

JUNE 1984

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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"

"TURN UNTO ME"

"THE LIGHT OF THE BODY"

"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

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

"NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS"

"THE LOT - - - NOT 'FORTUITOUS SELECTION'"

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

“ . . . WHERE SHALL WISDOM BE FOUND? . . . ”

Today we have listened to the words of Job in response to one of his “friends” who, under the guise of helping, actually accused, pulled down, and surely hindered Job in his resolve to honour God. This spirit of Job is expressed in his words:

“My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit . . . 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 27:4-6

This determination enabled Job to endure the affliction that came upon him so overwhelmingly. Trials we face by comparison may seem much less, yet they are given of God to test each one’s particular weakness; and, to the one being tested, the trial is great, indeed seems grievous. If we can discern not only Job’s source of strength, but also perceive the holding to great efforts which he exhibited, strength can be found to face whatever the Almighty in His wisdom and righteousness places upon us.

In Job’s response to his adversary, Bildad, we find a clue to his strength as he asked the question:

“But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?”

Job 28:12.

How revealing of our brother’s mind, giving us a glimpse of the source of his resolve. He had previously spoken (verses 1 through 11) of God’s creation, its marvels, and man’s discovery and use of these for himself. Silver, gold is found by man and used advantageously — as well as iron, brass, sapphires. There are floods, yet they are bound by the Almighty; a covenant having been made that He would never destroy the earth again with a flood. God also sets bounds to the sea, beyond which it cannot go. All this, His creation, man perceives, uses, and indeed becomes accustomed to. Thus Job asks:

“Where shall wisdom be found ? . . . ”

There is something even more precious than gold, silver, brass, iron, knowledge, or scientific expertise. Where is it to be found? Job asks — and further tells us:

“Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living.” Job 28:13.

He is speaking of wisdom — man does not know the value or estimation of it, and does not understand its potential. Wisdom is not “found in the land of the living.” The word **living** gives the thought of flesh, living creatures. This divine wisdom then of which Job speaks is not natural to the minds of men, for it is given only of God. Why is it not found of men?

“Man knoweth not the price thereof; . . .” Verse 13.

This wisdom, so simple, so reasonable, so unfleshly is despised and considered to be of no import. If one spent his life searching for it as men searches for treasures, it could not be found. Job tells us:

“The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me.” Verse 14.

It cannot be bought with gold or silver. So again Job asks:

“Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?” Verse 20.

But can it be found by those who seeking to walk in integrity as Job, long for it, value it, and recognize their great need for it? Doubtless it can be, for:

“God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.” Verse 23.

“Then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.” Verse 27.

In His kindness, He shows us the way. **Declare** means to write, to commune. We have an example where this word is used when David said:

“The heavens **declare** the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.” Psalm 19:1.

We see the heavens every day, grow accustomed to their marvels. But when we stop to consider, comparing their glory to the works of men’s hands, how awesome, eternally ordained by His word! If we are sensitive and thoughtful, the heavens **do** indeed **declare** His glory.

“ . . . THE FEAR OF THE LORD, THAT IS WISDOM . . . ”

From Job's words in answer to his adversary, we see that he knew and valued his Father's counsel, His wisdom, and that he found its sublime help. What had he found?

“ . . . Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.”

Job 28:28

How simple a definition, how helpful for us in our searching for it! “The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.” Does this not explain why so few really know and understand, for how few truly fear the Lord. **Fear** as used here is not terror or fright; but, rather the word means reverence, trust, giving the thought of awe at such great power, belief in it, and reluctance to offend the Source of such mightiness. **Elohim** — the very name of God, speaks of His mightinesses. Do we not see and feel His power all around us — in His creation, in the storms which cause such great devastation; and, also in the gentleness of His mercy, in His overruling of our circumstances, and the provision of help when He knows it is right for us? All this is done in His wisdom. Recognizing this, if we reverence and glorify Him, we are beginning to know wisdom.

Was this what enabled Job to withstand his trials? — a **greater fear of God** than **terror of his circumstances**. Naturally in his position, Job feared — Could he bear it? How would he survive? How could he cope? All these fears of the flesh were subject to his greater feeling of reverence for God. How powerful then that fear of God can be. It was seen at Mt. Sinai as God spoke to His people. Their reaction was:

“ . . . all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off.

And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”

Exodus 20:18-19.

