

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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APRIL, 1957

SPECIAL NOTICE

CONFERENCE

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST at HAMILTON STREET, BLACKBURN, LANCS., invite the brethren to meet in Conference on SATURDAY, 20th APRIL, 1957, in their meeting place in Hamilton Street.

Luncheon will be served between 12 noon and 1.15 p.m. for visitors coming from a distance.

AFTERNOON

Business, 2.15 Discussion, 3.30

Subject:

'Useful activities for the younger members of the Church.'

To be introduced by three eight minute talks:

(i) General approach, guiding principles, objectives, pitfalls.
BRO. H. BAINES, Morley.

(ii) Activities suitable for indoors (meeting places).
BRO. ROY RENSHAW, Blackburn.

(iii) Activities away from meeting places: in homes, outdoor, for groups, for individuals.

BRO. DEREK L. DANIELL, Bristol.

TEA, 4.30

PUBLIC EVENING MEETING, 6.30

Chairman: BRO. JOHN PRITT.

'THE GLAD TIDINGS'

BRO WALTER CROSTHWAITE, Ulverston

BRO. ROBERT McDONALD, Dewsbury

Short talk on the NEW HYMN BOOK by BRO. A. L. FRITH, Cleveleys.

Brothers and Sisters intending staying in Blackburn over the week-end are asked to write Bro. Roy Renshaw, Hospitality Secretary, 125 Pilmuir Road, Blackburn, Lancs.

All other correspondence should be addressed to Bro. H. Wilson, 10 Hollin Bridge Street, Blackburn, Lancs.

If arriving in Blackburn by train, take a bus to Infirmary. via Bolton Road. Fare 2d.

PROVERBS Chapter 27, verse 17.

Life and Death

IT is a trite saying, but nonetheless true, that the language of the English Bible has won its way into our everyday speech. In books, newspapers and magazines we often find quotations from the Book of books. Politicians cite Scripture texts; the Bible is quoted in historic documents; passages from it are inscribed over buildings housing learned societies, and on monuments. Sometimes the Bible is quoted to establish a point or clinch an issue. It is true that often these 'quotations' are misquotations; that a text is taken out of context; that a quotation is given a meaning it was never intended to have; that sometimes the writer or speaker is not conscious that he is quoting the Bible; and that even the devil can quote Scripture for his own ends. But the fact remains that Scripture *is* quoted as having a bearing upon all kinds of matters, mundane as well as divine, material as well as spiritual.

The choice before us

These thoughts arise from having seen such a quotation in a supplement issued with the *Manchester Guardian* on the occasion of the recent opening by the Queen of the atomic power station at Calder Hall. The supplement contained a half-page advertisement headed with the words, 'I have set before you life and death.' We wonder how many readers were aware that the words were quoted from Deuteronomy 30:19, where Moses, in rehearsing the faithfulness of God to the Israelites, quotes Jehovah as saying, 'I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse therefore choose life that thou mayest live.'

Could words more apt be used to convey the awful destruction and the marvellous blessing within the reach of mankind through the development of atomic energy? It is sad that, in spite of protests and appeals from other countries and in our own Parliament, the Government insists on carrying out its programme of atomic and hydrogen bomb explosions. But let us not forget that, to her honour, this country is the first to launch upon a programme of peaceful and industrial use of this mighty power of the atom. Used in this way who knows what blessings can be conferred upon mankind? Used for the contrary purpose we know not, even now, the horrors which can be released upon the world. In other words men have in their hands a weapon whose death-dealing power is not known, and which, if used, may prove to be uncontrollable.

How this teaches us that the same thing can prove a blessing or a curse, life or death. The old Book is again proved to be abreast with the most advanced science. For are we not learning more and more with all our discoveries and inventions that they can be good or evil according to the use to which we put them? Films, radio, television—so much was expected of these inventions, yet so little of benefit has resulted. And yet what power for good they could be: films and television in helping us to see countries and people and their ways of life which otherwise would be to us simply names; the radio in giving us the best music, educating by talks on worthwhile subjects, and in preaching the gospel according to the New Testament and not according to conventional religion through sermons calculated not to offend anyone's susceptibilities, pious homilies without depth or power.

For good or ill

It is tragic that so often what could be used for noble and good ends should be prostituted to popular demand or debased tastes. It seems inherent in man that, as Ovid, the ancient Greek, wrote, 'I know the best and yet the worst I do.' It is said that Orville Wright, one of the two brothers who invented the aeroplane, expressed his bitter regret that the invention had ever been used, as he saw it in the first world war, to bring destruction

and death. Yet what blessings has the same machine brought, for instance in taking valuable and scarce medicines to cases urgently needing them, and in rescuing those who would otherwise have perished miserably. The same applies to many medicines—rightly used they mean life and health, wrongly used they bring agony and death. The motor-car is another instance : too often when a Christian has purchased a car he has used it to take his family away from the worship and service of God. Yet, as we all know, many Christians use the same invention to bring the aged, the feeble and those living at a distance to the meeting-house, when otherwise it would be impossible for them to attend.

The importance of choosing highly

Blessing or curse, life or death—which? More important and urgent than any of the inventions mentioned is a mighty power not discovered or produced by man but given him by God—the power of God and the wisdom of God, the gospel. Of it Paul says that he is ‘not ashamed, for it is the power (dynamite) of God unto salvation.’ (Rom. 1:16). He speaks of it again as ‘the gospel . . . by which also ye are saved’ (1 Cor. 15:1) and as ‘the gospel of your salvation’ (Eph. 1:13). But it is a solemn thought that the same power that can be our salvation can be our condemnation. Paul, the inspired ambassador of the King of kings, spoke of himself in preaching the gospel as “to the one a savour from death unto death: to the other a savour from life unto life’ (2 Cor. 2:16). He was echoing Jesus Christ when He said, ‘the words I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life.’ (John 6:63). But of those same words Jesus said, ‘He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my sayings hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day.’ (John 12:48). The same message, the same gospel, the same words can mean life or death, blessing or cursing.

