

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

VOL. 31. No. 1.

JANUARY, 1964

THE WORD OF GOD FOR 1964

"THE words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one shall shut, who shuts and no one opens:

I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut; I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name."

(Revelation 3 : 7-8).

The Word of God

ONE of the outstanding characteristics of the Bible is its everlasting freshness. The Christian (and many who are not Christians) turn to it for its sayings and teachings because they find them perfectly fitting to their various experiences and circumstances in life. True, there is the idea that the Bible is an old-fashioned, out-of-date book. But such an idea arises from ignorance of the Bible. If those who have that opinion would take the trouble to dip into it for a few moments they would find that its contents are very different from those they have been led to believe. They have heard the view expressed by others and have not troubled to find out for themselves. In this, as in other respects, the words of Jesus to Pilate are fulfilled: "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you...?"

The words forming our thought for the year 1964 were spoken by the glorified Christ to the church at Philadelphia. There are some promises and commands of scripture addressed to specific persons alone, and in specific circumstances, so that we rightly insist that the statements apply only to those addressed. That is one secret of "rightly dividing the word of truth." This was one of the great discoveries by men who, from about 150 years ago, set themselves to restore New Testament Christianity. To remember this elementary dogma: to whom are the words spoken, and thus to whom they apply, and under what circumstances, clarifies many scriptures which would otherwise be confused and misleading to us.

But there are other words of scripture which, although uttered at first to particular people and under certain circumstances, yet have their wider application and their teaching and encouragement to others of God's people. God promised His people Israel that "the eternal God was their refuge, and underneath them were the everlasting arms"; but how many others of His saints have proved these words true in various experiences? We believe that the encouragement and hope given to the saints at Philadelphia in the words of our text can be applied to and realised by ourselves in these days.

We are members of the body of Christ, the church of the Lord. In the eyes of the world, even the religious world, we are an insignificant denomination or sect of extremists, "literalists"; we carry no weight among the many religious denominations, and play no part in the movement for the worldwide unity of the Churches. Politely treated, maybe; our aims and our standards interesting and "intriguing", but having no practical effect upon the world and its needs. So we are seen by

others. And, to some extent, we must admit the same of ourselves. In that sense we fulfil this scripture that we "have but little power." We realise this truth. But this admission can be a source of renewed strength to us if we confess that the power lies not in ourselves, but in God. Christ told His apostles that "without me you can do nothing", but Paul exulted in the fact that "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." In his second Corinthian letter (ch. 3 verse 4) the same apostle confesses "not that we are sufficient of ourselves . . . our sufficiency is from God." We can so easily fall into the temptation of wishing to become a people "recognised" by the religious denominations as a constituent part of the universal church, the ecumenical movement. The idolatry and fall of God's ancient people, Israel, were due to their desire to be like and numbered among the powerful nations around them, rather than realising that their glory and power arose from their being the chosen of God, to reveal the glory of His purpose to the world.

Be Faithful

"Little power, and yet . . ." There is a contrast here. Though the church at Philadelphia was weak by the world's standard, "yet", in spite of this, "you have kept my word." That was as great a testimony as could be paid to the church, from Him whose eyes were like coals of fire, who saw and discerned infallibly. The "little power" is true of us, churches of Christ. Is it equally true that "we have kept His word"? Kept it in faithful carrying out of the things taught there, by word and example; kept it in holy living, in lives reflecting the light and glory of the Christ? Looking back over the past year, let us humbly confess that we have not always done either. On the one hand we have not always done the things taught by Christ and His apostles: this has led to confusion and division among us. And there can be harmony and unity only when "we are of one mind and one spirit, striving together in the faith of the gospel." On the other hand, our lives before those outside of Christ's church have not always commended the beauty of the church nor the purity of Christ. And this has given the world its excuses for not being interested in the church or the things of God.

But let us be encouraged as we go into another year. For, as to the Philadelphians, God sets before us "an open door, which no one is able to shut." It is God who makes and gives us the ability and opportunities to serve Him. He opens the way and none can close it: not the might, opposition or indifference of the world with its fake standards. The door is always open, the opportunities always there, for preaching the gospel, "in season and out of season." Neither we nor anyone else can close the door, for God has opened it. But we can neglect to go through it; we can fail to use the opportunities.

We are faced again with the fact that the service of Christ is an intensely personal one. Let me not expect from others what I am not willing to do myself. Let me not say, in effect, "Here am I; send him!" It depends upon me. In losing myself in Christ's glorious cause my own life is filled with purpose, a fulness and usefulness which excludes boredom or frustration. To be doing the work, using the opportunities, "redeeming the time" brings from Him who is no man's debtor a peace and joy which pass understanding. Let us be faithful, doing God's work in God's way. His reward and blessing may not be known fully now, but we "shall know hereafter." "We shall reap if we faint not." And the joy we share shall be the joy of our Lord Himself.

EDITOR.

'Love one another'

THIS is not so easy as it would appear to be, for we can easily deceive ourselves that we love one another, when in truth we do no such thing. "Love is of God": John leaves us in no doubt of this. What we show, and like to term as love, may in no way resemble God's love, which He displays in everything which is, or was, or will be. John assures us, "God is love." Paul says, "The greatest of these is love."

Before one can claim to "love the brethren," one's love has to be tried and tested. Hebrews 12:11 says, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Moses says that God's love is "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings." So is our love perfected after trial and testing. We reap a blessing if it is subjected to the necessary proving. By what other means can we be sure that our love comes up to the standard required of all God's children?