Here were very evident manifestations of God's mightiness, causing His people to be in awe. Moses replied:

“ . . . Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that **his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.**”
Verse 20.

Indeed His fear was before their faces! Moses put their position into perspective for them and for us, showing that God revealed His power, causing fear — “that ye sin not.” With a first-hand experience of that might — and fearing it — would they be inclined to disobey, to offend, to sin? It would not be wise. It would not prosper. Is this not how fearing God leads to wise behaviour — wisdom?

At this same time, Job continued:

“. . . to depart from evil is understanding.”

Does not the fear of the Lord help us to understand His Fatherly requirements and kindness to His children? We can show this perception by becoming aware of and ready to depart from evil. This is wise. This helps us to resist sin, as did Job.

“THE WHOLE DUTY . . .”

There have been others who desired and found this divine gift of wisdom. Solomon was one who sought it in order to rightly rule and judge his people. God was pleased to grant him that wisdom. Solomon wrote of wisdom in the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Perhaps he best sums up his findings by saying:

“Let us hear the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God, and keep his commandments:
for this is the whole duty of man.” Ecclesiastes 12:13.

These words — “**whole duty**” — are in the Hebrew, **one mind**, which comes from a root meaning to perfect. This word is used in describing Jerusalem:

“. . . The **perfection** of beauty, the joy of the whole earth . . .” Lamentations 2:15.

The **perfection** of man can come only as he faithfully pursues the work of wisdom, the fear of the Lord, and the consequent keeping of His commandments. In this, we often fail. Is it because something else overcomes our fear of the Lord — some other desire gets on top? An example is seen in David’s grievous sin concerning Bathsheba and Uriah. When Nathan the prophet revealed to David that he had sinned, had failed to fear God as his desire over-came wisdom, David’s prayer was.

“Have mercy upon me, O God, . . . For I acknowledge my transgressions, . . .”

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts:
and **in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know
wisdom.**" Psalm 51:1-6.

If David had known and used wisdom in his deepest thoughts instead of the lusts which lurked there, would he have failed? If in his heart was only the fear, the reverence of God, would he have sinned? He did fail; and this, under the Law could have brought death. But he was granted mercy because when reminded by God's messenger, he did indeed fear and sought for greater wisdom.

With this in mind, as we ponder the words and actions of David and those of Job, are we not better able to understand why Job sought wisdom and valued it? Why he called upon this divine counsel so often, and thus was able to withstand the sore trials which came upon him? Can we also discern why so few know this true wisdom, which IS the fear of God?

Paul recognized this, and helps as he wrote:

"I . . . came out to you with excellency of speech or of wisdom, (worldly wisdom), . . .
I was with you in weakness, and in **fear**,
and in much trembling.
And my speech and my preaching was not with
enticing words of man's wisdom, but **in demonstration
of the Spirit and of power.**" I Corinthians 2:1-4.

Why this demonstration of the Spirit and of power? To cause those whose heart could be reached to know the fear of the Lord, spiritual wisdom, and:

"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Verse 5.

Paul then went on:

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a **mystery**, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory:" Verse 7.

Truly if these rulers of Jesus' time had feared the Almighty, would they have dared to crucify His Son? How vital then is this hidden wisdom, this counsel of our Father.

Let us then, Brethren and Sisters, take hold of that strength and obedience which was Job's; let us strive to grow in the fear of the Elohim, of the mightinesses that are God's; for this, our whole duty, is for our perfection.

J.A.DeF.

TURN UNTO ME

We are helped as we read in Zechariah of how God dealt with Judah and Jerusalem through His prophet Zechariah, whose name means, "whom God remembers". God does remember all of His people and is mindful of how each one can be used to accomplish His purpose.

As we look at the work of Zechariah we see it was one of preaching to those of Jerusalem to encourage the building of the temple. It would seem that at the time of both Haggai and Zechariah that the work had ceased, after a return from captivity of approximately 14 or 15 years. The work of building God's house was not uppermost in the minds of those in Jerusalem because other concerns had taken pre-eminence. When we look at the first chapter of Zechariah the 2nd verse we read:

"The Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers. Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts."

God wanted His people to remember the covenant relationship between them, "turn unto me — and I will turn unto you". How needful it is for us as well to remember, for God wants us to recognize our place in His sight and to consider our ways before Him Haggai's words contained the same message, as he spoke in — Haggai 1.2:

"Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.

Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?

Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways."

When we look up the word "Consider" we find that it comes from three Hebrew words. The first meaning "to put" the second "heart", and the third "Jehovah". In essence to consider is to put the heart on the things of the Most High, lifting thoughts to a higher spiritual plane.

This was Haggai and Zechariah's purpose, to have the people consider their ways and be mindful of God's word to them and seek His help. In Zechariah 1:12 we see how God works with those who are away from Him in His desire to have them "turn to Him". :

“Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?

And verse 14 . . .

And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.

Therefore thus saith the Lord; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.”

God’s desire as shown by the words above, was to return to Jerusalem with mercies, those mercies consistent with His promise to His people, just as Zechariah 3:8: tells us:

“Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.

For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua: upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.”

Jeremiah speaks also of this Branch in Jeremiah 23:5:

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteousness Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Those in Zechariah’s time needed to be reminded of the Branch, God’s Son, for they had lost sight of this provision of God’s mercy and were in danger of falling short, not considering their ways.

How often we at times fail to consider our ways, getting caught up in the business and stress of daily living. Yet, the answer to our struggles lies in considering our ways and turning to Him, for only then can there be a visitation by His Spirit to strengthen and help.

As God's eyes, the eyes of the Spirit, are upon us, He brings indication to guide us in our struggles. Yet, how often we fight against these indications, not submitting nor valuing the mediatory power available to us through the BRANCH, the Lord Jesus.

Haggai and Zechariah's work was able to go on, despite difficulties because they both displayed right spirits. How can we develop such a spirit? is it not by remembering and considering our place in God's sight. If we can think in such a manner it will help us to see the bigger picture of God's purpose and get our thoughts out of ourselves.

Haggai and Zechariah's work was difficult, for it is an awesome job to motivate people in the opposite direction to which they are naturally headed. Yet, we know the work of the house was completed as we read in Ezra 16:14:

And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes King of Persia. And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the King."

From these words, we see that God was there overruling and guiding for the completion of His house. Not only overruling His people, but also causing those not of the house of Israel such as Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes to be used in a positive way to help accomplish this task. Can we see how easily the adversary can be overcome by God to be used in whatever manner He desires? In like manner, the most dangerous adversary of all, our flesh, too, can be harnessed and overcome, but only with God's help.

And so how uplifting are these words of God to us, as we consider our ways, turning to Him for help and guidance, to seek a permanent grafting unto that Branch provided in God's mercy.

M.C.S.

THE LIGHT OF THE BODY

“And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.”

(Gen. 15:17).

When God sends a vision in whatever way, it is to instruct. It was to instruct Abraham, it was also to instruct us. The pieces were the members of the body. A heifer, a she goat and a ram; there was also a turtledove and a young pigeon. The birds had not been divided, the other sacrifices had; but let us note each piece had been laid together again in its respective place. It was also dark, but God is the author of light. A smoking furnace and a lamp of fire was sent to those members laid together in conformity with the head. This had the effect of showing divine acceptance of all the parts of the body.

Now if the parts are not laid together (let us note **together**) and therefore not in conformity with The Head, will the Light and The Spirit Fire for the overcoming of the flesh be given? That which is the acceptable “Body” or sacrifice has to be together, not scattered asunder. That which is divided asunder and scattered is on the other hand obviously removed from the Lamp of God and the Fire of The Spirit.

Here then in this divine object lesson of so long ago, is a lesson in unity for today. Those who are scattered, but claiming to be of the same “Name” do not conform to this powerful lesson demonstrated to the father of the faithful. There are undoubtedly those influences that are constantly waiting to “scatter”. But the example for those who would be faithful is shown by the father of the faithful!

“And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.” (Gen. 15:11)

Those fowls would have brought about the scattering and spoiling of the members. They are the **very** epitome of those who would be “greedy” for themselves at the expense of the scattering and devouring of the parts of the Body.

Abraham, the father of the faithful and those who would follow him cannot allow this either in deed or in principle. What a great teaching for us in so few words, in such a wonderful object lesson from so long ago.

Moving on to another portion of scripture we read: -

“With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful;
with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright;
With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with
the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.

For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring
down high looks.