Not all depends upon the preacher of the gospel; much devolves upon the hearer. Jesus demonstrated in His parable of the sower that the soil is of equal importance with the seed, the receiving heart of equal importance with the gospel. We see, therefore, the responsibility resting upon each of us—our own salvation or condemnation. We choose whether we shall have life or death. God is not responsible for any who shall be lost: ‘As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.’ (Ezek. 33:11). The Lord ‘is longsuffering, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.’ (2 Pet. 3:9).

‘A blessing for you—will you take it?’

Choose ye to-day.’

‘What shall the answer be?’

EDITOR.

Expediency II.

IN 1 Corinthians 10:23-29 Paul points out that there is nothing wrong in eating meat offered to idols, because the idol is inanimate and the meat nothing. Now, if a heathen host informs you that certain meat was offered to idols, reject it for his sake, because he associates that meat with idol worship and to him the meat is something. In 1 Corinthians 8 Paul again shows us that there is nothing wrong in eating such meat, but if a brother who is weak be with us we must refrain from it in case he is led into idolatry by our actions (v. 10). If we use our liberty in doing certain things which are in themselves right so that brethren are offended so as fall, then we are sinning against them and Christ (vv. 9, 11-13). It would be more expedient for us for a millstone to be hung around our neck and we cast into the deepest seas than to cause one of the little ones who believe in Christ to fall (Matt. 18:6).

Let us not be puffed up with our knowledge that such and such a thing is not wrong, and persist in it even though it offends. We too easily say, 'He's just got a bee in his bonnet: take no notice of him.' If that is our attitude we know nothing; we are ignorant of the spirit of Christ, which is love. Love builds up (1 Cor. 8:1-3). Never say, 'Why should I deny myself of such-and-such, because so-and-so cannot resist it?' 'Love seeketh not her own' (1 Cor. 13:5). A brother might be convinced that it is wrong to eat meat and that we should all be vegetarians. Remember, if he thinks meat is wrong it is wrong for him to eat it (Rom. 14:14, 23). Let us not despise him with our superior knowledge, and force him to offend his conscience (Rom. 14:1-3). That is not the way of love. "But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died' (Rom. 14:15).

Surely the things of this life have not such a power over us that we cannot deny ourselves of them. ('God shall destroy both it and them,' 1 Cor. 6:13). Romans 14:17: 'For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink: but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.' These are the things that count. And Paul concludes: 'Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ' (1 Cor. 11:1; see previous verses in 1 Cor. 10). In 1 Corinthians 8:13 he says: 'I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother offend.' Then he goes on to point out that he is a freeman in Christ (just as we are); not only that: he was a preacher of the gospel, even an apostle, and as such had a right to be supported by those who obeyed the gospel, a right to be married to a Christian wife, and so on; yet he availed himself of none, because he did not think it profitable (read 1 Cor. 9). He discarded everything that would hinder his work.

Look at Christ: 'Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.' 'Though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.' 'Who, being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped at to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.'

Don't say, 'Does the Bible condemn it?' but, 'Is it profitable, beneficial, expedient, advantageous, for the gospel, others, the brethren and ourselves?' when deciding how to use your liberty in lawful actions.

Application according to circumstances

In considering whether a thing is expedient or not, much depends on circumstances or environment. The question of meat offered to idols does not affect us, because meat is not offered to idols in this country. From 1 Corinthians 6:12 to 10:1 Paul deals with the subject of expediency. In chapter 7 he discusses the inadvisability of marriage during the persecutions at that time. Paul advised all single Christians to remain single (vv. 7-8) for their 'own profit' (v. 35), because in that time of turmoil (vv. 26, 29-31) the persecution would distract the partners from the Lord's work in their concern for each others' welfare (vv. 28, 32-35). Normally it is advisable to marry (1 Tim. 5:14) but in persecution it is more expedient to remain single (1 Cor. 7:40).

Modern examples

In the early days of wireless it was not profitable to have a crystal set, because once the earphones were on the novelty kept them on. In these days the novelty of television makes it unprofitable to have a set. You might be able to discriminate between the programmes. You might be able to switch it off to study the Bible or go visiting, to help the sick

or attend meetings. But can your fellow-brethren, especially those with little self-control? Your TV set might destroy a fellow-brother for whom Christ died. Would you use your liberty to sin so against him and Christ?

There is nothing sinful in alcohol. It is excellent for motor-cars, but it could make you a drunkard. In drinking it your example could turn a brother into a drunkard, and many non-Christians away from the truth.

Some brethren look upon smoking as a matter of expediency, but I believe that it is unlawful. Forgetting about cancer, smoking definitely harms the body, defiling the blood and arteries. Your body might be strong enough to resist it, but that does not disprove the harmful properties of tobacco. The body is not made for smoking nor smoking for the body. Brethren who are slaves to this habit are bad examples to others and a poor advertisement to non-Christians.

The matter of expediency is not confined to TV sets, cinemas etc.; it covers every lawful aspect of a Christian's life and where I work, what I wear, where I go, how I spend my spare time, how I speak, etc. We should ask ourselves, 'Is it expedient to God, others and ourselves?'

Rom 14:21: 'It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.' 1 Corinthians 9:20-23: 'To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them . . . To them that are without law, as without law . . . that I might gain them . . . to the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.' Hebrews 12:1: 'Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.'

ALLAN ASHURST.

Points for Preachers-IV.

The Physical aspects of preaching

WE have in the human voice one of the most marvellous instruments God ever made, and this instrument we have to learn to use in the proclamation of God's Word. All preachers are not endowed with a natural speaking voice, at least as far as public speaking is concerned, most of us have to develop our voices.