Christ's love was tested at His death and found perfect. From that wonderful heart of His He had already forgiven His enemies before he besought from God

their pardon for so heinous a crime. "His own received him not"—was ever man so tried? It is only by being placed in similar position that we can determine whether we truly love, or are just persuading ourselves that we do. Then we are guilty of self-deception. If we are not placed under such conditions, how can we assess our reactions to them? Bearing this in mind, instead of fostering ill-feeling or resentment towards the brethren, we should acknowledge the debt we owe them.

For givenness

For, if we love our brother, we shall, like Jesus, forgive him from our heart even before he asks for our pardon. More than this; we shall not, like Pilate, wash our hands from him, but we shall seek his immediate good, and go out of our way to achieve this. Thus we shall emulate Jesus, who, "while we were yet sinners, died for us."

Inasmuch as we are Christ's, we are convinced of what manner of love we must show. But love untried is love uncertain; while trials and vexations are absent our love is only theory. We must have the same kind of love as Jesus, which sent Him to the cross to redeem His enemies. For we were enemies of God, alienated by ungodly works, bound and fettered by sin. But the Word became flesh and lived among sinners, revealing the very nature of the love of God, and becoming the perfect sacrifice for us. If we could evaluate so great love then we could comprehend it. But this being an impossibility, we can only copy it within our feeble human limitations. Our human weakness renders it all the more needful that we prove our love, when it is tried. It compels us to strive the more earnestly for the good of that brother by whom we are tried. Thus our love serves not ourselves but another child of God.

We need to perfect our love. Does He not say, "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect"? If we are faithful He will strengthen and perfect us. He never tells us to do anything beyond what we are able. To do His will, love is all we need: Jesus says, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." We cannot separate these two — love and obedience. Yes, it is as easy as that. Yet in spite of its pure simplicity and forthrightness men stumble, introduce innovations and traditions, rejecting the counsels and commands of God, making void His precious word. Thus, instead of loving one another, we conceive confusion, producing division and hatred. So much time we have wasted, so many opportunities lost, through disobedience alone. It is inevitable that we retrace our steps. We are in dire need, in this respect, of regeneration. We must attend to this at once. It is inevitable that we retrace our steps and resort to the infallible guide — God's word. We must turn to love and good works. Because the church at Laodicea was sitting on the fence Christ expressed His thorough disgust (Rev. 3:14).

Loving our brethren does not mean our sitting on the fence. Such an attitude does not display love to the brethren. It may show disinterestedness, indifference, together with desire for popularity, — pleasers of men rather than pleasers of God. Jesus says, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you; for in the same manner did their fathers to the false prophets."

We need to be certain that we are not deceiving ourselves when we say we love the brethren. "Take heed that ye be not deceived." James speaks of "a man deceiving his own heart." Can we say we have never deceived ourselves? Therefore it becomes the more important that we subject our love to testing. To love our neighbour as ourselves is the fulfilling of the law given to Moses. We being now under grace are to love under a better covenant, reserved for us through Christ Jesus. Through grace He called us to love and good works, to love our brethren, which James assures us includes their temporal needs. It means that we owe our brother the riches of a Christlike love from the heart. Only then can we truly say that we love the brethren. It takes a lifetime to accomplish, so let us each start today. For His name's sake.

J. A. GREGORY.

CHRIST is our Head, and He alone can assign our place in His service. If it be a prominent place, let us not shrink from it in assumed or unbalanced humility. If it be a lowly place, let us remember that Scripture makes it clear that lowly members may be more honourable by the choice than some who seem quite prominent. But let us not make the fatal mistake of choosing our own field of service.

PRAYER is the creator as well as the channel of devotion. The spirit of devotion is the spirit of prayer. Prayer and devotion are united as soul and body are united, as life and heart are united. There is no real prayer without devotion—no devotion without prayer. Prayer is as essential as food is to life.

Nuclear Weapons

(Substance of lecture in "Facing the Facts" series given at the Holiday Fellowship at Scratby, Great Yarmouth, on July 26th, 1963).

THE story of the development of nuclear weapons might well be called the story of "the bomb." During the last war "conventional type" bombs of 4,000lbs. to 8,000 lbs. were common. Experts say that the blast from a 4,000 lb. bomb wrought havoc over an area of 24,000 square yards. An 8,000lb. bomb could desolate ten acres of a town or city. Towards the end of the war bombs of 12,000lbs. were being used, and, on occasions some weighing ten tons. The latter, it was claimed, combined maximum blast and penetration.

The Atomic Bomb

The first atomic device was exploded at Alamogordo Air Base, near Albuquerque, New Mexico, U.S.A. on July 16th, 1945. There was first a great ball of fire, a man-made sun, followed by a radiating heat and blast wave of tremendous force. The temperature generated was such that the metal tower on which the device was exploded, was completely vapourised; the surrounding desert was fused to glass for a radius of 800 yards. Scientists said of this type of weapon that "it cannot be classified as either a primarily blast or a primarily penetrating bomb, for its destructive capacity so far exceeds any other kind of bomb that it may be said to embrace nearly all destructive principles."

The release of nuclear energy represents probably the greatest scientific advance of modern times. It has been applied to wreak indescribable destruction. The heart of sinful man is "deceitful... desperately wicked."

