

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

*Pleading for a complete return to Christianity
as it was in the beginning.*

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A THOUGHT FOR THE YEAR, 1957

Be strong, be brave, have no fear, do not stand in
dread of them; for the LORD your God will be going
with you, never failing you nor forsaking you.

(Deut. 31 : 6. Goodspeed's translation).

Facing the Future

(Matthew 9 : 2 ; Mark 6 : 50 ; John 16 : 33).

WE believe that the writers of the Scriptures were inspired to write the very words which best expressed the meaning intended. This is marvellous, especially when we remember that much of the New Testament was written by men termed 'unlearned and ignorant,' in the sense that they had not been trained in the rabbis' schools nor did they hold official positions. Yet such men, although writing in Greek, a language not their own, infallibly set down the words conveying what they wanted to say.

Be of Good Courage

A striking illustration of this is found in the three texts at the head of this article. In each of them the words 'Be of good cheer' are used by Jesus. Two Greek words are translated in the New Testament by the exhortation 'Be of good cheer.' One is from the verb *euthumeo*, which means 'Cheer up' in the sense that the worst is over. Very often we think of the Holy Spirit in this light, because Jesus spoke of him as the Comforter. Our usual idea of a comforter is one who consoles, who tries to brighten us up when we are depressed or sorrowing. But the word itself helps us to understand its meaning. It derives from *cum* (with) and *fort* (strong): with strength. The Comforter therefore is the strengthener, the helper.

In the passages referred to the writers meant something more than is conveyed by *euthumeo*, so they used a different word. This is derived from the Greek *tharseo*, and means 'Courage: the worst is yet to come.' It was the word used by Greek soldiers when the shock of battle was imminent, and by sailors when the storm was about to break over the ship. It meant that they were to brace themselves and stand firm to face whatever might come.

Three Cheers

The gospel records give three occasions when the word was used by Christ. In the first instance 'Be of good cheer' was said to the paralytic who was brought by his friends to Jesus. As he lay helplessly at the feet of the Great Healer, Jesus saw there was something more needed than physical healing. Sin was the cause of the man's condition. Medical science is only now learning that paralysis can come from mental conflict, a suppressed sense of guilt and shame, or fear of the consequences of a wrong deed. This man's sin must be dealt with first, so Jesus bids him to 'Take courage: your sins are forgiven.' His courage would be needed to set right that which had been the cause of his affliction. The worst is yet to come for him, but 'Be of good cheer' the Son of God tells him.

The second instance is when Jesus walked on the water to His disciples. They were terrified, thinking they saw a ghost. But the well-loved voice of their Master reassured them: 'Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.' They were to take courage, for the worst was yet to come. Worse storms and more dreadful experiences were to come upon them than they knew that night. But they were to know the abiding presence of the Comforter, the Helper, the Strengtheners through them all.

The third incident is in the upper room when Jesus is with the disciples for their last meal and talk together before His crucifixion. Strange indeed that when it was the Saviour who was to undergo the agony of Gethsemane, the unspeakable horror of a world's sin, the utter loneliness of being forsaken, the physical torture of flogging, the mock trials, the derision of the soldiers and finally the shame and appalling pain of the cross, no word of cheer was offered to Him. It is He who cheers His disciples with the words, 'In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.'

Truly the worst was still to be for them. They were to tread 'the way the master trod,' to drink of the cup that He drank of, to be beaten, imprisoned, suffer reproach for His sake, be cast out by their own, and finally to die for His cause. But 'Be of good cheer,' for through it all they would rejoice 'that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name'; they would remember His words, given in Matthew 5:10-12, and they would 'rejoice and be exceeding glad.'

The Meaning for us

What a message with which to enter a new year! Cannot we humbly and reverently apply these words of the Christ to ourselves? Internationally, politically and morally a darkening prospect lies before us. No self-delusion can persuade us that the future is bright. This is not to be a prophet of doom, but to face plain facts, unpleasant as they are. It may be that the worst is yet to come. But through the very darkness and hopelessness of the future the light of Christ shines the clearer. Through the very fear in men's hearts the confidence that comes through Him who overcame the world is all the more assured. When there is nothing stable, when change and decay are all around, when 'the things that are shaken are removed,' we know that God abideth faithful. He is the Lord; He changes not; and Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. There, in God's unchanging faithfulness, is the guarantee that

'Through the grace of Christ our Saviour
All will be well.'

Taking a last look at the three occasions when Christ exhorted to 'Be of good cheer' we find another remarkable fact. In the first case the paralytic is told to have courage because his *past* can be made right; in the second the disciples in the boat must be courageous because of the *present*, for their

Saviour is now with them ; and in the last instance these disciples are to be of good courage because in the *future* they will prove the unchanging faithfulness and abiding presence of Christ through His Holy Spirit. Thus the exhortation covers past, present and future. What God was and is He will yet be. Our salvation is a complete one : from the penalty of past sin, from its present power and from its future presence.

So with this assurance we need not fear entering another year, for 'He is faithful that promised.'

EDITOR.

Cruel and Wicked

"The nature and temper of the regime that we have to deal with have been further revealed by the decision to expel 13,000 British and 9,000 French citizens from Egypt, none of them with more than £20 in their pocket. It is a cruel and wicked decision affecting thousands of humble and helpless people."—*Daily Telegraph*, Nov. 26, 1956.

IT IS WAR ITSELF that is 'cruel and wicked' and very largely because in fact it is always the humble, and the helpless, and the innocent, who suffer its consequences.

War is not a chivalrous, gentlemanly game played with due regard for the rules and subject to penalties for fouls ; it is an indiscriminate, brutal, unjust and immoral force.

The bombing of so-called 'military objectives' in this country by the Luftwaffe gave rise to raging anger and resentment against such 'barbarians' as the Germans, but subsequently our own 'obliteration bombing' policy made it clear that civilians are in fact the 'military objectives' of modern war. But the consequences of war, whatever the alleged justification, are inescapable and inevitable.