The object we should strive to attain is threefold: (1) to be heard; (2) to be heard distinctly; (3) to be heard all the time. To be heard one must speak distinctly, pronouncing syllables and consonants clearly, speaking not too quickly nor too slowly, but expressively.

To be heard distinctly means that all should hear you, even at the back of the hall. To do this your voice must have carrying power, not always attained by shouting. This requires time and thought. Try reading aloud to yourself in front of a mirror; have a good reserve of air in your lungs, as singers do in sustaining a long note. Make the sound come from the centre of your mouth, not from down in your throat or your nostrils. As you pronounce the words exaggerate them by mouthing them in front of the mirror. Perseverance will soon enable you to speak distinctly and give your voice carrying power. Far too many fail to speak in any but a conversational tone, with the consequence that often the occupants of the first two rows of seats are the only ones to hear. To be heard all the time a speaker must be able to make his voice carry in the quietest part of his message.

There are parts when we must, out of reverence, speak quietly, not necessarily softly: for instance, our Lord's sufferings. A mistake many speakers make on such occasions is to drop the voice back into the throat until their utterances become a mere whisper; and yet it is possible to make even a whisper carry, by proper use of the voice, to the furthestmost part of the hall.

Avoid over-straining your voice. 'Speaker's throat' can be a serious and damaging complaint. Try to keep from catching cold; if you get a cold lay off speaking so as not to risk damage to those vital vocal cords.

Pronunciation and Enunciation

Pronunciation is the giving of the proper sounds and accent to words, giving each vowel, consonant and syllable its proper value. Wrong pronunciation can have disastrous, and sometimes humorous, effects upon our discourses. I remember one very earnest brother solemnly assuring the brethren that the prodigal son went into a far country and wasted his substance on 'righteous' living. A good self-pronouncing dictionary is a great help. Always keep one handy, for it is wise also to know the meaning of the words we use.

Enunciation is equally important: this is the art of speaking sentences distinctly and not running the words into one another, such as saying, 'Whatsthematter?' instead of 'What is the matter?' As words are made up of letters and syllables so our speech is made up of words, phrases and sentences. In reading we find verses and paragraphs which need studying as to their meaning and context, and in turn speech needs presenting in its sentences and paragraphs clearly and distinctly. Briefly, then, pronunciation has to do with the sounding of words, enunciation with sentences. Let both be done clearly and with meaning.

Learn to speak English

This may seem strange to the reader, but the English I mean is that which makes one easily understood, which after all is the first essential of grammar. Many speakers indulge in ambiguity—couching their message in double-meaning phrases, puzzling the hearers and leaving one wondering 'What was he getting at?'

We often speak best when under strong conviction, and then people usually know what we mean without difficulty. If you are at all doubtful about your grammar, don't hesitate to take a course of English at an evening school if you are young enough, and thus learn how to use our language.

A master of English does not usually show it off. I recall a schoolmaster with a superb knowledge of English; he could express himself in a variety of ways, yet as a public speaker he was the world's worst. Why? Because he delighted in flowery language and an over-use of superlatives, expressing the same thought in every possible way. Knowledge of English is only good when you know how to use it. I call to mind another speaker who, by intelligent use of language, could say more in a quarter of an hour than could most speakers in double the time: he made every word carry meaning, nothing he said was superfluous, every word was made to be a vehicle to convey his thoughts, which is, after all, what words are for.

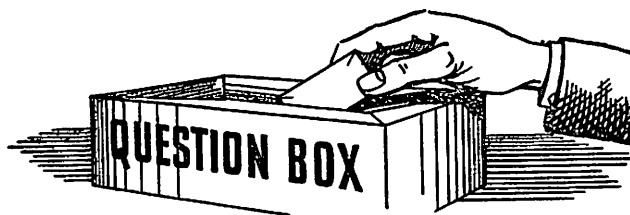
Our Lord was a master of the language he spoke. I advise readers to study the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5, 6 and 7), not merely the subject matter, but the phraseology, the way He put things together. And note the verdict at the end—'He spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes.' Note also His discourse to the Pharisees in Matthew

24 and 25—the first, denunciation; the second, a quite different type of address.

Finally, for reverence in prayer read John 17, one of the loveliest passages in the Bible, where Jesus prays to His Father on behalf of the disciples: truly a masterpiece in expressive language. Then make Psalm 19:14 your personal prayer: 'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer.'

(Concluded)

H. BAINES.



CONDUCTED BY
L. CHANNING

Send your questions
direct to L. Channing,
9 Ripon Street,
Aylesbury, Bucks.

Q. MOST commentators indicate that Hebrews 11:35 is a reference to 2 Maccabees, chapters 6 and 7. Does this contradict your statement that the Apocrypha was not endorsed or referred to by a New Testament writer?

A. The writer does not know of any commentator who would assert that the writer to the Hebrews was alluding solely to 2 Maccabees, 6 and 7 when he wrote the words contained in this verse. The verse is in such general terms that it would be rash to do so. Commentators refer to 2 Maccabees 6 and 7 rather as an *illustration* of the verse in Hebrews, for in these chapters is a description of some of the terrible tortures faithful Jews suffered at the hands of the Syrian tyrant, Antiochus Epiphanes, rather than renounce their faith.

However, there are also other incidental connections. One is, that the writer to the Hebrews uses in the verse under discussion the Greek verb *tumpanizo*, which is translated by the word 'torment' (R.V. margin, 'beaten to death'). This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, but does occur in 2 Maccabees 6:19. It refers to the tympanum, a drum-like instrument of torture over which the victim was stretched and beaten to death with clubs or thongs. 2 Maccabees 6 describes how the aged priest Eleazar suffered martyrdom in this way.

