,

Peter denied the Lord Jesus three times just as Jesus had said he would. When the cock crew, we read, "The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter — and Peter went out and wept bitterly." Luke 22:61. Can we imagine the grief of Peter as Jesus turned and looked so eloquently, causing him to realize what he had done in spite of all his protesting that he would be willing to die for Jesus. He failed, still savouring the things of man, fearing for his own life and safety.

Why are we given such detail about Peter? Our brother, as we see him revealed for us in the Spirit's purpose, appears so very human — in many ways like you and me. He was anxious to do right, to be right, anxious to please, but not always moving in subjection to or in recognition of God's will. Obviously he needed help and it was given by Jesus in true love as He rebuked him, taught him, showed him where he needed to change. Jesus said to Peter:

"I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and *when* thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22:32.

Jesus perceived the great need in Peter, to be converted — turning from what he was to a more steadfast follower of Himself, one more ready to take up his cross and come after Him. Peter had failed on several occasions as we have seen, yet Jesus knew he could and would change greatly, for He said, "*When* (not if) thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Peter obviously *was* converted for we read all through the Acts of the Apostles, of his faithful work, witnessing and standing fast for Jesus' name. For example in Acts 5:29, he said to the high priest and officer of the temple, "We ought to obey God rather than men." This was his answer to those who had commanded him not to teach in Jesus's name!

What happened to Peter in this short period of time that now made him savour the things of God? He *was* converted, turned right about, resolutely putting behind that thinking which had so hindered. Now he could and did strengthen his brethren. What caused this to be accomplished? Was it not his experiences with Jesus, as well as his willingness to receive the teaching of Jesus, the corrections of Jesus, and the final poignant rebuke when Jesus turned and looked upon him. In reference to "looking upon Peter", we remember the words of Psalm 32:8:

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will *guide thee with mine eye.*"

As Jesus turned and looked upon Peter, watching him closely, giving him a message, conveying His sorrow, it smote Peter and "he went

out and wept bitterly.” Did not Jesus’ guiding eye help Peter to realize how much he had failed, how much he had put his affection upon his own things? He was from that point on, more clearly aware and determined to savour the things of God. Did not the works of Jesus, of the Spirit, accomplish this conversion on Peter’s willing and yielding heart? By these he was turned about and became more zealous and circumspect for the things of God.

Must we not profit from Peter’s experiences, Brethren and Sisters, for we are much like Peter, wanting to please God, yet failing often because we too “savour the things that be of men.” Peter did become able to strengthen his brethren, as Jesus had said, but through grievous experiences, and bitter weeping only, did he learn and become turned about.

We, who are also his brethren, can be strengthened by Peter’s example and by his words:

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ’s suffering . . . ; If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye . . . : For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God . . . : And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.” 1 Peter 4:12-19

These words plainly reflect the things of God. They can help draw us away from thinking as the flesh does. Let us give earnest heed to them in our walk toward His kingdom.

J. A. DeF.



Christadelphians Then and Now

AS THE MIND GOES BACK to the early part of this century the memory is fresh with the experiences of those who became Christadelphians then.

By refusing to go to Church, by denying Church doctrine such as the "Trinity", reproach was keenly felt as neighbours and so-called friends treated us with contempt. The position was aggravated when war started in 1914. Britain at that time had not forgotten her former greatness. She had recently emerged the victor in the war in South Africa with the Boers. Britain could boast of her empire, which was great throughout the world; Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India. At the coronation of Edward seventh no less than some nine princes who ruled over extensive Kingdoms, but were subject to the British Crown, followed the British King in acknowledgement of being subject to him. Patriotism was prevalent as Britain basked in the glory of her possessions and achievements. Those who were critical of Britain's military experts as in the case of the war against the Boers in South Africa were treated with utter contempt, and in not a few instances were threatened with violence.