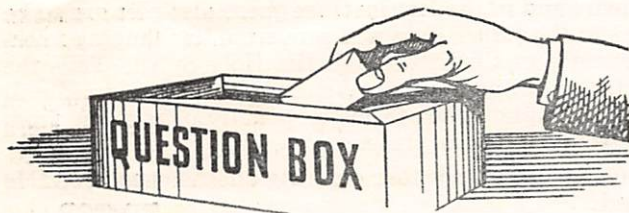
Of course innocent people will suffer ; of course cruelty and injustice and brutality will be rife ; of course there will be misery and hunger and distress ; these are invariably the consequences of war, and those who grandiosely declare, 'not peace at any price,' should ask themselves what is the price that the innocent, not only in this country, but all over the world, will have to pay for this lack of imagination, and worse still, lack of integrity among the so-called leaders of the world.

It is only when it is recognised that it is war itself which is unjustifiable and immoral that peaceful settlement of disputes instead of being a meaningless slogan will become a reality.

—SYBIL MORRISON,
Peace News, Nov. 30, 1956.

Our Choice

Life is a serve-self restaurant.
Piled high with joys that mortals want ;
And each who comes to earth may choose
What he will take and what refuse.
We pass along from day to day,
Viewing life's glittering display—
And at the end the cost is paid,
According to the choice we've made.



CONDUCTED BY
L. CHANNING

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Q. I have heard it claimed, on the basis of Acts 2:6-8, 11, that the Apostles were given a miraculous knowledge of foreign languages in order to help them in their missionary work. Is this claim correct, in view of the following? (1) We never find the Apostles afterwards making use of the gift for this purpose. (2) Such a gift would hardly be needed as Greek was spoken throughout the ancient world. (3) Paul says in 1 Cor. 14:2 'For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto me, but unto God for no man understandeth him.' Does not the statement in Acts 2:6 'Every man heard them speak in his own language' infer that the miracle was worked on the ears of the hearers?

A. The question is an involved one. It is best answered in two parts. What was the gift of tongues? and for what purpose was the gift given?

(a) *What was the gift of tongues?* The gift of tongues, whether given as a result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or the laying on of Apostles' hands, appears to have always been the same. Only the manner of imparting the gift varied (Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 19:6).

From the consideration of Acts 2, verses 4, 6-8, 11, it seems quite clear that under the inspiration of the Spirit the Apostles spoke in various languages, the languages of the nationalities afterwards mentioned. The testimony of the hearers is against the idea that they were under the power of the Spirit in any way.

In verses 11-13 they speak as though a miracle had been performed on them, but as a matter of fact, they are surprised that by Galileans, their own languages are being spoken, and are unable to account for it. Again, seeing that the nature of the gift of tongues is the same throughout the New Testament, although the method of imparting it varies, we would find that, if the miracle was upon the ears of the hearers in Acts 2, then it would be so in the case of the Corinthians. But the reverse is true. Those at Corinth who were without knowledge of the foreign language being spoken, were unable to understand it without an interpreter. Paul directs that if an interpreter is not present, then the inspired man is to keep silent (1 Cor. 14:9-11, 16, 27).

It is claimed by some that the gift of tongues was not the actual ability to speak foreign languages under the power of the Spirit, but consisted merely of ecstatic utterances in unknown tongues. In support of this, it is argued that the usual Greek word for language, the word *dialektos* (from which the English word *dialect* comes), is not used in connection with tongues in 1 Cor. 14, but the Greek word *glossa* (from which the English word *glossary* is derived).

It is further said that those under the Spirit were given the promise in Mark 16:17 of speaking in 'new tongues.' Again, Paul speaks of 'unknown tongues' (1 Cor. 14), of there being 'many kinds of voices' (1 Cor. 14:10), even of tongues of angels (1 Cor. 13:1). Some of the points that the ques-

tioner has made are also put forward in support of this theory. But it seems to the writer that the more such arguments are examined, the less convincing they become.

The word *dialektos* is used in connection with the gift of tongues in Acts 2, verses 6 and 8, and is translated in the R.V. in both cases by the word *language*. In the other references in Acts where the word 'tongue' is used, notably 2:11, 26; 10:46; 19:6 and throughout 1 Corinthians, chapters 12, 13 and 14 (with the exception of 1 Cor. 14:21) the word *glossa* is used. This latter word is capable of wide application. It is used to describe the manifestation that accompanied the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:3). It is sometimes used for the actual organ of speech, as in Mark 7:33; Phil. 2:11; James 1:26.

In connection with the 'new tongues' promised in Mark 16:17, apart from the fact that the R.V. shows that the word 'new' is not found in some manuscripts, it surely means that under the power of the Spirit, some would speak in languages that, though not new to some of the hearers, would be entirely new to the speakers. The argument on the word 'unknown' tongues, as found in 1 Cor. 14 has no foundation, for the word is not in the original. It has been rightly omitted altogether in the R.V. Likewise, no argument can be drawn from Paul's reference to the tongues of angels in 1 Cor. 13:1. Paul does not there say that he could speak with the tongues of angels, or ever would be able to do so. He says 'If' (see R.V.) he could even do this, and had not love, it would avail him nothing. He uses a similar argument, though in a different connection, in Gal. 1:8-9. The gift of tongues then, was not a miracle on the ears of the hearers, nor the speaking of so much gibberish, claimed to be 'new' or 'unknown' tongues, but the ability to speak under the inspiration of the Spirit, in a clearly recognisable foreign language, which the speaker had not learned.