But supposing it be granted that the writer to the Hebrews had these chapters in 2 Maccabees in mind when he wrote this verse, this in no way affects the non-canoncity of the book, nor does it affect the statements made in the original answer. The two books of Maccabees, though uninspired, do in the main record history between the Old and New Testaments, fairly accurately. If the writer to the Hebrews is referring to these chapters at all, it is because of the historical truth they contain, and not to endorse them, or to quote from them as inspired writings. He is doing no more than Jesus did when He referred to historical events outside Divine revelation (see Luke 13:1-4). Paul even quoted from a pagan poet (Acts 17:28) but in so doing, he did not endorse the quotation as inspired; neither did the writer to the Hebrews if he referred to 2 Maccabees 6 and 7.

The statement in the original answer is therefore still true, that 'Neither the Lord nor the apostles ever quoted from, nor endorsed the Apocryphal books.' Perhaps this is best summed up by Henry Gough, who made a special study of the subject. In the editorial to his book, *The New*

Testament Quotations Collated with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, he says in reference to the section on Apocryphal Quotations, 'Though it cannot be denied that this division comprises some striking coincidences of expression, I am satisfied that not one of them is really a quotation.'

Q. How did the Holy Spirit independently of the human medium, i.e., Church Councils, tell the world which books were to be held as scripture and which books were to be rejected? Canon Westcott admits that as late as A.D. 300 the Second Epistle of St. Peter appears to be almost or entirely unused or unknown (*Bible in the Church*, p.34), and Dr. Farrar adds that it is accepted as St. Peter's mainly on the authority of the Church of the Fourth Century (*Early Days of Christianity*, vol. 1, p.176) as you state, the Council of Carthage.

A. This question, sent in by a Roman Catholic correspondent, is a supplementary one to the answer given on the Canon of Scripture, in September, 1956.

If the questioner will read again the original answer, he will see that it was not claimed that the Holy Spirit 'gave the world the canon of scripture' independently of any human agency, any more than the body of truth of which the New Testament is formed was given without human agency. But the claim was that the human medium was not the Council of Carthage, or any other so-called Church Council. The claim that the early councils were Roman Catholic and that they gave us the Bible in its present form, is false on both counts. Firstly, Catholicism had not come into existence at that time. Secondly, as was clearly demonstrated in the original answer, the Canon of both the Old and the New Testaments was completed and recognised long before any of the Church councils. It was also shown that the Canon of the New Testament was being formed in Apostolic days, while the church was still under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In regard to Peter's Second Epistle, it is true that this was one of the books that were not so widely circulated in the early church, as were some of the other books of the New Testament. The reasons for this were touched upon in the original answer. It is also true that Origen, and later Eusebius, expressed doubt as to the genuineness of the Epistle. But this was just the fallible judgment of men, unaided by any direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In fact, how fallible was Origen's judgment is shown in his statement on the Second Epistle of Peter, for we find him accepting the error that the Church of Christ is built upon Peter. His statement has been preserved by Eusebius: 'Peter, on whom Christ's Church is built, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, has left one Epistle generally accepted. Grant also a second, for it is a matter of question.' Certainly, as was observed in the original reply, the doubt cast upon the genuineness of Peter's second letter no more made it uninspired than Luther's rejection of the Epistle of James proved that Epistle to be uninspired.

Again, it does not mean that the Epistle was not recognised and used in the early church. A number of the Early Fathers use phrases and expressions in their writings which show that they must have been acquainted with the Epistle. There are such references in the First Epistle of Clement of Rome, chapter 23—written to the Corinthians about the end of the first century. The Second Epistle of Clement, about the middle of the second century, also has a reference. Polycarp, reputed to have known the Apostle John, and writing at the beginning of the second century, seems also to refer to Peter's Second Epistle. References are also found in the writings of Melito of Sardis, A.D. 170; and Theophilus of Antioch, A.D. 168-180. Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 165-220, gives a list of New Testament books which certainly seem to include the Epistle.

Hippolytus of Portus, A.D. 220, undoubtedly makes a reference to it. Origen's reference has already been noted, while mention was made in the original answer that Eusebius, A.D. 270-340, included the Epistle in his fifty Bibles. All this was long before the Council of Carthage, which was not until A.D. 397.

As for the quotation made from *The Bible in the Church*, by Westcott, the questioner fails to do that writer justice, for it is evident that he is speaking comparatively. Westcott makes the position quite clear in his book, *The History of the Canon of the New Testament*. He says, 'From the close of the second century the history of the Canon is simple, and its proof clear. It is allowed even by those who have reduced the genuine Apostolic works to the narrowest limits, that from the time of Irenaeus, [A.D. 130-200] the New Testament was composed essentially of the same books which we receive at present, and that they were regarded with the same reverence as is now shown to them' (p.6, 6th edn.). Note carefully what this great authority on the subject is saying: that even the most severe critics must admit that the New Testament was in the form we now have it, *at least* at the close of the second century. Once again, this was long before the Council of Carthage, or any other council of the church. We repeat therefore the conclusion made in the original answer, that, 'All the Council of Carthage did was to decide, on human authority alone, that the Canon needed formal and "official" recognition.'

In regard to the questioner's reference from Farrar's *Early Days of Christianity*, that writer cuts the ground from under his own feet and the questioner's. In the chapter on the Second Epistle of Peter in his book, *The Messages of the Books* he says, 'The Church of the fourth century was in no respect better able to decide upon critical questions than we are—in many respects less so.' With that we heartily agree. But the Canon of the New Testament does not depend on the fallible and inadequate critical ability of the church of the fourth century. It was formed by the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit, several centuries before.