The first atomic bomb used in warfare was dropped on Hiroshima, a Japanese Army Base at 8.15 a.m. on August 6th, 1945. Its explosion was equal to that of 20,000 tons of T.N.T. (dynamite). It instantly and completely devastated four square miles of the city. Hiroshima's population was 343,000. Of these 66,000 were killed and 69,000 injured. Over 67 per cent. of the city's buildings were destroyed or severely damaged.

The second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9th, 1945. Nagasaki was an industrial city, but its geographical situation gave it more protection than Hiroshima. Nevertheless nearly 40,000 were killed and 25,000 injured. Also 40 per cent. of its buildings were destroyed or badly damaged.

Many of us have seen on television a filmed report of casualties at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. What took place there was indescribably horrible. At the moment of explosion, in addition to the intense heat, the bomb sent out waves of radiation. The effects of this are similar to severe burning by X-rays. People at great distances were dreadfully burned and disfigured. In addition to the immediate effects there were large scale delayed effects. Large numbers of people later became seriously—many fatally—ill.

It is not surprising that all normal life in these cities was brought to a standstill. The population panicked and fled *en masse* (what was left of it) to other places. Even city officials and civil workers ran away. All rescue operations were abandoned.

The Hydrogen Bomb

The hydrogen bomb (sometimes called the fusion or the thermonuclear bomb) was developed early in 1950 and was first tested in 1951, by the United States in the Pacific. On November 1st, 1952 a hydrogen bomb of 5 to 7 megatons was exploded experimentally—one megaton is equal to one million tons of T.N.T. "It was reported that this explosion caused an island to disappear and produced a hole in its place 175 feet deep and 1 mile in diameter."

On March 1st, 1954, a bomb in the 12 to 14 megaton range was tested. About 80 miles from the scene of the explosion 23 Japanese fishermen were busy in their boat. Radioactive ash fell in that area. One fisherman died, and many of the others later succumbed to a mysterious disease. It was found to be a blood disease, caused by radiation.

The destructive power of the hydrogen bomb is described thus: "A five megaton bomb can devastate nearly 150 square miles by blast, and cover 800 square yards with intense, searing heat." Radio-activity extends to a much wider area, and continues for a long period. Again, "One twenty megaton bomb dropped on New York would cause material damage of the order \$20 million and would result in about 7½ million casualties."

Fall-Out

All nuclear explosions—experimental or otherwise—throw out many radioactive substances into the atmosphere. These include uranium, plutonium and strontium. The large scale testing of nuclear weapons has “polluted” the atmosphere, and all of us, to a greater or lesser degree, are exposed to radiation thereby. These dangerous substances enter the body in three ways: (1) breathing—they are in the atmosphere and we inhale them. (2) eating—everything that grows, and that depends directly or indirectly on vegetation (e.g. milk of cows is affected) can become radioactive. (3) through wounds, abrasions, even through our pores the danger may get into our bodies. There is a wealth of evidence compiled by scientists which is literally horrifying in respect of what these substances can do to man. They can cause:

Leukaemia. This is cancer of the blood, or excessive production of white blood cells. Once this process begins, medical science is powerless to stop it and it is invariably fatal.

Cancer in the flesh—the disorderly growth of body cells.

Cancer of the lungs—another scourge which, as yet, is incurable.

In addition the substances thrown out by nuclear explosions may cause bone cancer or cancer of the skin. It should be emphasised that some effects of radiation have a prolonged latent effect. In other words a man may develop cancer of the skin 30 years from now through radioactive substances entering his body at the present time.

Genetic Effects

At birth a baby consists of about ten million cells. Yet all this began, about 40 weeks previously, with one tiny cell about one hundredth of an inch in size. Conception consists of the fusion of the spermatozoon (from the father) with the ovum (from the mother). That tiny, single fertilised cell is the beginning of the child. The cell contains 23 pairs of chromosomes, tiny thread-like things only visible under a microscope. Each pair of chromosomes differs from every other in shape. After about a day the first cell divides into two—and each of these cells has 23 pairs of chromosomes. Each of the two new cells is an exact replica of the first cell. The two divide into four; the four into eight; eight into sixteen; sixteen into thirty-two, and so on. This process continues until, at birth, the many million cells in the new-born infant are the forty-third generation of the original cell—and every one of them has its 23 pairs of chromosomes, just like that first cell.

Each chromosome contains some 1,000 genes. These minute entities are described as like microscopic beads on string. Scientists insist that our genes determine all our inherited and inborn characteristics. “Genes determine whether we belong to blood group A or O; whether we are born with normal vision or afflicted with one of the various types of hereditary blindness; whether we have brown, blue or hazel eyes; whether on a rich diet we grow fat or remain slim; whether musical education makes virtuosi of us or leaves us unable to distinguish one tune from another; and so on through thousands of details which together make up our physical and mental personalities” (C. Auerbach: “Genetics in the Atomic Age”). Be that as it may, it is now generally accepted that radiation (the polluting of the atmosphere with radioactive fallout) can, and does, affect the genes in human cells. It can seriously damage people alive today, and generations of people still unborn. It might well reduce the life span, and could increase enormously the percentage of genetic handicaps—inherited illnesses such as diabetes, mental instability, mental deficiency, blindness, etc.

Devastation

Ralph O. E. Lapp writes in an article on “Nuclear War”: “The nuclear radiation hazard has been emphasised because of its unique characteristics, its great lethality, its spread over a wide area, its persistence in time, and its many-sided attack upon the living organism. Nuclear radiation is potentially the greatest killer of all the weapon effects, and certainly one of the most difficult hazards to combat. It is a very effective weapon even though it represents only 10 per cent. of the bomb’s energy.