(b) *For what purpose was the gift given?* The assertion that the gift of tongues was given to the early Christians to aid them in missionary work is without a vestige of support in the New Testament. There is not one single instance of the gift having been so used. Indeed, the only instance we have which has any bearing on the matter shows the reverse to be true. In Acts 14:11, Paul and Barnabas seem not to have understood the language of Lycaonia, the intentions of the people being conveyed to them by their actions. Again, such a gift of speaking foreign languages would not be needed for this purpose, as the questioner has rightly observed, for normally Aramaic or Greek would have been understood almost everywhere in the ancient world.

Again, the gift of tongues was never used for *teaching*, in the accepted sense of the word. At Pentecost, the teaching came through Peter alone, *after* the manifestation of tongues. This is in harmony with what Paul says in 1 Cor. 14. The Corinthians, as with some to-day, were elevating the gift of tongues above every other gift. Paul tells them that, as far as the church was concerned, this was the least valuable of the gifts, since it was not edifying, not a teaching medium. The gift of prophecy was given for this purpose. Note particularly 1 Cor. 14:3-5, 9, 11-12, 16-19, 24, 39.

The gift primarily involved praise and prayer to God. This is consistently indicated throughout the New Testament. For instance, Acts 2:11 says, '... we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.' Acts 10:46, 'For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.' Acts 19:6, '... and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.'

What then was the purpose of the gift? The answer is that it was a sign to unbelievers, whether Jews or Gentiles. It was so used on the day of Pentecost. Peter acknowledges the same manifestation in the household of Cornelius, to be a sign to himself and his Jewish brethren (Acts 11:15-17,

15 : 8). It was convincing proof to the former followers of John the Baptist that Christ had come and that the Holy Spirit had been given (Acts 19 : 2-6). Paul clearly teaches the same purpose of the gift in 1 Cor. 14 : 22). He argues that there was therefore not much value in such a gift being exercised in the church, and a man so doing without an interpreter merely spoke to himself and to God (1 Cor. 14 : 1). He therefore allowed it only when an interpreter was present (verses 27-28). It was wrong even to be used in front of unbelievers, when everyone was speaking at once, or when the languages spoken were not understood by unbelievers (1 Cor. 14 : 22-23, 27-28).

Please note.—We regret that we cannot answer questions by private correspondence. All questions submitted to the writer will be dealt with in strict rotation through this column. Supplementary questions are welcomed, within reasonable limits, in regard to any question already answered.

L. CHANNING.

It Depends on You

If Christ is

- The Door (John 10 : 7) you are the doorkeeper to open or close it for others.
- The Light of the world (John 8 : 12) you are the bearer of that Light to the end of the earth.
- The Vine (John 15 : 1, 5) you are the fruit-bearing branch that draws life from that Vine.
- The Bread of life (John 6 : 35) you are to break it to feed those who hunger.
- The Truth (John 14 : 6) you are the Truth-bearer, interpreter of the Truth.
- The Bright and Morning Star (Rev. 22 : 16) you are to brush aside the clouds that veil His beauty.

Oh glorious truth, that we are an indispensable part of the great plan and programme of God.

Christ has no hands but our hands to do His work to-day ;
 He has no feet but our feet to lead men in His way ;
 He has no tongue but our tongue to tell men how He died ;
 He has no help but our help to bring them to His side.
 We are the only Bible the careless world will read ;
 We are the sinner's gospel ; we are the scoffer's creed ;
 We are the Lord's last message, given in deed and word :
 What if the type is crooked ? What if the print is blurred ?

We are Authors

YOUR LIFE is like a book. The Title Page is your name. The Preface is your introduction to the world. The Pages are a daily chronicle of your efforts, trials, pleasures, discouragements, ambitions and achievements. The principal Subject of your book may be tragedy, comedy, romance, science, religion, literature, or business. Day by day your thoughts and acts are being inscribed.

What you will record on their remaining pages is of vital importance. Hour by hour, record is being made which must stand for all time. One day 'The End' must be written. Let it then be said of your book that it is a record of noble purpose, generous service and work well done.

'Lord, Behold He whom Thou Lovest' . . .

WERE I asked which two Bible stories give the clearest indications of divine inspiration, I would answer, with only the slightest hesitation, Abraham's offering of Isaac and the resurrection of Lazarus. The one is a divine way of establishing faith as an example to all mankind, the other a divine use of human love. Love is the keynote of both incidents, and both are prophetic of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In the Lazarus story there is a delightful picture of two sisters. Not that we are told much about them, but enough for us to see them as real people. Martha, practical, attentive to duty, alert to discover, when He was yet some distance away, that Jesus was returning to Bethany. Mary, emotional, loving, 'content to let the world go by,' sitting at Jesus' feet listening to His words. Those two may be known by the words they speak and the things they do. But with Lazarus it is not so. He utters no word, performs no deed; just falls sick and dies. 'A nonentity' would describe him; did not the record say: 'He whom thou lovest.' In that simple phrase Lazarus is given character, disposition, and all that goes to make personality. Jesus, who 'needed not that any should testify of man,' had looked upon and associated with Lazarus, and knew him as one whom He could and did love with some special regard. That he was also beloved of his sisters is implicit in the story.

It is strange that this important event should have mention in one only of the Gospels. The feeding of five thousand is recorded four times, but Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us not a word about Lazarus, not even to mention his name. Had we not John's recording of it—written as we suppose many years after the other Gospels—this story would have passed into the silence of the many things not recorded which Jesus did. That this silence is divinely imposed is certain. No writer, with knowledge of this event in his possession, would have omitted it from his record; and no human telling of the story could have left it where it is. The deep-seated curiosity of mankind, that is for ever seeking for and probing into the hidden things of life—which to-day manifests itself so dreadfully in the newspapers of the world—if it had been let loose on this story, would have left records very different from that which John alone gives us. The selective mind of the Holy Spirit is evident, not only in what is revealed, but in what is withheld.