For thou wilt light my candle: and the Lord my God
will enlighten my darkness.” (Psalm 18:25-28)

Here again is reference to darkness. Not the actual darkness which Abraham experienced; but just as dark, no less. “Thou wilt light my lamp (or candle)”. Yes, God will do this. He will bring light to relieve the darkness of the afflicted people. But will He do this for the unmerciful, for those who are **not** upright, for the impure? No, of course not: when such depart from God, God will not lighten them in darkness. As men prove to be froward, God will wrestle with them, will show Himself froward, i.e. depart from them, and as He recedes their light is gone!

So the Body, whose parts are together, and from which the birds of prey are kept through faith of necessity have as a result members who are merciful, upright, pure, i.e. unsullied by contaminating influences that would spoil all the parts by infecting them by rotteness.

The Lord then will enlighten the darkness and light the candle, the lamp, which will pass amongst the parts, the members, as seen in that ancient and profound lesson which Abraham experienced.

Turning to yet another portion of scripture, we read again of darkness and light:

“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matt. 6:22-23)

What a lesson is here! If the “light” which is in an individual, or in a number of individuals who call themselves an Ecclesia is really darkness, how great indeed that darkness is!

The Body which Abraham saw, **had** the light, the lamp, in the midst of the parts. But the words of Christ show us that if the seeing of “the Body” is distorted, then though there

is a "seeing" of a kind, the whole Body is full, (let us note the word full) of darkness.

Here then is a theme, a principle of truth, If the eye is not single, if the "seeing" of the Body is not united where is the light of the Spirit of God? There will be no smoking furnace or burning lamp in such a situation. The seeing then being according to man's "seeing" is as nothing; indeed is less than nothing, for it is injurious professing darkness to be light, and those who are deluded by such a situation could hardly be in greater darkness. To not know they are in darkness when they really are, **is** very great darkness, like the blind man who apart from the warmth of the sun in the summer season, if left to himself does not know whether it is day or night.

How wonderful then is the instruction which emanates from that event enacted before Abraham those many years ago. Instruction of how God works with the parts (or members) laid in order along with the Head, Instruction to help for these last days lest faith becomes lacking, and then the fowls of disruption take over to the scattering and devouring of the parts, the members, of The Body.



I am the Light of the World. (John 8:12)

The importance of light even in the natural is seen when the fact is considered that — no light, no life. Without light in the natural, there could be no life and this fact is brought forcibly to our minds when we consider that light was the first work of God in the beginning. For the scene presented for our contemplation regarding the beginning of Creation is one of disorder and darkness.

“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”
(Gen. 1:3).

Without the operation of God in the beginning total darkness would still prevail, and which spiritually does as prophesied by Isaiah in chapter 60:1-2:-

“Arise shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.
For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.”

God said, Let there be light — light to shew the beauty and design of His Creation and in the first instance to the man he had made, and his companion. The light He called Day and the darkness He called Night. The Night however was not an interminable period of darkness, but a condition which must give place to the light of the morning. Is this not a lesson for us? As the light in the natural order enables men to see with the eye and thus to admire the handiwork of God, so also the Spiritual light “enlightening the eyes of the understanding” reveals the beauty or His purpose in Christ who said in John 8:12:-

“ — — — I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

The Apostle Paul explains in 2 Cor. 4:6:-

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

and concerning those who walk in darkness:

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the

glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (verse 4)

And so we are enabled to understand that this glorious light of the gospel reflected so perfectly in Jesus emanated from the Father, for **God is light** and in Him is **no darkness at all**.

What a blessing is the light and to possess the eyes which see.

“For blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.” (Matt. 13:16)

“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”

(Luke 10:21 and 23-24)

In the world, darkness predominates. It covers the earth, and the people are enveloped in gross darkness. Sin and death have had dominion for nearly 6,000 years, which represents to God's people a long night during which they wait for the morning, a morning without clouds. The assurance remains that in the pattern seen in the creation the night is a period fixed and marked off by God. The day must dawn when the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in His beams. Yes — Jesus was the light, and the fulness of this light was seen in the Gospel.

Whenever there has been departure from the Truth, the light of the Truth is always dimmed. Jesus said that the light condemned the darkness and if favour is to be found with the world it must be at the expense of the light.

The Gospel was preached to the brethren and sisters in the wilderness and made it quite clear that only the firstborn of God would be saved.

“ — — — Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn.” (Exodus 4:22)

And just as the firstborn of Israel were saved through the blood of a lamb, so only the firstborn of God constituting His family will be saved through the blood of the Lamb which taketh away the sin of the world — the Lamb who could say, 'I am the light of the world'. The instrument of God for bringing men and women to His light, is the Gospel, there is no other way, for this has been and will be effective in the saving of all who believe the Gospel from the time of Abel. Salvation is promised in the divine principle shown both in the Old Testament and the New that "the just shall live by faith."

" — — — but the just shall live by his faith."
(Hab. 2:4)

" — — — as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
(Rom.1:17)

" — — — for, The just shall live by faith."
(Gal. 3:11)

"Now the just shall live by faith: — — —."
(Heb. 10:38)

The saints have to follow the perfect example of the Light of the world, of whom it is written, in 2 Sam. 23:3-4:

"The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

"And he shall be as the light of the morning, — — —."

also in Psalm 112:4:

"Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: — — —"

The upright — who are they — those who rejoiced in the light which was the unfolding of "the glorious gospel". Abel, being enlightened, brought the first of his flock as an offering. Noah walked with God (in the light) obviously. Abraham renounced the darkness of Chaldea and through the light, rejoiced to see the day of Christ — and saw it afar off. And David in 2 Sam. 22:29 says:

"For thou art my lamp, O Lord: and the Lord will lighten my darkness."

And to Joseph, shut away in prison, wonderful light was given upon the calamity which was to overtake Egypt, enabling him to interpret the dream of Pharoah and to prosper according to the purpose of God, that he might become

ruler of the land. We note the very significant name given to Joseph by Pharoah — Zaphnath-paaneah, which means — the man to whom secrets are revealed, or the man to whom light is given; or another translation is, Saviour of men.

Let us remember that in the ark, there was only one window, one source of light, no other. In the tabernacle there was only one candlestick — one source of light, no other; both speaking most powerfully and confirming the message in John 8:12:

“ — — — I am the light of the world — — — .”

J.S.



The Signs of His Coming and of the End of the World.

“ — — — and the king of the north shall come against him — — — with many ships.”

The Soviet Union is a tremendous territory, bounded by the frozen Arctic wastes to the north; walled in by the Norwegian-Swedish peninsula to the west and again confined in the far east by the great mass of Chinese territory, except again in the far north. To its south of course lies Europe and Asia with Russia's outlet from the Black Sea through the narrow straits dominated by the Turks.

Why should such a land power be interested in the sea? Yet this is the case, and significantly so, because the divine prophecy foretold it long ago.

The NATO powers have much available suitable coastline, hence their formidable share of the world's shipping and maritime power. But recently NATO was greatly surprised by what has been described as the magnitude and effectiveness of Soviet naval manoeuvres in the area of the Norwegian Sea.

The head of NATO's Atlantic Naval Forces said his department had been “startled” by what the Russians were achieving in the suddenness of a naval exercise in which fifty destroyers, frigates, cruisers and submarines with fifty supporting aircraft took place.

It was not until manoeuvres actually started, with the Russian Navy having thrown a chain across the British, Iceland Greenland “gap” that NATO became aware of the aim of one of the largest training exercises ever seen in the Atlantic.

It has been voiced by a NATO spokesman that “what is really worrying the alliance now is the vast qualitative improvement of the Soviet Navy in the Kola area”. Over two-hundred operational submarines, including over fifty nuclear armed submarines with nearly seven-hundred vessels of all sizes and one-hundred and seventy bombers guard Russia's Baltic and Northern bases where the Soviet Union's largest nuclear arsenal is situated.

A new naval building programme including three more harbours is already preparing. Also the White Sea Canal connecting Leningrad shipyards with the Barents Sea has just been widened. In this area there are large sub-aquatic and subterranean tunnels where Russia can hide its submarine fleet, thus protecting it from attack. This is quite an achievement when it is recognised that recently Russia produced submarines weighing twenty-five thousand tons, which have been undergoing tests in the Northern and Polar Seas where ships of this kind can travel under the ice.

So the setting for the ancient prophecy is prepared, when power of the north shall come "with many ships".



News from the Ecclesias

EDEN, NEW YORK — Grange Hall, Church Street.

Sunday: Breaking of Bread: 11.30 a.m.

Sunday School: 1.30 p.m.

Bible Class: Midweek: Forestville, Orchard Park.

Alternate Week: Revelation Study.