Grace Sufficient

Grace when the sun is shining, Lord;
 Grace when the sky is black.
 Grace when I get the unkind word;
 Grace on the too smooth track.
 Grace when I'm elbowed into a nook;
 Grace when I get my turn.
 Grace when the dinner will not cook;
 Grace when the fire won't burn.
 Grace when my duties all go wrong;
 Grace when they seem all right.
 Grace when 'tis gladness, praise and song;
 Grace when I have to fight.
 Grace when my dress is fresh and new;
 Grace when it's worn and old.
 Grace when my purse is empty too;
 Grace when it's full of gold.
 Grace when the saved ones don't act saved,
 And lay the blame on me.
 Grace when the grace I've asked and craved
 Seems denied to me, Lord, by Thee.
 Grace when the midnight hours I tell;
 Grace when the morn is nigh.
 Grace when I'm healthy, strong and well;
 Grace when I come to die.

Home

SO LONG as we have homes to which men turn
At close of day ;

So long as we have homes where children are
And women stay ;

If love and loyalty and faith be found
Across those sills,

A stricken nation can recover from
Its gravest ills.

So long as we have homes where fires burn
And there is bread ;

So long as we have homes where lamps are lit
And prayers are said ;

Although a people falter through the dark,
And nations grope—

With God Himself back of those little homes,
We have sure hope.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

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| April 7—Exodus 17. | John 4:1-26. |
| „ 14—Exodus 18. | 1 Tim. 3. |
| „ 21—Exodus 19. | Heb. 12:14-29. |
| „ 28—Exodus 20:1-21. | Matt. 5:1-26. |

The Ten Commandments

One of my earliest recollections is of learning these by heart. The school-mistress was a faithful member of the Anglican Church, so that this was part of the ritual like 'The Lord's Prayer,' but her insistence that all the children in her school should be able to recite the commandments without mistake was a good thing. Apart from the fourth commandment, and that would be good practice for anyone, every word is good and true for to-day. It is doubtless the failure of the schools to be so insistent on things like this that accounts for juvenile delinquency in some measure—how much none can say because so many contributory factors are at work.

The respect for the one true God instilled into the mind of a child must influence after-life for good. There is so much weakness about duty nowadays that it is becoming unusual and out-of-date even to talk about duty. Things must be done out of love and for plea-

sure rather than because they are duties. Nevertheless we shall be judged upon the standard of duty. Until we learn that duty comes first and arises from love to God and neighbour, we cannot hope to be really helpful or useful in society, nor can we find real satisfaction apart from it.

It may be that due to our insistence upon the validity and superiority of the New Covenant, we have somewhat neglected the Ten Commandments. It will do us good to give some thought to their truth and their importance.

First look at the circumstances of their giving. The people of Israel released from Egyptian bondage are now in a region where their sustenance depends entirely upon God's miraculous help. We cannot think that they are in a high state of culture, moral or mental. The sojourn in Egypt would tend to bind them together as a people but education would be neglected and contact with heathen influences would dull religious habits and inclinations handed down by their fathers. It would seem that education in the things of God must begin with the work of Moses, the plagues of Egypt, the wonders of God's salvation, and now the voice of God speaking from Mount Sinai—a terrible sight (Heb. 12:18-21)—and awe-inspiring words. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.'

Travellers have assured us of some of the features of the Sinai district suitable for so mighty and awe-inspiring a display; wide valleys in which the tribes could assemble before the mount without restriction of space or view, and where Moses could ascend in their sight into the cloud where God's very presence was manifested. We observe how strictly reverence for God is enjoined. The people are to be prepared for the greatest work upon earth—a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' Could we but realise the awful conditions prevailing around the need for so tremendous a manifestation of God's power, and so great an insistence upon His holiness. Consider some facts about the heathen: 'As a model hero . . . Odysseus was a consummate liar. The Spartans deemed it a virtue to be a successful thief . . . all the glorious career of Rome was filibustering. Impurity was shameless and not infamous; it was practised as worship in temples; and abominations that now are nameless were indulged in even by honoured teachers of morality (e.g. Sophocles and Socrates).' So truly the people needed urgently to recognise their God, and to revere Him and His commandments from their hearts. They trembled and asked that the voice should not be heard any more, and the words were recorded by Moses in his book of the law, and later kept on the tables of stone in the ark of the covenant.

There are three positive commands and seven prohibitions. To have but one God (Jehovah), to keep the sabbath day and to respect parents are positive. They contradict the habits of the heathen at every point. Many gods was the rule, there was no real worship, let alone a day of quiet contemplation, and real respect for parents did not co-exist with sexual vices. The prohibitions are equally contradictory to all normal heathen behaviour and morality. We refer our readers again to Romans 1 and 2, where the subject of man's deterioration from true to false worship is set forth so clearly. Before us in these chapters of Exodus is the breaking forth of true religion from the welter of heathenism. We might well call it the Restoration movement, beginning with the call of Abram and developing step by step to a called-out nation to be separated from the world for the purposes of God. It is not evolution by natural means, but restoration of true worship by supernatural means. What a spiritual battle against the devil is God conducting with this nation which He has brought out from slavery to be set

apart (holy) for His purposes. Try to imagine the greatness of the work. It is almost heart-breaking to get a family to obey parents willingly; how much more a whole people to obey a holy God.

It need hardly be said that of course the law given by God through Moses has been abrogated by Christ in favour of His law. 'We are not under law to Moses but under law to Christ' (1 Cor. 9:21). It was one of the greatest tasks with sexual vices. The prohibitions are of the apostles to unify the Church under the law of Christ while Jewish Christians were being bound by their age-long loyalty to Moses, as they so regarded it. It was difficult to make them see that loyalty to Moses necessitated giving the pre-eminence to Christ—a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me; to him shall ye hearken.' We thus have so much in the epistles to this purpose, particularly in Romans, Galatians and Hebrews. But we come to this vital point that 'love is the fulfilling of the law' because the prohibitions we have considered demand our refraining from those anti-social actions—yes, and thoughts and words as well—which make society and the world in general unsafe and unhappy. It was necessary that all that the Jews received in the law should be given in order that the way should be prepared for the introduction of a new and better covenant. The law was perfect for God's purpose, and for those to whom it was given. The prohibitions have been replaced by something so much better, the positive rule and example of the Son of God, the God who spoke from Sinai, and appointed all the sacrifices which prefigured the finally effective sacrifice.