That the disciples were touched with the same sense of curiosity as others we know from what is said about them. They loved Jesus. They talked about Him among themselves and, on occasion, in wonderment, behind His back as it were, for He was a mystery to them. In this story of Lazarus there was much to baffle them. When there came to Jesus that most impelling call of anxious love, so significant in its phrasing, 'Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick,' we are told, 'He abode two days still [inactive] in the same place,' as though He waited on events. What could His disciples do but watch and wonder, for this was something outside their experience of Him. It was out of character of their Master as they knew Him, that He should receive an appeal with a great sense of urgency about it and allow it to pass unheeded. Is it not certain that they, who had seen so many wonders performed, would have similar thoughts to that expressed by some of the Jews: 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have caused that even this man should not have died?'

That Jesus was aware of the effect His inaction had on them is clear from what He said to them: 'This sickness is not unto death,' but their

wonderment would not be lessened when, two days later, He told them, 'Lazarus is dead.' His first words and this 'plain' statement were a contradiction, which only found explanation by what afterwards took place.

A vital part to the understanding of the story is that to which John draws his readers' attention: 'Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus': an individual affection for each of them. It is out of love the message is devised and sent, and it is to love the appeal is made. Love is implicit in the story's every word. This was to prove an ordeal for them all, especially keen for Jesus, because He was taking their affection and using it as a means of achieving a hidden purpose. The story tells of a sacrifice akin to that of Abraham in the offering of Isaac, 'the son whom thou lovest.'

As Jesus drew near on His return to Bethany, the two sisters met Him, first Martha, then Mary. The message they sent to Him, so expressive of their longing that He should come to them, was doubtless in their minds as they each approached Him. That longing had possessed and sustained them while they watched their brother die. Even now that he is dead it lingers in their thoughts, for they were stricken indeed; not only had they lost their brother, but they were troubled also because He in whom they had put their trust was not there when they most needed Him. So now that they meet Him it is with reproach, each using the same words: 'Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died.' The words were true. As far as records go, at no time was Jesus confronted with death but that it seemed to act as a challenge to Him, to prove His power over it. So true is this, He could say to His disciples, 'I was glad for your sakes, I was not there.' Had He had been there, Lazarus would not have died. His death was a necessity to some divine purpose. Which brings us to the heart of this story.

Scripture speaks of 'the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world'—that is, in the mind of God before time began. The working out, in time, of this great purpose is traceable in the divine records, and its climax, the sacrifice of God's Son—'the Lamb slain'—is now rapidly approaching. The whole structure of events which, under the providence of God, had worked together since the creation of man to this moment of time, is made to hang, in the wisdom of God, on the gossamer thread of the faithfulness of a handful of men, whom Jesus had gathered around Him. Only a few days after the restoring of Lazarus to his friends, Jesus uttered that prayer in which He passes judgment on what He had accomplished, saying, 'I have finished the work thou gavest me to do,' and associated that work with these men; 'I have manifested thy name unto the men thou gavest me, and they have believed.'

That statement was anticipatory. Not yet had they reached the highest summit of faith. The love for each other which bound these people of Bethany with Jesus was to be an avenue leading to events through which faith was to be established on earth. That is why Jesus said: 'I am glad I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe.'

Someone has pointed out that the New Testament refers to the miracles of Jesus sometimes as 'signs and wonders,' or as 'signs,' but never as 'wonders,' which is taken to imply that the display of power—the wonderful part of a miracle—was of less importance than the sign it was intended to convey. When Jesus tells His disciples, 'I am glad for your sakes I was not there, to the intent that ye might believe,' was it the raising of Lazarus He had in mind or was it something else? The disciples knew that He had already raised the dead and we suppose they would readily

believe in His power to do the same thing again. We think the point of significance lies elsewhere.

The one certain thing in nature is not life but death, and the most dreadful thing about death is the corruption which inevitably follows it. In these days it is sought to hide it with flowers, in New Testament times they anointed the body. Though obscured it was there inevitably.

When Jesus told those around to remove the stone from the tomb, Martha, forthright and outspoken as always, protested, saying, 'Lord, by this time he stinketh.' The dread concomitant of death was instantly before her eyes and she shrinks from it. She could believe in a resurrection of the dead at some remote time—the last day—but not in the defeat of dissolution which, in her mind, had already taken hold of her brother's body. But Jesus reproved her. 'Said I not unto thee . . . thou shouldst see the glory of God?' After thanking God that His prayer had been heard (what He had prayed for is not made clear), He called out loudly, 'Lazarus come forth, and he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes.' They were then bidden to 'Loose him and let him go,' as though He said, Take from him those misplaced habiliments of death, and set him free, as a living person, to again associate with his fellows.

We see a connection between Martha's blunt statement, the reply made to it, and the Lord thanking the Father that His prayer had been heard. Lazarus was then not yet raised, and as far as those around could see no miracle had yet been performed. But had the astounding and significant part of the wonder been accomplished in the state of the body which had lain in the tomb four days? Did Martha indeed see the glory of God when she gazed upon her brother and saw his body, not in a state of corruption, but preserved against his resurrection?

If the significance of this miracle lies where we have placed it, the disciples certainly did not read it at first, to the understanding of the death of Jesus, for no sooner was He dead and His body taken from the cross, than they took steps to bury Him, 'as the manner of the Jews is to bury,' as John tells us. They speedily began their preparation for the anointing of His body with linen and spices in large quantities, until prevented by the Sabbath from carrying this further. They were at the tomb early on the first day of the week to continue their work, taking spices with them, only to find there was no body to anoint. The Lord had set himself free from that with which they had bound Him and was gone, and their medicaments were left on their hands useless for their intended purpose. The miracle of the raising of Lazarus—worked to the intent that they might believe—had not yet accomplished its intention.