Our minds and hearts have been joined with our brethren and sisters on the occasion of the Manchester April Gathering.

As trial and difficulty, as well as help and strengthening have been experienced, we are grateful for the hand of our God and for the thoughts and supplications of our brethren and sisters. We are mindful of those in illness and pray that healing may be granted if it is His will.

By the time this is in print one from here, God willing, will be visiting our brethren and sisters in England.

J.A.DeF.

“PENTRIP” Black Rock, Portmadoc.

Breaking of Bread: Sundays 11.30 a.m.

Bible Class: Midweek:

We were grateful to be able to attend the Fraternal Gathering at Manchester.

We now look forward to the summer months knowing that arrangements are in hand for visits here.

per D.L.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall Annexe, Audenshaw, M/cr.

Breaking of Bread: Sundays 11.30 a.m.

Young People's Class: Sundays 2.00 p.m.

Bible Class: Thursdays 7.30 p.m.

We were grateful for message received for the Fraternal Gathering, an assurance of the unity which is so essential.

Various enquiries received indicate work that is required of us; in this we realise we need His guidance and help.

The lot — — — not “fortuitous selection”

The magazine styled “**The Apostolic Witness**” asks the Remnant exactly how “God shows” whom He has chosen today.

Not wishing to be disputatious, but desiring to get to the focal point of a previous article in the “**Apostolic Witness**” may we ask in reply, “Does God ALWAYS show (bearing in mind the History of the Truth in these times) by a ballot of members, those whom He would have to lead in His ways?”

To go back to the initial matter of the disciples seeking to replace Judas Iscariot with Matthias, to make up the twelve Apostles. May a further question be raised. Where is the proof that when “they” gave forth their lots everyone participated in a say in the matter? Was the giving forth of their lots the agreed determination of the Ecclesia to find out through God’s guidance something which they could not know and could not determine of themselves?

“**The Apostolic Witness**” also comments:

“ — — — the lot was not “fortuitous selection” but the means whereby the Lord, in answer to the request of the prayers of the disciples, showed whom He had chosen through the intelligent participation of the disciples. The Greek reads “And they gave lots FOR THEM, and fell THE lot on Matthias”. Lots were cast for both by the disciples as they saw fit thus exercising intelligent choice; but the outcome was overruled by God so that the lot fell on Matthias — — —

The incident clearly shows that He was working through His own institution, the Ecclesia, in the participation of ALL the members. That this can be twisted to represent the decline to Nicolaitanism is surely quite illogical reasoning, for he that is ready to see a pope in everyone is ready to be the biggest and grandest of popes, should opportunity arise.”

It is divinely recorded, “So hast thou also them that **HOLD** the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate” (Rev. 2:15). When Nicolaitans are upheld or voted for, this is Nicolaitinism. In such instances the Ecclesia, or the majority feel sure they are in a right position and therefore it is the right thing to do to vote for the hierarchy; it is thereupon believed that all things laid down by such leaders who they support are, of necessity, to be accepted as requirements of the Truth.

To those who would be delivered from such a decline, may consideration be given to what was a necessary part of the required outlook of members of God's Ecclesia. Members cannot always determine what should or should not be done. Is not the answer in certain problematic circumstances for the Ecclesia to seek to God in prayer for His direction and guidance? Rigidity of all personal views; which sometimes have been propagated and channelled through the subver-
 vident majority, and thereafter imposed upon the whole of the Ecclesia, can be held in check if sufficient regard is paid to a need in certain matters to seek for God's guidance, for the Ecclesia to be shown what should be done. The outcome of events under His overruling hand, though not apparently ostentatious, indicate the direction to be taken.

"The Apostolic Witness" believes that having appointed two, the disciples exercised intelligent choice to pick one of these two to make up the number of the Apostles. So having reached a state where they did not know, they then proceeded to use their intelligence to conclude the matter. It was therefore mans' intelligent choice. If this be the case, was it God's choice? This difficulty is avoided by the Apostolic Witness, saying "the outcome was overruled by God." Nevertheless the Apostolic Witness declares "Lots were cast FOR BOTH — — AS THEY SAW FIT — — "

Such reasoning brings the erroneous conclusion that eleven Apostles were directly chosen by Christ, the twelfth ultimately, was the intelligent choice of all "as they saw fit" but divine overruling was seen in the choice. One final question — Is there anything fortuitous about the Lord's lot?