David Lloyd George (who later became prime minister) was opposed to the war against the Boers in South Africa, not as a conscientious objector but from purely political reasons, and was subjected to threats against his person, being described as a "little Englander". When he went to Birmingham to address a meeting in the Town Hall there was a near riot. Police could not control the crowds milling round the Town Hall, by disguise he managed to get into the Town Hall, threading his way through the hostile crowds on the platform he delivered his speech to the reporters — when the crowd outside learned he had managed to get into the Hall the crowd became enraged; started throwing stones at the windows until there was not a whole piece of glass left. Had Lloyd George tried to escape from the building he would have been lynched. He only managed to get away by donning a police uniform and in this disguise avoided detection. This gives some idea of the intense patriotic feeling prevalent at that time.

In this explosive atmosphere the truth was preached. Many are the accounts of how the speaker had to escape and flee; but God's hand was not shortened that it could not save. In spite of the threats of violence there were well attended meetings to hear the proclamation of the Truth, and numbers increased. Strong opposition brought the Truth to the peoples' attention. The reproach felt by those in the Truth, with accompanying threats, caused a uniting of the members in helping one another, and a firm stand in proclaiming the gospel. That was the healthy position of the Christadelphians *then*.

Now Christadelphians no longer feel reproach. They are looked upon as respectable. In this friendly atmosphere there is no animosity. This tolerance within and without robs their preaching of any definition. The constriction of the "narrow way" is no longer felt. In the "broad way" there are no problems; all, of whatever sect enjoy a superficial companionship, worldly companionship, in which the things of this life are a major consideration. So that it is not surprising to find those who are "directors" of businesses uniting with the world in a partnership which shows clearly that they are of the world although professing to be "brethren of Christ".

Formerly Christadelphians were mostly of the working class, and education was confined to the teaching of elementary schools. Now the pattern has altered, and like Christendom higher education with the attaining of "degrees" has divided their flock. Those who have had higher education are looked up to, not because of their scriptural wisdom, but because of their having received the wisdom of this world. Of course, such may be "good speakers", but they cannot be in a scriptural sense. Their "fair speeches" may attract, but are powerless to convert. Higher education fills the mind with gentile wisdom, so that there is no room for the divine; in fact the poison of higher education prevents the mind from receiving the simplicity of the Truth. This was seen to a marked degree when the chief magazine had a number of articles on "The origin of Man". These were a blatant denial of the Truth, and show how those responsible leaders are not responsible. In the articles there was the worldly view doubting whether Adam was the first man, and spurning the idea of the serpent and the divine record of how the serpent brought about the fall of man. The Bible stands as a whole. If one part is rejected then no reliance can be placed upon the Bible; for who is to say which part is inspired conveying the wisdom of God, and which part is not.

It is understood that a movement has been started by some of the members to counteract the declension which in some degree is perceived. It will be found that however good the intentions of those are they will not be able to make any progress. Once the leaven has entered the false teaching will spread. Attempts to stop it are doomed to failure where the majority prefer the broad way. Hence the divine requirement is clearly stated by the Apostle Paul.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you,
and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6:17-18)

W.V.B.

“In defense of heavenly citizenship”

IN OUR STRUGGLE TO BE OBEDIENT unto our Father, we have given to us the knowledge of what it is that our Father desires we do. It is through God’s compassion toward us that He tells us what our lives must be like in order to be obedient unto Him, as He speaks to each and every one of us through our daily portions. Do we truly value this provision given us?

We need only to reflect upon the order in our lives, the peace of mind, the contentment we have as children of God, to know that we must truly be thankful for the consistency God has given us, in this world of change and confusion. God’s word has made this possible. His word has called us out. It is His word by which we are allowed to live in this world and struggle to be not of it, but only if we are obedient to that word and allow ourselves to be guided by its power.

To be not of the world is difficult. The world and its lustful ways developed through the rampaging of the flesh is always close as hand to pull down, to undermine, to take advantage and always subtly. All of us are influenced by this fleshly power as it seeks to rule our living. Yet, our Father has told us to resist this power and we know we must oppose it to be obedient, even though it means suffering will come in attempting to do so. Jesus knew He was to suffer many things, yet He savoured the knowledge and responsibility given Him by God. Jesus valued the hope before Him and was able to speak as one subject to the things of God, but in constant combat, struggling against the thinking of the natural man.