On the morning that Jesus rose, John and Peter, who doubtless had seen with open-eyed wonder Lazarus come forth from the tomb with his grave clothes around him, ran to the sepulchre and John, seeing the grave cloth that had bound the head of Jesus 'wrapped together in a place by itself' (it had served its purpose and was tidily discarded), the record states 'that disciple believed.' The significance of the two lots of discarded graveclothes came to him like a flash of light. Faith was born into the world in the heart and mind of one man. Others followed, and of this frail fabric of human belief Jesus Christ built His Church. Frail indeed, but indestructible, for against the Church so built, the gates of Hades, the grave, should never prevail. Eternity that was before time became and eternity after time shall be no more are thus linked indissolubly by human belief and testimony that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God.

W. BARKER.

'Give Heed to Reading'

'THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS'

(Millar Burrows: 'The Dead Sea Scrolls; with Translations.'—Secker & Warburg, 1956. 30/-).

IN early 1947 a great collection of manuscripts stuffed in jars was found in a cave near the Dead Sea. Expert examination revealed that the manuscripts were written in Hebrew and formed a most important discovery. Among them were a translation of the prophecies of Isaiah and a commentary on Habakkuk which formed the most ancient Bible manuscripts known to exist. Scholars are largely agreed in dating the manuscripts between 150 B.C. and 70 A.D. As well as the biblical writings they contained a work called 'The War of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness,' some Thanksgiving Psalms and a Manual of Discipline of an unnamed Jewish sect. Some believe this sect to be the Essenes, a strict brotherhood of ascetics. Josephus groups them with the Pharisees and Sadducees as the three philosophical sects among the Jews. They are not mentioned by name in Scripture, but possibly Paul refers to them in Col. 2:16-23.

At best it is only a guess which identifies the Essenes as the authors of the Dead Sea scrolls. Some scholars suggest that the teachings of the Essenes had much influence on Christianity, and even that John the Baptist was an Essene. This is sufficiently refuted by the Jewish Christian Ederheim, who in his book *Jesus the Messiah* writes, 'Neither John the Baptist and his baptism nor the teaching of Christianity had any connection with Essenism.' And Bishop Lightfoot says, 'At whatever point we test the teaching and practice of our Lord by the characteristic tenets of Essenism the theory of affinity fails.'

Some Christians may be disturbed to read the suggestion that a Teacher of Righteousness figuring prominently in the Dead Sea scrolls is Jesus Christ Himself, or that the figure of Christ is built up from this Teacher of Righteousness. There need be no such fears. For in comparison with this shadowy nameless figure, who is identified as any of five or six Jewish heroes of the time, the Christ of the New Testament shines with resplendent glory, a vital figure of flesh and blood and at the same time the Son of God.

All these points are brought out in the book under review. It is by far the most balanced, exhaustive and authoritative of the many books so far published on the subject. The author refrains from speculation: he sets out the evidence and theories and leaves conclusions to the reader.

One thing emerges clearly from the book. It is the great gulf between inspired and uninspired writings. To read the translations of the scrolls and compare them with Scripture is sufficient to display this difference. Any greatness of thought and expression found in the scrolls is due to the influence of Scripture, for the sacred page

'Gives a light to every age;
It gives, but borrows none.'

So the uniqueness of the living Word, Christ, and the written word, the Bible, remains untouched by this latest discovery. For nothing can alter truth. Christ who is the truth said, 'Thy word is truth.' To read such a book as this under review stimulates and confirms belief in 'the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture.'

'THE NEW WORLD SOCIETY'

(Marley Cole: 'Jehovah's Witnesses: the New World Society.' Allen & Unwin. 1956. 16/-).

The writer of this book is a journalist who has obviously been at great pains to gather information on the religious body known successively as International Bible Students Association, Millennial Dawnists and now as Jehovah's Witnesses. Treating his subject in a detached manner one can yet discern his sympathy with and admiration for this 'fastest growing religion of modern times.'

It is difficult for any Christian not to admire Jehovah's Witnesses, and to have sympathy with them in their protests against commercialised 'Churchianity,' the influence of the world upon organised religion, and their aim to demolish the accretions and rubbish adhering to traditional Christianity, and to reach the foundation of the truth of God in the Scriptures. Admiration for their stand for freedom in religion, refusal to take part in wars of earthly powers, readiness to suffer shame, imprisonment and death for what they believe; their zeal in furthering their beliefs from door to door, whatever their reception; their splendid organising ability; their sacrificial giving in money, time and service to their cause; and their world-wide propagation of their message through books, magazines and conventions.

These people have been treated as enemies by religionists and those of no religion, by Fascists, Nazis and Communists—proof enough that their doctrines cut across the widely-held religious teachings and political philosophies of men. All these aspects are depicted in this book.

But it is the tenets of this body in which we are most interested. For, granting the zeal, organising power and willingness to suffer, these alone do not make them right according to the Scriptures, in which they claim to place such utter trust. Whilst appearing to be a people who renounce the false values of the world and place their whole hopes in spiritual things, their religion is essentially materialistic and rationalistic. It is materialistic in the hope of and insistence upon 'a new earth,' in which the glory and beauty of the garden of Eden will be restored in a physical sense, inhabited by a race of supermen and superwomen. It is rationalistic in that it rejects what cannot be comprehended by the human mind. Because it cannot understand the mystery of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit it rejects the belief in the Deity of each as idolatrous. Its degraded view of Christ is little short of blasphemous, as is its teaching on the Holy Spirit as merely an influence—simply impersonal holy spirit. Because it cannot conceive of a God of love banishing from His presence forever those who 'refuse to retain God in their hearts,' it propounds its theory of the annihilation of the wicked—exactly the fate the wicked desire! All this is very like taking God on our own terms: what finite puny man cannot grasp cannot be true.