“Fallout presents the possibility of a veritable ‘saturation’ attack meaning that it could envelop an entire nation in lethality. This may seem incredible in view of the very large land masses of the United States and the U.S.S.R. However, analytic appraisals by defence experts show that in a nation such as the United States an attack with 10,000 megatons of high-yield fission weapons would kill approximately 80 per cent. of the population (if unsheltered) within 60 days.

A 20,000-megaton attack would kill 95 per cent.; in other words it would virtually saturate the nation with lethal fallout. Because of its larger land area the U.S.S.R. would not saturate quite as quickly, but a 10,000-megaton attack would mean about 75 per cent. mortality, and a 20,000-megaton attack would raise the figure to roughly 90 per cent.

It would be pleasant to suppose that such high levels of attack are purely hypothetical and have no relation to the actual potential of the world's stockpiled weapons. Such, however, is not the case. Present stockpiles are more than adequate to spread radioactive lethality over an entire continental mass. This is part of the new dimension of nuclear warfare" ("Survival", pp. 172-173).

The Christian's Attitude

Christians are to love their enemies (Matthew 5 : 38-48). They are to overcome evil with good (Romans 12 : 19-21). They are to do good unto all men (Galatians 6 : 10). How can a child of God have anything at all to do with such weapons of horror and destruction?

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

Smoking

(Substance of fifth lecture on "Facing the Facts," given at the Holiday Fellowship at Scrabby, Norfolk, Summer, 1963).

IN presenting this lecture to you I shall try, to the best of my ability, to deal with fundamental issues. I want to be factual rather than speculative; incisive rather than merely scratching the surface. Above all, I want you to understand that I am no stranger to this problem, having been addicted — yes, it is an addiction — to this, one of the most malevolent of all vices, for years. Now, having put this slavery behind me, I can examine the problem objectively, and my most sincere desire is that this study should prove to be of help to those who may be struggling with this problem in the most real and personal sense, and also that it may have a steady influence on those who may be contemplating an excursion into the pseudo-delight of the tobacco habit. I propose to deal with this subject by posing and answering certain questions, and I have arranged the subject matter in what I hope will be a convenient manner, under several sub-headings.

First of all, then, what is smoking and why smoke? Smoking is that activity engaged in when the prepared tobacco leaf is burned in some receptacle, such as a pipe, or is arranged in the form of cigar or cigarette and burned in similar manner. The smoke is either puffed out indiscriminately from the mouth or is inhaled into the lungs before final exhalation. It is this inhaling of the tobacco smoke, potentially dangerous, which may eventually destroy the lungs, and, if it does not kill, may result in a high degree of physical incapacity. Of course, cigarette manufacturers claim that the harmful content is now filtered out, but the alarming rise in deaths from lung cancer does not confirm this. It is claimed that smoke emanates from chimneys as well, but it is significant that legislation is being enforced to spread smokeless zones so that the air we breathe will not be polluted.

When we answer the question as to who in fact do smoke we find that three-quarters of men and half of the women in this country are now regular smokers. In addition to this, and a fact which causes most concern, an undetermined number of children now smoke regularly.

Why do people smoke?

In the first place, the part which example plays should never be underestimated. Many people, especially younger ones, see others smoking and embark on the same themselves in order to "try it." There is an old saying that experience is the greatest teacher, but I would like to make the point that experience, if this is taken to mean unpremeditated action, can also prove to be one of the strictest taskmasters. I have never been an advocate of the "try it" school in order to gain experience, and I urge everyone to think seriously before subscribing to this theory. Example is a very potent force.

Now more than ever we are being subjected to ever-increasing pressures, through skilfully conducted advertising campaigns in newspapers, on hoardings, and on television. This last medium is very effective. It brings right into our homes high-pressure advertising, a type of psychological approach which seeks to convince us that there is no complete pleasure or satisfaction without a cigarette, and that in this age of tension we need the soothing and benign influence of tobacco to quell the troubled mind. Nothing could be further from the truth, of course, and the best antidote to this type of poison is to let our children see that there is real

pleasure and satisfaction in Christian living, and that when the anxieties of life come we can meet them with that equanimity which does not need to be bolstered by tobacco.

Further, I know from personal experience, that when I stopped smoking the most acute sensation which I experienced was the sensation of not having anything in my hand or mouth; I have wondered since if this could be an experience which has been carried over from infancy; perhaps we ought to look upon smokers as adolescents and adults who still need comforters!

It seems that as we explore the reasons why people smoke we are brought face to face with the age-old problem of what people *want* and what they actually *need*. I suppose we all want more than we really need, and when we think of the problems affecting other people we must not delude ourselves. People with insufficient means *will* buy cigarettes; people of under-developed countries *will* crave for the things they want rather than the things which they need, and they will use whatever resources come their way to produce them.

What are the dangers?