In the ten commandments we have a peerless law for true worship and moral behaviour, the principles being enshrined there which the many enactments for civil life in the Jewish nation set forth in detail. Christians have their obligations set out also in principles in the 'Sermon on the Mount,' not the voice of God from Mount Sinai, and in the epistles they are further enforced, often in much detail. It was my privilege when quite young to be compelled to learn that 'sermon' by heart (Matt. 5, 6 and 7), a task not appreciated at the time. I now believe it would do us all good to make it a constant exercise to read and re-read, and besides we have the obligation, unless we have believed in vain, to make it our business to be continually familiarising ourselves with our duties as set out in the letters. It is true we have not witnessed the thunders of Sinai, but let us see that we refuse not Him that speaketh (Heb. 12:25). We ought to give the more earnest heed (Heb. 2:1) for God has spoken finally to us in His Son (Heb. 1:2).

R. B. SCOTT.

From a Christian's Diary

By BEREAN

The Meaning of Easter. How popular is this subject this month! Everywhere we turn amongst our religious friends we hear of such abstract subjects as 'The Challenge of Easter' or 'The Promise of Easter,' perhaps as sermon titles or leaders in parish magazines. Then there is 'The Triumph of Easter' and many more designations—almost as if Easter were personified and itself the object of worship. That is why I am choosing to be in the fashion and to give you the real 'meaning of Easter.' It is the so-called *Christian festival of nature's revival*.

My dictionary gives the meaning of Easter as the name of the goddess of light and spring (Eastre or Eostre) and states that it is connected with the Latin word *aurora* (dawn) and the East. Need one say more?

The fact that the Roman Catholic Church has adapted heathen nature-worship for her own ends does not justify the observation of her festivals by Christians. The more Churches of Christ absorb such celebrations from Rome the more obviously do they give their consent to the theory of the development of doctrine whereby Rome claims the right to change the teaching of the apostles. As soon as we recognise another day of remembrance in addition to the Lord's Day we enter the realm of speculation for which we have no divine authority. How can we pray with the psalmist, 'Keep thou me from presumptuous sins' if we are presuming to teach for our doctrines the commandments of men?

Reports that some 'Churches of Christ' are organising 'Good Friday' services and are even suggesting the celebration of 'Holy Communion' on that day need not surprise us. We have ceased to be shocked by the apostacy of the Association. I can only adapt the well-known words of Shakespeare and say, 'What's in a name? A sect with even a Scriptural name may smell as Romish.'

Wide Measures. Speaking at the inter-Church conversations with the Church of Scotland last year, a clergyman of the Church of England said: "The most significant factor in the Church history of the present century has been the search for a wider measure of Christian unity. . . . Even if the origins of our unhappy division are not for us a matter of per-

sonal sin, their continuance a day longer than is really necessary comes home to us with the force of sin.'

It is a hopeful sign that at least the word 'sin' is here associated with disunity, but what of the efforts to eradicate this sin? Commenting on the above in *The Green Light*, Brother C. P. Findlay wrote: 'Such blindness in the search for unity is inexcusable. Men do not need a wider measure to find Christian unity. Get a wide enough measure and you can include the Jews who do not believe in our Lord . . . The trouble with these gentlemen is that they want unity for the sake of unity, not for the sake of truth. The fact is, a wider measure than God's truth has produced the "unhappy divisions." The way that is narrow is the way home and there is no other way. John 14:6.'

Teaching Evolution. Correspondence has been appearing in several evangelical papers from readers who are worried about the persistent propaganda in schools and text-books in favour of the evolution theory. B.B.C. school broadcasts have also fostered this theory as though it were fact and I must confess to sharing the anxiety of parents whose children are taught from an early age that man has evolved from lower forms of life. This teaching establishes from the first an innate distrust of the Bible.

One writer mentions a well-known encyclopædia and writes of her amazement at finding in the 'Science Section' a list (now long out-dated) of 'Evidences for Evolution' closing with these words: 'We may therefore conclude that evolution is an undoubted fact.' She continues, rightly, 'Yet we know that there are many scientists to-day who have grave doubts about the truth of this theory.'

I would think that 'grave doubts' is an understatement but it is good to see this protest, for most encyclopædias carry the same kind of misinformation. I wonder if Christians protest sufficiently strongly, if at all, against this subtle undermining of the faith of young people in the truth of the Word of God. Many leaders of even evangelical Churches take no action because they subscribe to the theory anyway. Churches of the New Testament order, however, will always oppose such anti-scriptural teaching for 'there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds,' as the apostle Paul wrote (1 Cor. 15:39), confirming the record of Moses that every living creature 'brought forth after his kind' (Gen. 1:24, 25).

CORRESPONDENCE

A CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Dear Editor,—If Brother Wood, before rushing into print, had followed the teaching of Matthew 18:15 and Galatians 2:8 by 'phoning me, he would have found out that I have challenged no-one to debate. I have asked him to correct his statement. I am ready to defend my religious practice at any time, privately or publicly. However, I do not agree to defend or deny a proposition which I have not agreed to discuss, or to furnish a place and crowd for anyone seeking a public debate. My first knowledge of the matter came from a letter from Brother Wood enclosing his article which had been printed. He wrote me that his anonymous reference was to myself.

CLYDE P. FINDLAY.

102 Priestfield Road,
Edinburgh, Scotland.

Dear Editor,—It has now been denied that any challenge to debate was made, as I reported in the February issue of the *Scripture Standard*.

There is not the slightest suggestion of the use of individual cups in the New Testament. In order to demonstrate the truth of this publicly, I wish to issue an open challenge to anyone to debate the matter under the conditions specified in the *Scripture Standard* last month.