Paul in Philippians chapter 1 verse 27 applies this same discernment to ourselves as he tells us:

“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ, that whether I come and see you, or else be absent,

I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;”

This word “conversation” means “citizenship” and makes it clear that our seeking of citizenship must be as it becometh, or as the prime root of this word means “leads” to the good news granted through Christ. Again we are told this in Philippians chapter 3 verses 20 and 21:

“For our conversation (or citizenship — same word) is in heaven, from where also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like his glorious body, according to the working by which he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

This heavenly citizenship which has been granted to Christ because of His loyalty and obedience to God is that citizenship which requires our preparation now, as we await the return of Christ.

As we wait, must we not stand on guard and be ready to fight against any fleshly alliances with the things of the world, which might endanger our immortal citizenship? We must, and it is on this front that we must look to God and His mercy, in order to be supplied with that which is needed to fight this warfare in obedience to His commands. Paul tells us in II Corinthians chapter 10 verse 4:

“(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds),”

This tells us the weapons we are to use must be different from the worldly weapons of the flesh. This seems reasonable if we are striving not to be a part of the world, for if we are fighting against the things of the world and use the same weapons it uses, would we be any different from those of the world? We would not and how dangerous would be our position if we were to make use of these same weapons by joining in their same evil, making our citizenship undistinguishable from theirs.

This warns us that we must be very familiar with the weapons God gives to battle against the flesh so we do not use a fleshly weapon, which in our hands could only result in failure. We read in Ephesians chapter 6 verse 13:

“Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

This “evil day” spoken of, is it not the days allotted to us in our probation, the “evil days” in which our stand must be made? It is upon our record during these days, and how we have used God’s weapons that we will receive either honour in winning, or dishonour in defeat. The honour of citizenship or the dishonour of rejection at the judgment seat of Christ. Paul goes on in verses 14 through 17:

“Stand, therefore, having your loins girded about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, with which ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;”

To be armed with such spiritual help as truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation and the Spirit working on our behalf, allows us to be completely covered by the protection of God against all enemies.

We must ask ourselves if we are always arrayed with this armour? Do we make use of it in obedience, in the manner God has instructed us? We must take great care in the way we direct ourselves in our warfare, for we lack nothing because God has seen fit to supply every conceivable help. All that is left is the constant exercising of these tools, for as we practise, the more proficient in their use we become. One of these tools to keep our spiritual life alive is our daily portions. The more we use them learning obedience, absorbing their lessons and meditating upon them, the better we are able to struggle to overcome.

We know what the weapons of the world are: anger, jealousy, bitterness, envy, to name a few. When we feel the urge to choose one of these weapons to destroy whatever it is which is offending us, let us remember Christ, our example, how He obtained His citizenship through the use of only the weapons of the spirit: love, mercy, submission, and so, like Him choose one of these instead. A man is known by his conversation, that which proceeds out of his mouth, likewise, is not a man known by the weapon he wields? Is it love and peace we are using, or is it anger and strife?

We have been shown the path through our portions which lead to Zion, but there are many obstacles at the side of this path which can ensnare us, lead us astray and keep us from our goal. Let us remember that Christ has trodden this same path and His footprints are before us, therefore, let us attempt to follow them, using the weapons of the Spirit to combat the things of the world around us, especially our own lustful flesh. As we fight with the weapons of God, we are defending our citizenship laid up in store for us, being brought by Christ for those who have obediently sought to overcome by savouring the things given of God.

M.C.S.



A Journey to New York (*Part 10*)

The Winery and Springville Auction.

THE DAY WAS HOT AND HUMID. But this was no deterrent for we were willing and glad to go to, and see, whatever was suggested. Along the road from our young Brother's place, in the direction of Fredonia, westwards, was the Merritt Estate Winery. It was but a short journey, and its location quickly discernable by a huge barrel perched at the roadside with the name of the winery displayed. Turning off the road we parked the car in the vicinity of long rows of vines stretching away over a large tract of land. This of course was the reason for Merritts being called an Estate Winery. They grew their own grapes to make their own wine, supplementing their supplies from the produce of other vineyards in the vicinity.