Jehovah's Witnesses do not stand for the Bible and the Bible alone, but for the Bible as explained by Pastor Russell, their founder, in his copious writings. The Bible cannot be understood apart from these expositions. The explanations of Witnesses are not the result of their own reading of Scripture but of the literature of Jehovah's Witnesses. All must have thorough grounding in their own writings, and hence the eagerness to sell or give away these publications. In almost every case quotations from the New Testament are made from their own version, 'The New World Translation.' The same passages of Scripture are repeated almost automatically. The result is that many listeners are overwhelmed with a show of biblical knowledge and become ready converts. Very rarely does one become a member who has anything like a deep understanding of the Bible. Set passages are

brought out, but once away from such passages the Witnesses are as likely to be refuted as any whose knowledge of the Scriptures comes at second-hand.

A system of teaching involving so many contradictions, revisions and absurdities as this doctrine cannot be the truth of God. The growth of the sect is a testimony not only to the zeal of its adherents but equally to the ignorance and darkness of the age. The safeguard against these fantastic and strange teachings is to 'study to show ourselves approved of God, workmen who need not be ashamed.'

On Teaching

THE TEACHER must be thoroughly converted to the Christ to whom he is attempting to lead others. It is not enough to know a few facts about Christ; he must know Christ. If the Christian life consists of rules which ignore the person and presence of Christ, his teaching will be non-effective.

The teacher must have a good grasp of his subject, for one aim of instruction is to guide the student into the knowledge of facts. The teacher must be a diligent student. He must learn of the Master Teacher before he can acquaint others with Him. In preparing his lesson he should approach the Bible with prayer for guidance. There is no short cut to understanding the Bible. The mind must be applied to it in systematic study.

The teacher should cultivate imagination. Time should be spent in meditation. Being in too big a hurry will often prevent assimilation of God's Word. Ponder over the truths you 'discover.'

'Apply thyself wholly to the text; apply the text wholly to thyself.' The teacher has a double purpose: that he himself might learn, and that he might guide others.

Besides factual teaching, there is inspirational teaching. This is to help to inspire and motivate character building as well as acquisition of knowledge, for it is possible to have a large store of Biblical details without Biblical principles. One of the best ways to inspire his scholars is for the teacher to radiate his message, by showing his joy, happiness, and love for God and his pupils. His students must see that teaching is to him a joy, not a job.

Finally, the teacher must point out the application of the principles of the Bible. He must make the Bible lesson real by bringing it home to the situation he knows his pupils are facing.

J. D. BALES.

Be kind

LIFE is too short to nourish hates;
Right may be wronged, and yet, while justice waits
Love heals the wounds that anger aggravates.
Be kind!

Think not that tenderness unmans the strong;
That sacrifice can sanctify a wrong;
That love and patience ever last too long.
Be kind!

Not ours to rob the poor, the weak to rend.
But ours the power and duty to defend,
To be indeed to him in need a friend.
Be kind!

CHURCH OF CHRIST HYMN BOOK

At the time of going to press the last batch of proofs had been corrected. The next process will be the binding of the book. It is regretted that, after all, the book was not ready for delivery by the end of 1956, but it is hoped to be able to supply orders early in 1957.

The treasurer is grateful for the prompt response to the appeal to send orders and money to him, and especially to those who have made donations to help forward the printing fund. Money is still urgently needed, and it is asked that churches or individuals who have not yet placed their orders, will do so very soon, if desiring the book. Of the ordinary edition 5,000 copies have been ordered, at a cost of over £1,230, so it will be appreciated that the generous and loyal support of the churches and brethren is necessary.

The better quality leather-bound edition has now been approved. This can be supplied in green, brown or black, gold-lettered on spine, and with gilt-edged pages. Price 9/6; with owner's initials in gold, 12/6. This edition will make a beautiful gift and is recommended also for platform use.

The ordinary edition costs 6/-, including postage. The book contains 435 hymns, in single column, with references to tunes by name; bound in black or navy blue cloth.

It may after all be possible to issue a special preceptors' edition. An attempt is being made to buy fifty sets of the printed sheets for interleaving and binding by local binders.

Please send remittances and orders to FRED HARDY, 'WINDYRIDGE,' BAGHILL GREEN, WEST ARDSLEY, Nr WAKEFIELD.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JANUARY, 1957.

- Jan. 6—Exodus 1:1-14. Acts 7:1-18.
 „ 13—Exodus 2:1-10. Heb. 11:17-40.
 „ 20—Exodus 3:7-22. Acts 7:17-37.
 „ 27—Exodus 4:1-23. John 16:1-24.

THE DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT

The title of the book we are taking for our old Covenant readings during six months is 'EXODUS.' The ancient Hebrew manuscripts use merely the first words, 'Now these are the names,' as a title, and the section of the first five books we call 'EXODUS' is the second book of Moses, the whole being named in the early Greek translation 'the Pentateuch' — 'the five-fold book,' com-

prising Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. These titles are Greek and were given by the translators of the Septuagint (so called on account of the tradition that seventy men were engaged in the work). The titles are admittedly most appropriate—Beginnings, Departure, Levitic laws, Numberings, Recapitulations. This great translation, which enabled Jews to read their Scriptures in the almost universal language of our Saviour's days, was made in 288-247 B.C. It forms the basis of much of the quotation (made in Greek of course) of the Old Covenant in the New Covenant writings. It was the earliest translation of the inspired writings of the Old Covenant into another tongue than the Hebrew, and like our own 'Authorised' and 'Revised' versions, represents a providential disposition of God to confirm the accuracy of what we hold as the 'Word of God which liveth and abideth.' The effort of the translators was with the most Godly intention of giving to readers of Greek just what was originally written—not a human interpretation of it.