JOHN M. WOOD.

19 Venturefair Avenue,
Dunfermline.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

From May 1st, 1957, until further notice, please address all matter for the Editor to Carlton Melling, c/o James Melling, 2 Pyke Street, Wigan, Lancs.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

'S.S. Treasurer & Agent: Bro. Paul Jones, 41 Pendragon Road, Birmingham, 22B,

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Aylesbury. We are glad to be able to report two more additions to our number. The first is Sister Elsie Rolands, who has transferred her membership from the Church at Summer Lane, Birmingham. Our sister is the fiancée of Brother Rawlings, who has also recently come from Birmingham. They are to be married shortly and hope to live in Aylesbury. The second addition is Brother Robert Roberts, of Kirkcaldy, an R.A.F. apprentice who expects to be stationed at Halton Training Camp near here for the next three years. During this time he hopes to be regularly meeting with us.

L. CHANNING.

Bedminster, Bristol.—It was with great joy we heard the confession and witnessed the immersion on March 10th of Ruth, daughter of Bro. and Sis. Cowley. Although young, we are confident that she fully realised the importance and responsibility of the step she was taking. As she acquires knowledge of Him whose disciple she now is, may she also grow in grace and be a bright and shining light and example to others, leading them also to a like decision.

F.W.W.

Holland, Haarlem.—On February 27th Brethren G. B. Adams and myself engaged in public debate with two representatives of the Mormon Church. This was a rather historic occasion, because it was the first time that the Mormon headquarters at Den Haag had given official permission for a debate. So the two Mormons who took the platform were officially representing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

The proposition which the Mormons affirmed was that 'the Book of Mormon is inspired by God and contains the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ.' This we were happy to deny. A Mormon from their headquarters in Den Haag took twenty-five minutes to try to establish the proposition, and he was followed by Brother Adams. Then came the second Mormon, and I took the fourth speech. After a short break each speaker had ten minutes for rebuttal.

There was a good crowd—the hall being full and some twenty people hav-

ing to stand. The interest was certainly good, because these people stood for more than two-and-a-half hours! Among those present was the President of the Mormon Church in the Netherlands, 'President' Perry, and his wife, and about twenty-five Mormon missionaries.

We feel confident that the evening did good for the Church, for the Mormon representatives had no sound arguments to advance, nor were they able to answer the arguments which were made against the Book of Mormon. At the end of the debate a lady was heard to say to a Mormon missionary, 'You may come for your Book of Mormon and take it away, because what I have heard to-night has convinced me that I don't need it, but that I can find everything that I need in the Bible.' Further, a member of the Mormon Church in Rotterdam, which is led by the second Mormon speaker, Mr. Jongkees, intimated that he intended to write to me, because he had heard things that were perfectly new to him, and he didn't know what to think! We publicly challenged the Mormons to meet us in debate on other propositions, and even presented them with the typed-out propositions, but the President leaned across to his 'champions' and said, 'Don't sign!' Without doubt, the debate has done the Mormons a lot of harm, and the Church a lot of good.

Warmest Christian greetings to everybody.

FRANK WCRGAN.

Morley.—On February 24th, the Lord's Day of our anniversary week-end, a good congregation had the joy of witnessing David Barlow immersed into the name of Jesus. Nurtured and brought up in the fear of the Lord in a Christian home, our young brother made his decision at home in the presence of David Dougall, preacher at our anniversary meetings, and guest at the Barlows'. Bro. and Sis. Barlow and their daughters Margaret and Elizabeth have met with us around the Lord's Table and ably supported us in the Gospel. David's baptism brought them to the decision to be received into the fellowship of the saints meeting here. Accordingly on March 3rd David, his father and mother and two sisters were given the right hand of fellowship. The Barlows have a long and excellent testimony in their stand for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints, and their decision brings great pleasure to us and the many in the Yorkshire district who appreciate their worth. Thus

the decision of young David was an impetus for the Saturday tea and meeting. A heavy snowfall failed to intimidate the many supporters who cheered us by their presence. The meeting-place was filled with brethren from South Yorkshire, Nottingham and Derbyshire, to hear Bro. David Dougall and Bro. Tom McDonald give stirring and effective exhortations from the living Word. The chairman was Bro. F. A. Hardy. Bro. Dougall most ably served us on the Lord's Day. We are grateful to our heavenly Parent for all these blessings. More young people could be won for the Saviour, therefore pray with us.

FRED SUGDEN.

Motherwell.—The Church here reports the immersion of four young lads: Brian Coady, William Wardrop, John Purcell and John Longmuir. All are sons of members and have come up through Sunday School and Bible Class. We give praise to God for the increase and trust and pray that they will remain faithful to the Lord and Master.

L. PURCELL.

Woodstock, Capetown.—On February 10th we witnessed a native man and his wife united in baptism with the Lord Jesus, due to the humble and faithful efforts of brethren labouring at the native town of Langa Location. We thank God for these brethren who are zealously striving to contend for the 'faith, once for all delivered to the saints' and who are also doing personal contact work.

In the evening we had Bro. Joseph Lyon from Lusaka, N.R., on a brief business trip, preaching on the 'Coming of Christ.' We pray God's blessing on the endeavours by him and his family to extend the Kingdom of God.

On February 23rd we witnessed a young woman, a patient in one of the chest hospitals in the Cape, immersed into Christ. We are furthermore concentrating on various homes in a built up area, Bridgetown, about seven miles from our meeting-place, where much interest is being shown by the people, who are anxious to know the truth. A man who is a teacher at an industrial school at Ottery in whose home we have conducted gospel services gave us the option to come and conduct a Bible class for the boys there on Lord's Day afternoons. I went on February 24th and, with the co-operation of the brethren

interested, feel assured by the grace of God much could be accomplished.