It was a family concern, and there was a family atmosphere about it. They were pleased to show visitors around and explain their process of turning grapes into wine, from the pressing to the fermenting, and then the maturing until the final bottling process. Inside the winery the air was cool in comparison to the exterior hot humidity, and though somewhat on an old fashioned scale in being a relatively small business, nevertheless the cleanliness of the place and the scrupulousness of its processes were evident.

The young lady showing us around was competently articulate and neatly dressed, and when we finally ended up in the bottle store was pleased to let us sample the various wines without exerting any pressure for us to buy, patiently explaining the differing qualities of the various brands of wine.

It was a pleasant experience, not unique, for there is at least another Estate Winery in the area, but it was completely new to us, and most interesting, and the wine produced of an acceptable standard.

This visit took care of the morning for us, but more was planned for the afternoon. At Springville there was to be an Auction, and we were asked would we like to go, to which we readily agreed. This township of a little over four thousand inhabitants lies almost due east from Forestville at a distance of approximately thirty miles. We visualised a large sale room, with a counter and an Auctioneer holding the usual hammer, and surrounded with old furniture, antiques, and paintings. Well, there was indeed a sale room, but more like a miniature arena, with rows of rough wooden benches sloping down towards the sale ring. The items to be disposed of were live; ranging from rabbits, ducks and hens, in coops and cages, to

cattle behind stockades. The assembled crowd were no doubt typical members of the New York farming communities; there was no semblance in any of them of the gentleman farmer types seen on market days in the villages of rural England. Being a covered place, filled with animals and with people sat assembled, patiently waiting for the Auction to commence, while others moved around in the press of the throng to view the livestock with expert eyes; the wooden building had built up a temperature that was almost like an oven. The variety of the garb worn by these American farmers riveted our attention. Some wore stetsons and cowboy type boots, looking as though they had come straight from the "Wild West". Others were dressed in leather jackets; and again some wore no top coat, but sported the usual very colourful American tie. Here was America in the raw, a multitude of different types of individual, but not the slightest show of class consciousness, or aloofness by any; no segregating of themselves or sectioning of themselves away from their fellows, as can be felt on occasion in England, due to the studied attitudes of certain members of what England describes as its "Middle Class".

Yes, New York, in its way of life is different from Britain. More outgoing, less reserved, and the studied polish of speech and manner of some in the "Mother Country", markedly absent.

Outside the Auction building were open-air stalls, containing old books, and small items of antique or pseudo antique articles. Some of these objects appeared so rubbishy that we marvelled on how the stall-holders could make a living, or even "break even", by the sale of such things, for which there seemed to be few buyers.

But there were other stalls as well, filled to overflowing with the fruits of the earth, and being sold off at a brisk rate in small and large quantities. We sampled some cherries very reasonably priced and deliciously sweet; the abundance of such things markedly contrasting with the comparative frugality of what the Englishman can afford to buy and eat on his little excursions.

About fifteen miles north-east of Springville on a road that runs towards Orchard Park and Buffalo, is the small town of Colden of less than a thousand inhabitants. This was the next place of call after we had satiated ourselves with the various sights and interests of the Springville auction. The Colden Valley is a scenic place, and there was also much to attract our attention in Colden's Country Store. The building itself, and in many respects in the way its goods were displayed therein, was reminiscent of the old time stores of Britain before the days of "Super Markets".

Main Room: Doll-house items, "penny candles", old fashioned toys, books, dolls, greeting cards, player-piano rolls! Lamps, jewellery, turco paints, mechanical banks, baskets and antique productions.

Pantry: Gourmet housewares, foodstuffs, herbs and spices, tins, iron items, imported soaps and delicious jams.

Fabric Room: Thousands of yards of country calico prints. Hand-made pillows, quilting books and supplies, custom-made cosy flannel granny nightgowns, ribbons and laces. Lampshades, curtains and bedspreads or pillows made to order.