It is only during the last forty or fifty years that people have smoked cigarettes heavily, and as it takes thirty or forty years for cigarette smoking to wreak its awful damage we are only now beginning to see and understand the full consequence of our voluntary actions. Doctors have noticed that the number of people dying from lung cancer has been increasing very rapidly, and they have estimated that heavy smokers may have thirty times the death rate of non-smokers. In a survey of British doctors carried out in 1951, 25,000 stated what their smoking habits were. During the next eight years all the deaths that they suffered were recorded. Results show the risks that a 35-year-old doctor runs of dying in ten, twenty and thirty years if he doesn't smoke and if he smokes 25 or more cigarettes daily. It was seen that four times as many smokers as non-smokers die in the first ten years and over the whole period twice as many die. So there is no doubt that smoking cigarettes is dangerous. All smokers have a greater risk of dying than non-smokers. Even though the lungs have a self-cleaning action they cannot be expected to stand up to the irritations to which they are subjected perhaps ten, twenty, thirty or forty times a day over long periods.

In 1960 in England and Wales, 22,000 people died of lung cancer — four out of five as a result mainly of cigarette smoking. This works out at one death every half-hour — three times the number killed on the roads and six times the number killed by tuberculosis. Many women become widows because their husbands smoke cigarettes and are cut off in their prime; children are left fatherless while still at school.

In the last twenty years no other sort of cancer has shown an increase comparable to cancer of the lung; deaths from this cause are over four times what they were in 1940, and over 40 times what they were in 1910, when few people smoked cigarettes. Moreover, comparable results to those obtained in England and Wales have been obtained in thirty-three other countries.

Health and finance

With bronchitis, too, the medical evidence points to the cigarette as an important factor, though not the only one. Atmospheric pollution and dusty occupations also play a part. But the vast majority of people who suffer from bronchitis are or have been cigarette smokers. Many people have helped to give themselves this disease which causes wretched disability due to shortness of breath, and which is responsible for the loss of 27,000,000 working days a year.

In addition to this, smokers burn their offices or houses down by carelessness with their cigarettes, and explosions in coal mines that have killed many have been found sometimes to be due to miners lighting forbidden cigarettes underground. This is the extraordinary thing about smoking. Once it starts, people become so addicted to it that they are willing to risk their lives for it. I can testify to the fact that I have felt intensely miserable when I have not been able to obtain cigarettes, yet paradoxically, people who have never smoked or who have given it up are perfectly happy without it.

A word about finance. Twenty cigarettes a day cost about £80 a year. In a lifetime a smoker may spend as much as £3,200 on this habit. I leave you to consider what good could be done with this money.

As regards hygiene: we all know that smoking imparts a disagreeable smell to the breath and to clothes; fingers and teeth become stained and the objectionable habit of spitting is developed.

It is very important to persuade young people not to start smoking, and the best way of doing this is to abstain from smoking ourselves. We as Christians must remember that our bodies are temples wherein dwells the Holy Spirit, and this being so we recognise that the particular type of desecration which I have set forth is unthinkable for us.

A. MARSDEN.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

FOR JANUARY, 1964

| | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 5—Genesis 6 | Mark 1:1-20 |
| 12—Genesis 7 | Mark 1:21-45 |
| 19—Genesis 8 | Mark 2:1-22 |
| 26—Genesis 9 | Mark 2:23 to 3:12 |

MARK'S GOSPEL

We will first take a look at the author of this unique book. We should realise that the gospels are absolutely unique. The first three bear a remarkable similarity in the events they record. A most interesting study is of their decided differences, not in the events they record but in the way they are recorded. It is abundantly clear that the writers had different classes of people in view but the same purpose: the setting forth of the most wonderful human life that has ever been lived. That they were divinely inspired is beyond question. They convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment, and with other Scriptures embody the power of God unto salvation.

Mark's name appears first in Acts 12:12. It has been conjectured that he appears in the gospel itself as the fugitive young man in Mark 14:51-52. This is just a possibility, of course. However, the mention of his mother and the circumstances are enlightening, when we apply some thought. We can safely say that she was a woman of some substance, being a householder in Jerusalem. That Christians met in that house for prayer is a sign of (1) much concern about the imprisoned apostle Peter; (2) faith in the concern of God for him and them; (3) an open house for God's purposes and people; (4) godliness of heart. We are not surprised that her son became a worker in the church and a writer of truth. Some close connection with Peter himself is surely indicated by his turning to that house as soon as he realised the Lord had released him from prison. It must have been a familiar rendezvous for him and other faithful souls. We may then expect to find that Mark knew Peter well, and are not surprised that Mark was at Babylon with Peter, and is affectionately called "my son" (1 Peter 5:13).

Mark's activity in the church next appears in Acts 12:25. Barnabas and Saul had taken the bounty of the Gentile church in Antioch to the brethren in Judea (Acts 11:27-30). When they returned to Antioch, Mark went with them. This came about from a double reason. He was cousin to Barnabas (R.V. Col. 4:10). He was useful in the church and desired to share in the good work at

Antioch with these outstanding brethren. Their report and their gracious gifts had stirred the hearts of many in Jerusalem with the urge to "Go into all the world." The evidence for Mark's wish is seen in his going out with Barnabas and Saul on their first journey into strange places, but so far as we can judge, his enthusiasm failed when the wilds of Asia Minor were before them. He returned to Jerusalem (2 Cor. 11:26). We may be unfair in this, and must bear in mind he had probably faced the perils of persecution in Jerusalem: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). He was comparatively a young man.