The Greek word EXODUS is used three times in the New Testament, and from these occurrences we may gather its meaning well. It is translated 'departing' in Heb. 11:22 and refers to the very history we are studying. In the other two cases it is translated 'decease' (Luke 9:31; II Peter 1:15) with a marginal note in the R.V. 'departure.' Here it refers to the departure from this life to a better and final life, and so in our study we certainly have the great thought of release from slavery into God's care. The hopeless bondage in Egypt is significant of the helplessness of a soul enrapt in its sinful ways and propensities. It was impossible that the nation should ever be released, and a merciless dictator held the chains, so to speak, until God sent His Servant with His Word to arouse the people to a consciousness of divine power and concern for them. So it is the gospel comes to the human heart with its appeal to every right and noble impulse, and its assurance of divine aid. Well might the hymn writer say 'God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.' He uses human instruments to attain divine ends; the pity and love in a woman's heart to rescue a helpless and condemned babe. That babe became God's messenger to His people after eighty years of training for His purpose.

We read the story of the deliverance in the first fourteen chapters, and the consecration of the nation in the remainder of the book. Preparation both of the nation and Moses is described in the first two chapters. The campaign ending in the destruction of the firstborn of Egypt fills the third to tenth, and the triumph culminates in chapter fourteen. To be merely released from Egypt was not the purpose of God's great work upon that nation. He was bringing a people

out to be HIS OWN PECULIAR TREASURE. He is the only living and true God, and mankind has gone away from Him, exchanging the truth of God for a lie, and worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25). But He is working out His purposes by redeeming a nation and bringing it into His special and continuous care, dwelling in its midst, sustaining it by His power in the waste and howling wilderness. He manifests its total dependence upon Him every day and all day. He provides for its spiritual education a law taught and administered by a section of the nation set apart for the purpose.

Every soul born into it is brought up and trained in the highest moral and religious standard. Everything they experience manifests divine power. They look back to a miraculous crossing of an impassable sea, the defeat of a great world power, the salvation from the angel of death by the sacrifice of a lamb and obedience to the instructions of Jehovah, the provision of unfailing sustenance in a waste land, and water in abundance in a waterless desert.

In their midst God's presence is there always to be seen from every part of the encampment—the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. They journey day by day under His leadership. One day out of seven is set apart for meditation upon His goodness and greatness, and for their daily guidance in every matter His laws are given, explained and administered by Moses and the elders. Thus are they being transformed from an 'unorganised mass' of slaves as they came out of bondage into a 'holy nation' under divine authority and instruction. There is no parallel in history to this. It is the birth of the nation from which the Saviour came, the whole of whose story is full of God, teaching those lessons which are just as essential and true to-day as when the events were enacted and the words written. Truth abides while empires rise and fall, 'for whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope' (Rom. 15:4).

Let us apply our minds to the story of the departure from Egypt, 'looking diligently lest any man fall of the grace of God' by wanting, after this glorious coming out of the slavery of sin, to go back into Egypt by desiring worldly things and finding the service of God 'a weariness' (Mal. 1:13) instead of the exhilarating experience of freedom which it should be. There is, alas, a liability among Christians as among the Hebrews in the wilderness to 'grow weary in well-doing'—and exercising the divinely-given faculty of worship as a duty to be got through instead of the supreme enjoyment. That picture of the tabernacle in the midst to which at any time everyone

in the camp could look illustrates surely the Christian's continuous possibility and duty of 'looking unto Jesus' (Heb. 12:2-
R. B. SCOTT.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Aylesbury.—We rejoice to report yet another addition to our number in the baptism on Thursday, December 6th, of Miss Betty Adams. Sister Adams is from Waddesdon, a village five miles from Aylesbury. We have been in touch with her for some time. Her obedience to the gospel needed considerable courage, for it meant facing the opposition of many of her friends, leaving the Church of England, resigning from the parochial council, of which she was an active member, and relinquishing her position as leader and organiser of the local Young Farmers' Club, because of its social activities. May her wonderful example of love for her Lord be encouragement for others to follow.

L. CHANNING.

Buckie.—On Sunday, November 11th, after hearing the gospel declared by Bro. Sam Hunter, William Jarrett expressed his desire to put on the Lord in His own appointed way. He was baptised the same night in Peterhead. We give thanks to God that yet another soul has been added to his church. We pray that this young brother, who is now in fellowship with the church in Peterhead, may be faithful and be used to the honour and Glory of God.

On Sunday, November 18th, the brethren wished Godspeed to our young brother, George Reid, who along with Bro. James Strachan from Peterhead, sailed from Liverpool on the 22nd for Canada. Bro. George had been our treasurer, and we shall miss him very much. Our prayer is that our brethren will be successful in their new venture, and that the Lord will bless them.

JOHN GEDDES.

East Kirkby.—The church celebrated the thirty-second anniversary of its commencement with special meetings on the 24th and 25th November. A good number of visiting brethren joined us for tea and for the social meeting on the Saturday. The meeting was addressed by Bro. F. C. Day, of Summer Lane, Birmingham, on the subject of 'Fruit-bearing,' and we were all greatly edified by his teaching. The church also experienced a further uplift on the Lord's Day when Bro. Day again served us with much benefit. We look forward with hope to a New Year in the Master's service, and trust we may maintain the high tone on which we have commenced.

T. WOODHOUSE.

Holland.—Bro. Frank Worgan reports on October 20th that the year so far has been 'a wonderful one,' with 35 additions to the churches—30 baptised and 5 restored to fellowship. Those baptised include a lady who had been almost all her life a member of the Salvation Army, and a young German man staying temporarily in Holland. At the time of writing 14 baptisms and two restorations had been recorded at Haarlem. The work in Utrecht has also made good progress, with 12 baptisms so far this year.

The method of working is to make contact with non-members through missions and working on such contacts individually afterwards. Bro. Worgan writes: 'We hold a series of Gospel meetings; make new contacts; follow them up; bring them to decision; and then search for more contacts.'