China Room: Wall clocks, Pfaltzgraff china, Williamsburg candles, pottery, decorative accessories and startlingly, **BLUE CALICO ENGLISH CHINA!**

Pewter Room: Wilton Armetale, clocks, homespun tablecloths, hand-woven rag rugs, place-mats, and candle holders.

In another room: German nutcrackers, pyramids, creches, old fashioned glass and handmade wood ornaments.

Quilting Room: Daytime and evening lessons offered, the proprietors inviting customers to learn how to make their very own future family heirlooms; presumably in the form of some long wearing, hand fashioned attractively designed quilting.

As we returned from this expedition, the very hot humid atmosphere which had foreboded a storm as the afternoon advanced, broke suddenly, the rain falling after the American pattern, not in the droplets of English rain, but as though a hundred thousand taps had been turned on in the sky above. The rain hammered the car and bounced from the road and we could not help but admire the confident skill of our driver as he continued on his way obviously used to such conditions so different to the rainy weather of our own land.

In New York when the weather breaks it does it in a hurry, and then rushes along into fine weather again, leaving behind only a temporarily sodden landscape.

The evening brought the assembling together of the "little flock" in an informal and yet impressively noticeable reverential manner; on such mid-week occasions the assembly "meeting from house to house".

Thus ended a day which was crowded with many interesting features totally new and vivid to English eyes.

to be continued.

“The Signs of His Coming and of the end of the World”

“Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity”

(Luke 21:25)

THERE CAN NEVER HAVE BEEN so much perplexity as there is at the present time. The leader of the great nation of the United States is at a loss on how to extricate the American Embassy hostages from Iran. In Korea there is a cloud of unease in wondering what might happen if the Communist North once again makes an attack over the thirty-ninth parallel.

The Middle East peace negotiations continue in a wrangle. Israel's Prime Minister rejecting an Egyptian demand that the Israeli Government should freeze a Private Member's Bill going through the Knesset proclaiming Jerusalem as an indivisible city and the capital of Israel. Egypt suggesting their demand should be met on this point before resumption of Palestinian autonomy negotiations.

These are only a few items which speak of the approaching distress for the world, “with perplexity”. Meanwhile the surge forward of arms production, and other deadly processes gains momentum.

A few years ago warships were like floating castles, formidable and powerful. But there is now perplexity over their growing vulnerability. Recently, and for the first time, full details have been published on the subject of the only modern warship to suffer a live missile attack. One missile only, launched accidentally from a fighter plane, crippled the American missile destroyer, the Worden. It was a Shrike rocket, designed to destroy radar devices of enemy vessels. The one in question, having a warhead of only sixty pounds exploded about a hundred feet above the destroyer showering the ship with splinters which killed or injured thirty men, and eliminated not only the radar system, but also the ship's lighting and radio. Many of the casualties and much of the damage was caused by the ship's aluminium superstructure. Every splinter that hit the ship created two more from the aluminium and razor-sharp shards of hot metal cut through the ship, injuring men far from the area of the main impact. What a problem; what perplexity, generated by this sad incident, raising an awesome question on what the future may have in store for men of the sea!

A naval spokesman was caused to appeal to industry to simplify equipment for new warships, for if costs continue to rise, the decline in the number of Western warships could force Nato navies into a position in which they could not sustain an initial onslaught and would have to strike first, something which today, was politically unacceptable.

Continuing the subject of missiles, it is found that the British Air Force has established a "no go area" off the East Coast in the eventuality of hostilities. Any aircraft straying into the zone protected by Bloodhound missiles based in Lincolnshire, Suffolk or Norfolk would be "engaged and destroyed". But the problem resulting is the inability to distinguish "Friend from Foe"; and to overcome this handicap is recognised to be a most formidable and expensive task. The various lines of defence are the airborne early-warning Nimrods, the "eyes in the sky", able to look over the horizon followed by Phantom aircraft with missiles that automatically adjust their flight path to bear down upon opposing aircraft. These small Phantom planes are to be served by large Victor refuelling tanker aircraft, able to supply the fighter planes while in flight. There are also Lightning planes for high-altitude warfare, together with Hawk jets, armed with air to air missiles. Then there are the deadly Bloodhound missiles with a range of about seventy miles, able even to intercept low-level approaches of the enemy, and also Rapier missiles to guard against low-level aircraft flying below the radar beams.