Whereas, some years after, Barnabas was willing to take him on a second journey into the unknown. Paul refused on account of this previous falling back (Acts 15:37-41). Mark therefore went with Barnabas to Cyprus preaching, and Paul took Silas. We can read in this a characteristic of Barnabas, evidenced by his being called "son of encouragement" by the apostles (Acts 4:36). He felt more consideration for the younger man. It is good to know that the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas left no ill-feeling (1 Cor. 9:6), nor that between Paul and Mark, for in his last letter Paul wants Mark urgently for his help (2 Tim. 4:11), and affectionately refers to him when writing to Colossae (Col. 4:10) as one highly esteemed—"men that have been a comfort to me"—a fellow-worker (Philemon 24).

Mark's is the shortest gospel. The brevity of its opening is striking in its contrast with the other three. It seems to be concerned mainly with the activities of the Saviour. There are very few references to the Old Covenant scriptures. It has been called "the gospel of action." Mark may not have been an eye-witness himself but his literary work bears every mark we could wish of that feature. One has written of it "Mark's design is to present Jesus to us as the incarnate and wonder-working Son of God, living and acting among men, to portray Him in the fulness of His living energy." There are many graphic touches indicating the effect of the Lord's words and actions on the people.

In our January passages we have 1:22 and 27; 2:12 expressing the astonishment and wonder of the crowds; their pressing upon Him to hear and to have His help in 1:32 and 33; 2:1 and 2-13; 3:7 and 8. I doubt whether we ever realise what a tremendous labour and superhuman effort the Saviour must have put forth in these times, or what an impression was made. Do we not read it in Acts 10:37 when Peter said "that saying ye yourselves know, which was published"? He did not need to say much about the life and work of Jesus. It had been well known at Caesarea, though Jesus had never been near that town (so far as we

know). It is true the gospel had been preached by many but that consisted of the death and resurrection of the great prophet who had made His mark on His people's history in the three years or so of His public ministry. We dare to pun and say Mark's gospel has made its mark upon the world's history.

R. B. SCOTT.

Offices in the Church

HOSPITALITY

ONE of the qualifications of an elder (1st Tim. 3:2) is, "given to hospitality." Yet none of us would assert that hospitality is the prerogative of elders only, but we would agree it is a duty and a privilege that devolves on all members of the church.

It is, however, a duty in which our women folk have a special interest. It is they who have the ability to "home-make"—and by that we mean creating the home atmosphere that makes hospitality what it is in the churches of Christ today. We know of no religious body where this Christianlike characteristic is so marked, and we say this in no spirit of self-righteousness, but from a wide experience of being, as it were, at the receiving end of this great service to the churches.

It has been our privilege during these last forty years to have been an honoured guest in more than one hundred and forty homes of the brethren, as a visiting preacher, and this takes no account of the many other visits to homes on other business. So we feel in all modesty able to discourse on this subject with a reasonable amount of authority.

One of the dictionary meanings of the word hospitality is, "receiving and entertaining strangers without reward." So we see that in our accepted form of hospitality we seldom fulfil even this dictionary definition, except in those cases where a preacher is unknown to us personally.

We are, however, concerned with church hospitality, and its tremendous impact on inter-church life. It has been our experience to be guest in the homes of succeeding generations, unto the second and third, in certain families and faithfully has the tradition of hospitality been handed down. In every case it has been undertaken, not in a sense of obligation, because "mother" did it, but as a "reasonable service," one that was undertaken without question as the accepted order of things in the church.

This service of hospitality has proved time and again to be a real bulwark in the churches, binding us together as nothing else could. In common with

most public men we have had cause to differ from brethren in time past, often exchanging sharp letters with those with whom we have differed. Yet, come to be guest in these brethren's homes, and talk over these differences round the dining-room table, or round the fire at night before retiring; engage in prayer with them for God's blessing on the morrow's services and you will find it difficult, if not nigh impossible, to retain hard feelings against that brother. Rather will you find that he is just as zealous for the truth as you are and the mutual exchange of thought and ideas has given you a different view of the points at issue, and whilst perhaps not reaching agreement, you have achieved understanding, which is important.

Hospitality has also cemented friendships over the years, for this service of hospitality is not just a question of "tea-partying" or exchanging visits with those with whom we agree, although this has its part among friends in the church. But let us remember that real hospitality is entered into without hope of reward. Did not the Lord himself warn us against doing to others as they do to us? "Do not even the sinners the same?" The real test is "What do ye more than others?" Where he performed service to others . . . there was need.

This is also a service in which the women can really shine, and a service beyond the immediate need can thus be rendered. Much of the service we ourselves have been able to render over the years would have been impossible without these good folks opening their homes to us. We recall with affection the words of one brother in whose home we have been a guest many times. "I am not able to preach the gospel myself, so I do the next best thing: I entertain those in my home that can," and a real service he and others are doing for that gospel.

We have had many experiences while being guest in the brethren's homes, both sad and otherwise. We recall looking forward to being a guest in one brother's home, only to learn a day or two before that he had passed away. Would we officiate at his funeral? In the home where we had experienced so many happy hours, and in which we had confidently looked forward to many more, it was our sorrowful duty to offer consolation to a grief-stricken family. On another occasion we had to visit a brother and learnt he was dying of cancer; he knew his trouble and was prepared for the end. It was a moving experience to talk with one so confident of the life beyond: as we left him he spoke of "seeing us in the morning." We puzzled over what he meant, till two days later we received word he had died, and it came to us what that good brother meant.