As 1956 draws to a close, we look back over the best year in the history of the Lord's work in Utrecht, The Netherlands.

During 1956 four short series of gospel meetings were conducted. In two of these series, Bro. Frank Morgan, from Hindley, England did the preaching. Bro. Morgan entered the Dutch work in January of 1954. In the other two series, Bro. W. J. (Bill) Richardson, from Oldfield, Missouri, preached. Bro. Richardson is a veteran in the Lord's work in Europe, having entered the work in Holland in 1947. Speaking in the Dutch language, both of these men preached Christ in a plain and forceful way.

Since March of this year, our regular services, as well as the above series of meetings, have been well attended by non-members. Much personal work has been done. A co-ordination of meeting and personal contact work has resulted in twelve baptisms since March 4th.

With a number of contacts who seem very eager to learn more about Christ, we look forward with great anticipation to 1957. It is our prayer that God will continue to bless us as He has in 1956.

G. B. ADAMS.

Wigan; Scholes.—The church has just concluded a very successful mission, from November 17th to December 2nd.

We renewed acquaintance with Bro. Gary Adams from Utrecht, Holland, who preached stirring gospel messages. On two occasions over 130 were present, and the final night saw a gathering of 140. During the mission 54 non-members heard the way of salvation.

We express deep appreciation to the local churches, Morley church, and special thanks to the Blackburn brethren. The success of the mission was due largely to prayers, work and unity of the brethren at Scholes, who gave time, money and labour to ensure success; praise to the sisters also for their unstinting work.

We are happy to report that seven

souls have yielded themselves to Jesus Christ, putting him on in baptism.

Through the faithful preaching of our Brother Gary Adams four young souls expressed their desire to follow Jesus: Gordon Melling, Keith Tudor, Ronald Aspinall, Doris Parker. These four have been brought up in Christian homes and in the Bible School.

As the mission continued a young man, Bernard McMahon, a former Roman Catholic, stepped to the front, made the grand confession, and was baptised the same hour.

On the final night of the mission a married couple James and Alice Sutton walked out at the preacher's invitation, made the noble confession before many witnesses, and were also baptised the same hour.

We pray earnestly that these seven souls may be kept faithful by trusting God.

(Later): We rejoice over another soul for the Lord. Through the faithful teaching and visiting of Bro. A. Ashurst, a young girl, Lynn Martin, was baptised on Saturday, December 8th. May God bless her and use her in His service.

R. RATCLIFFE.

OBITUARY

Wigan; Scholes.—We deeply regret to record the passing of our sister in Christ Evelyn Smith at the age of 35 years, after prolonged illness.

For 23 years Evelyn had suffered, being for much of that time in hospital.

Evelyn was of a quiet, kindly and lovable nature. We mourn her passing, but not as those without hope.

Our prayers are for her three brothers, all members of the church, and we especially remember her beloved friend Raymond Tilling, who was her constant companion, ministering to her wants and wishes with sincere love and devotion.

Brother Carlton Melling conducted the funeral service. R. RATCLIFFE.

[We knew our sister well through the whole of her life. For 23 years she was unable to enjoy the everyday blessings we take so much for granted—health and strength, the fresh air, companionship, and even fellowship in the church. Yet, though she knew the inevitable end, no word of complaint was ever uttered by her. Courage and cheerfulness supported her when her frail, weak body had lost its strength. Her thoughts and sympathy were for other sufferers. Surely she has entered upon that abundant life from which sorrow and weakness and pain are banished.

'Twas sown in weakness here';
'Twill then be raised in power.'—Ed.]

COMING EVENTS

NEXT CONFERENCE

Preliminary Notice

The Church Meeting at Hamilton Street, Blackburn, Lancs., invites the brethren to meet in conference on Saturday, 20th April, 1957.

Afternoon session. It is anticipated that the business will be transacted inside ninety minutes and that the remainder of the time will be spent in discussion of 'Useful activities for the younger members of the church'; the discussion to be introduced by three eight-minute talks.

Evening session. The Glad Tidings.

PUBLICATIONS

'Talks on the Tabernacle,' by Walter Crosthwaite. Prices from Paul Jones, 122 Heathfield Road, Birmingham 19.

'Truth in Love' (monthly). Albert Winstanley, 43a Church Road, Tunbridge Wells.

'The Young Christian' (monthly). 'The Churches of Christ Salute You.' Prices of both from Thos. Nisbet, 8 Haldane Avenue, Haddington, East Lothian.

'The Gospel Banner' (monthly). From Lawnbrook Avenue Church of Christ, Belfast). Hugh Tidsley, 34 Sarajac Crescent, Cavehill Road, Belfast, N.I.

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FOR 1957.

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 THE NEW YEAR

FATHER of mercies! God of love!
Whose kind compassion still we prove,
Our praise accepted, bless us here,
Thus bought to this, another year.

We sing Thy goodness all divine,
Whose radiant beams around us shine;
'Tis through Thy goodness we appear
Preserved to this another year.

Our souls, our all, we here resign;
Make us and keep us only Thine,
And grant that in Thy love and fear
We may begin another year.

Be this our sweet experience still,
To know and do Thy holy will;
Then shall our souls with joy sincere
Bless Thee for this another year.

S. MEDLEY.

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All matter for insertion must be sent before the 10th of the month (news items the 15th) to the Editor: C. MELLING, 76 Tickhill Street, Denaby Main, nr. Doncaster.

EVANGELIST FUND: Contributions to R. McDONALD, Lumley House, 4 Clarke Street, Westboro, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Secretary of Conference Committee: A. HOOD, 45 Park Road, Hindley, Nr. Wigan.

NYASALAND MISSION. Contributions to W. STEELE, Atholl Dene, Longniddry, East Lothian.

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