In a time of war, with the sky filled with these weapons streaking faster than the speed of sound, how are they going to determine between friend or foe? A problem indeed, causing perplexity!

Another difficulty, recently voiced, has been the result of stock taking of ammunition supplies stored for Nato in Germany. The following is an extract from the publication of the Committee considering this problem:-

"Different national forces under the command of the Commander in Chief, BAOR, in his role as commander in Chief, Northern Army Group, may not all be provided with ammunition supplies sufficient to fight a war of the same duration.

That being so, the commander, other things being equal, would have to plan for a period of conventional warfare no longer than that able to be sustained by the corps with the lowest level of supplies.

He might therefore be forced to recommend the premature introduction of tactical nuclear weapons into the battle. It is therefore of paramount importance that all allied forces plan for and stock up to the Nato minimum level."

It does not require a great deal of pondering to determine the degree of the perplexing problems concerning co-ordination of his forces of differing nationalities, confronting any Commander in Chief of Nato in Europe, in the event of war, however capable he might be.

But so far, there has only been a sketchy consideration of the political and military perplexity that continues to grow on a world wide scale. What of plans for the protection of civilians in time of war?

In Britain there is a growing concern amongst its leaders over the state of Britain's Civil Defence preparedness. The Government is puzzling on what to produce as a Civil Defence policy. What can it produce!? Four thousand nuclear war-heads are stored in Eastern Europe, ready to strike on Western European civilian areas. In Britain, at the time of writing, there are two hundred and fifty emergency planning officers who are supported partly by Central Government finance, and partly by the local authorities. These people have been sufficiently honest to admit there is virtually no protection for the population in time of war. The only instructions for these officers is to keep everything running as normally as possible until the very last moment in order to prevent panic and mass evacuation to areas where the three main elements of survival — food, water and shelter — will not be available.

The "stay-put" policy to keep people in their homes is based on the supposition that no part of the United Kingdom will be completely safe. A Government spokesman recently commented that only fifteen million out of fifty-six million are expected to survive a nuclear attack, and it would cost "billions and billions" to construct shelters.

What a problem! What perplexity, generated by such a consideration! ! Letters and telephone requests are apparently being made for guidance as what to do in the event of an emergency. The answer being given by officials and voluntary experts, virtually says they do not know; but a gloss is placed on their remarks by comments such as, "the building of shelters for the population should not be considered until an efficient volunteer home defence organisation has been set up."

As Jesus so aptly expressed it, it is a time of perplexity and distress.

D.L.

News from the Ecclesias

EDEN, NEW YORK: Grange Hall, Church Street.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m. Sunday School 1.30 p.m. Bible Class: Midweek: Forestville and Orchard Park. Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

World events, almost daily, add only fear and perplexity to governments seeking their own way. We know that the only solution to the earth's dilemma lies in the coming of the Lord Jesus. These many signs indicate that this longed for event may be close at hand. May we be found waiting in the Faith when He comes.

Gratitude is felt for God-given help, provided through the counsel of brethren and by His over-ruling in all our affairs.

J.A.DeF.

“PENTRIP”, Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread: Sundays, 11.30 a.m.

Bible Class: Mid-week.

We have been pleased to meet with our first Summer visitors on Sunday June 8th. Sister M. Slaney, Sister N. Francis and Sister Eunice Francis.

The long days and bright summer weather helps much for our mutual pleasure.

per D.L.

MANCHESTER: Ryecroft Hall Annexe, Audenshaw, Manchester.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread: 11.30 a.m.

Bible Class: 7.30 p.m. in the ante room to large hall,
Wednesday evening.

As August draws near we are looking forward to the visit of Brother and Sister DeFries from the States.

These opportunities for meeting those from so far away are much valued; affording the opportunity for counselling together, and thus helping to the day when, if faithful, there shall be no more separation, but all will be united and able to rejoice in one another's company for ever and ever.

W.V.B.