We would however like to conclude on a brighter note. We recall many humorous incidents: so many we could almost fill a book. Two must suffice. Many years ago we were to serve a church some distance away, and as it would be late when we had the mid-day meal we fortified the inner man with a good breakfast of ham and eggs. On our arrival we learnt that the brother with whom we should have stayed was ill in hospital. However, his good lady insisted we have dinner with her before she went to hospital to see her husband. Apologising for what she called a makeshift dinner, she placed before us a plate of bacon and eggs. To make matters worse, the cold July day with typical English perverseness had turned out scorchingly hot. We were then informed that we would be having tea with the married son of the family, and his wife, guessing our meal would not have been up to the customary standard her husband's parents invariably gave, solemnly informed us that, as we had not had much dinner she had made a good tea—bacon and eggs! We were a long time before we could face that otherwise delectable dish again.

On another occasion we were to serve a church in a colliery district, where the brethren worked hard in the local mines, and where the traditional dish of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding was much in evidence, and in huge quantities. We found our dinner-plate filled far beyond our digestive capacity, and tentatively suggested to the brother that we doubted whether we could manage all that; to which he replied: "Get it down: an empty sack can't stand up."

Such is the service of hospitality, may it long be practised by the brethren, playing its part in binding the church together and helping us to serve Him, "who causes His sun to shine on the just and on the unjust," without discrimination.

HAROLD BAINES.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Aylesbury.—We rejoice to report another addition to our number. On Thursday, November 14th William Gillions was baptised into Christ. He was formerly with the Baptists and was contacted during the June campaign. He has been studying with us since that time. He is

a young man of talent, and we pray he may be a great asset to the work here.

L. Channing.

Park Road, Blackburn.—The church has been greatly encouraged in her work for the Master as a result of the recent labours of Bro. Gary B. Adams, who travelled from Holland to assist the brethren here. During the period Nov. 2nd to Nov. 10th, 1963 he conducted a gospel campaign in our own meeting room, and in a larger hall where, on each occasion, the gospel of our Lord and Saviour was faithfully preached. The power of the word was evidenced among us by the decision of one to put on her Lord in the way that was so clearly set forth—in the act of baptism. On Thursday evening, November 7th, Heather Cunningham obeyed the terms of the gospel and was added to the church.

We rejoice that the seed sown in past years has finally brought forth fruit to His honour and glory, and pray that others, as yet unsaved, who attended the meetings and heard the preaching of the cross may yield themselves in willing obedience.

On Saturday, November 9th, Bro. Frank Worgan presented to us all a word-picture of a crucified Messiah, after which Bro. Gary again left us in no doubt of our need to obey Him. We give thanks to these two faithful brethren for their labours amongst us; to the brethren in the Wigan area and nearer home who encouraged us by their whole-hearted support, and to all who in any way helped to make this effort so memorable. To God be the glory. R.R.

East Ardsley.—The church celebrated its anniversary on Saturday and Lord's Day, October 26th and 27th. About 80 took tea on the Saturday, and in the evening the room was well filled. Bro. Amos Barlow (Morley) was chairman and gave some reminiscences of earlier days of the church. Bro. Albert Winstanley followed with a stirring message on "What is God like?" Bro. Winstanley also served the church on Lord's Day, in the meeting for breaking of bread and in the evening gospel meeting. We thank God for a wonderful weekend. E. Pickersgill.

Sible Hedingham (Essex).—On Lord's Day, December 1st, Robert A. Limb responded to the gospel invitation and was baptised. We pray that he might grow in grace and knowledge and be used of God to His praise and glory.

The Church of Christ in West Cameroon.

—West Cameroon had never heard the gospel as it ought to be preached until in the fifties when American brethren evangelising Eastern Nigeria paid the country brief visits. Their visits resulted in the planting of the church in Tiko, Victoria and Kumba, but the members were all Nigerians.

A few years later the American brethren sent four Nigerian evangelists to West Cameroon. Other congregations, all of Nigerians, grew in Kongwe, Modeka and Barombi Kotto. The evangelists did a nice job, but with the ceasing of their support the work received a halt and it dwindled. Only two of the preachers still remain in Kumba and Barombi Kotto, the one entirely on his own, the other on a very meagre support.

The first two Cameroon converts are Bros. B. T. Kuhtsu and N. Elangwe. Kuhtsu was converted during a public lecture in Kumba, and Elangwe obeyed the gospel in Eastern Nigeria through reading a booklet, "You Can Be Just a Christian." The interesting thing is that both men, though in two widely separated places, decided to study the scriptures in order to preach the word to their people. So they entered a Bible Training College in Eastern Nigeria in 1962.

By their vacation efforts they planted two congregations composed purely of Cameroon natives in Mbonge and Pondo. The majority of the members are illiterate, the rest are semi-literate. In the middle of last year, 1962, in one of the congregations we had an average of 17 regular members in attendance on the Lord's day. But on the Lord's day of 25-8-63 there were only seven lukewarm members in attendance.

The brethren of the Haddington Church of Christ, Haddington, Scotland, for whom the Lord be praised, sent twenty pounds to this church last year to help it to put up its own meeting-place.

There are no preachers, hence the weakness of the few established churches. Christianity is a taught religion. Only full-time preaching and teaching will remedy the sad situation in West Cameroon. Britain had brought the country to political maturity. Spiritually the country is still under servitude. I therefore very earnestly appeal to the British brethren to come to our aid and lead us to spiritual independence also. Help us with funds to provide a few of the Cameroon churches with preachers.

Five thousand francs, the equivalence of a little over £7 per month will be adequate for a standard VI two-year trained preacher with a wife. I very well know there is plenty in the brethren's hands to do, but I do hope that for the suffering souls in a distant land too they can spare just a little money for a great work. For the love that links each of us to all the brethren all over the globe, kindly send your contribution to Bro. James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland, for the Cameroon Preachers' Fund. If a church or an individual desires to support a preacher alone, let such contact Bro. D. N. Elangwe, Bible Training College, Box 35, Abak, E. Nigeria. All money sent will be acknowledged, and accounted for to the brethren through Bro. James R. Gardiner.

Now that the world is beginning to realise the great sin of schism is the time to spare no effort in sounding the word abroad in its purity louder than ever before, to bring about the answer to our Lord's prayer.—By D. N. Elangwe, Box 35, Abak, E. Nigeria.

[Bro. James R. Gardiner, of the church at Haddington, East Lothian, has agreed to receive and forward gifts of money and/or in kind (Bibles, commentaries and other religious books, pamphlets etc) to Bro. Elangwe. Bro. Gardiner will give regular reports through the "S.S." of activities in this respect. Please send to James R. Gardiner, 88 Davidson Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.]

OBITUARY

Dewsbury.—The church regrets to announce the death of Sister Gibson on November 20th. She had been a very regular attender at our meetings for many years and latterly she had been prevented by illness. We miss her cheery presence.

R. McDonald.

Newtongrange.—The church has suffered the loss of a brother beloved. Bro. John Clark passed away suddenly on November 26th and was laid to his rest on November 29th.

We commend to our heavenly Father his wife, our Sister Clark; his daughter, our Sister Jean Robertson, and all the rest of his family, that they may receive the comfort and consolation they so much need to strengthen them in their hour of trial.

W. H. Allan.

COMING EVENTS

Eastwood.—Please book the Easter weekend, March 28th, 29th and 30th, 1964, for united effort in the Midlands. Conference, devotional, and gospel meetings. Times of meetings to be announced later. Speakers: R. Limb, G. Lodge, T. McDonald, E. Makin, A. Marsden, J. Thomasson, E. Winter. Enquiries for hospitality to Bro. G. E. Bullock, Station Road, Ilkeston. Other enquiries to Chas Limb, 32 Chewton Street, Eastwood, Nottm.

Ince-in-Makerfield (Wigan).— Special meetings are being planned for the holiday weekend (March 27th-30th, 1964), God willing. Book the dates. Plan to be with us. Accommodation gladly provided. Fuller details later.

THERE is only one logical and consistent way to live and that is as glad bond-slaves of the Saviour. The life of obedience is a life offered up, a life transformed, and it is the only life which will ever really know what it is to be in the will of God. Whatsoever He saith unto you—do it!

THE world today is longing for reality, the world is watching us and waiting to see if this "but" has come into our lives, and whether there has been a real transformation. I believe there are very many hungry people today, ready for the message of the Gospel if they can see the power of it in your life and in mine.

THROUGH faith the divine life flows in to us—through love it flows out to others. To abide in Christ is to live a life of constant faith Christ-ward, and constant love man-ward.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is published monthly. Prices: Home, one copy for one year, 10/-; two copies 18/6; three copies 26/6 post free. Canada and U.S.A.: one copy, one dollar 50 cents. All orders and payments to the 'S.S.' Agent and Treasurer: PAUL JONES, 41 Pendragon Road, Birmingham 22B. Tel. Birchfield 5559.

All correspondence, including articles, news items, coming events, etc., to be sent, before the 10th of the month to the Editor, C. MELLING, 133 Long Lane, Hindley, Lanes. Payments to PAUL JONES, address as above.

EVANGELIST FUND: Contributions to R. McDONALD, "Aldersyde," 10 Mardale Road, Bennett Lane, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Secretary of Conference Committee: ROBERT McDONALD, "Aldersyde," 10 Mardale Road, Dewsbury, Yorks.

NYASALAND Mission: Contributions to W. STEELE, 31 Niddrie Road, Portobello, Edinburgh, Mid Lothian.

Hymn Book Agent and Treasurer: FRED HARDY, 73a Bridge Street, Morley, Leeds, Yorkshire. Tel. Morley 255.

CHANGE OF SECRETARY

Dalmellington Church.—Bro. Harry McGuin, 38 Green Hill Avenue, New Cumock, Ayrshire.

BOUND VOLUMES

Will brethren who desire to have a bound volume of the last three years "S.S." monthly copies please place an order as soon as convenient, so that all can be supplied, with few remainders. Price 16/6 per copy, post free, bound full black leather-cloth lettered in gold on front and spine, 1961-62-63. Orders with remittance to Paul Jones, 41 Pendragon Road, Birmingham 22B.

BOUND VOLUMES OF "TRUTH IN LOVE"

I HAVE had numerous requests for bound volumes of "Truth In Love," and these have now been prepared. They cover issues 1-24 (this is the first volume) and issues 25-103, the second volume. Prices and information from: A E. Winstanley, 43a Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

A Tract**"TWENTY QUESTIONS"**

Prices for Quantities:—

| | | | |
|----------|------|-------------|------|
| 250 | 15/9 | 750 | 42/6 |
| 500 | 29/- | 1,000 | 55/6 |

Additional charge for overprinting local announcements. Orders to W. Barker, Printer, Station Road, Langley Mill, Notts. Payment to Bro. R. McDonald, 10 Mardale Road, Bennett Lane, Dewsbury, Yorks.