Then, due to the labours of the brethren at Simonstown, a young candidate was immersed on March 2nd. Brethren, our prayers are for you in lands far and near, as we trust yours for us. God bless you and all actively engaged in the Master's service over there. T. W. HARTLE.

OBITUARY

Bathgate.—The Church records with sorrow the passing of Bro. Daniel Banks, in his 79th year. Although unable through illness to meet with the Church for some time, he was always a regular attender when able, and ever ready to do what he could. He was one of the original members, having been in fellowship for over fifty years. We commend the sorrowing widow and family to God's love and care, and pray that He will sustain them in their great loss. Bro. David Dougall conducted a service in the home, where he spoke words of comfort and cheer to the bereaved family, and at Bathgate cemetery, where our brother was laid to rest on Thursday, March 7th, there to await a glorious resurrection.

C. FLEMING.

Vancouver, Canada.—Sister Elizabeth A. Hudson, a noble mother in Israel, fell asleep in Jesus on January 8th, in her 87th year; she was the faithful wife of the late Alfred E. Hudson, one of the British Churches of Christ pioneer missionaries to Burma and Siam. Our mother rendered a life of humble service to the Church and her family wherever she lived. She was identified with the Vancouver Church of Christ for forty years, and until her health failed in 1947 was an ardent and faithful attender at the meetings. Her loving spiritual and cheerful nature was widely known, and she was loved by brethren and sisters in the North West Pacific area. Her spontaneous smile of welcome and her eager desire to help in whatever capacity she could be of service, nursing, visiting, or entertaining the saints, were much ap-

preciated. Truly 'her children arise up and call her blessed.'

In their sad bereavement, her family are comforted by the noble example of their godly parents, and they desire that they may be counted worthy to join them with all the saints in eternal bliss.

'On Zion's glorious summit stood
A numerous host redeemed by blood,
They hymned their King in strains
divine,

I heard the song and strove to join.'

BESSIE HUDSON

7/7505 Fraser Street,
Vancouver 10, Canada.

Brother Alfred Hudson was one of the first missionaries sent out to Burma by British Churches more than sixty years ago. He and his faithful wife endured much, and sacrificed much for the cause they loved. Bro. Hudson was described as a true apostolic man. 'Blest be their memory, and blest their bright example be.'

W. CROSTHWAITE

Loughborough.—We deeply regret to record the passing of Bro. Arthur Simons on March 6th, at the age of sixty. He had suffered much during the last twelve months from what proved to be cancer, but his illness was borne with great Christian fortitude. Though he knew for some time the inevitable end he never uttered a word of complaint. For days he was looking forward for the *Scripture Standard* for March, and upon receiving it read it from beginning to end, only to regret that he would not be able to be present at the Bible School at Hindley. Our prayers are for his dear wife and their only son. We commend them to the Father of all mercies and consolation until we meet again. E. HILL.

Motherwell.—The Church regrets to announce the death of Bro. John Forrest, of Braidwood. Bro. Forrest was in Church at Carluke until it closed some two years ago. He was well known as a servant of God in his own district and sought at all times to tell others of his Saviour. We sorrow at his passing, realising that the world is richer by the example and life he lived.

L. PURCELL.

Preliminary Notice: Hindley Bible School to be held (D.V.) from Saturday, June 8th, to Thursday, June 13th, 1957. Mountain-top experiences, glorious fellowship Book the dates. Write for hospitality to Mr. Tom Kemp, 52 Argyle Street, Hindley, Wigan, or for further particulars if required, to Mr. L. Morgan, 'Briarcroft,' 396 Atherton Road, Hindley Green, Wigan.

We are pleased to announce that Bro. Fred C. Day (Birmingham) has kindly accepted our invitation to preach the Gospel for five nights, Lord's Day to Thursday. We request your prayers.

The morning lectures this year are to deal with: Religion Delusions; Mormonism; Seventh-Day Adventism; Christian Science; Jehovah's Witnesses. Bring your notebooks.

We give a special invitation to our young brethren to make this the holiday of your life.

One of the popular sessions at the school is undoubtedly the 'Questions Answered' period, 2.30 to 3.15 p.m.

If you intend to visit us, you are invited to submit questions which will be of interest and benefit to the brethren. Help us to help you by sending your questions early please.

It would help us if intending visitors wrote early for hospitality.

Fathers and mothers would do a job for us in encouraging their sons and daughters to attend. We want more young people. Awaiting for all—a feast of good things.

Eastwood.—Anniversary Services, May 4th and 5th, 1957. Speakers, Bren. A. E. Winstanley, Tunbridge Wells, and F. C. Day, Birmingham. Saturday, May 4th: Tea at 4 p.m.; Meeting at 6 p.m. Lord's Day: Speaker, Bro. A. E. Winstanley. We shall be glad to renew fellowship with our brethren and sisters. An intimation of numbers will greatly assist in catering.

C. LIMB.

COMING EVENTS

Wigan, Albert Street, Newtown.—Gospel Campaign (D.V.), Saturday, April 27, to Lord's Day, May 12 inclusive. Preacher Bro. W. Richardson, American evangelist in Holland.

COMING TO CANADA?

When in the Toronto district, the brethren of the Maplewood Avenue congregation extend a hearty welcome to all who desire to worship. The meeting-house is situated at 10 Maplewood Avenue, near the corner of Vaughan Road, Toronto, Ontario.

Services for the week are as follows:—
Lord's Day—

10 a.m.: Bible School for all ages.
11 a.m.: Worship & Breaking of Bread.
7 p.m.: Preaching of the Gospel.

Wednesday—

8 p.m.: Prayer and Bible Study.

Maplewood Avenue Church of Christ.
Secretary: John D. MacKay, 7 Locust Street, Toronto 9, Ontario, Canada.

BETTER WAKE UP!

Someone has said: 'It is better to wake up 500 Christians than to convert 500 sinners, for if 500 Christians really wake up, they will win more than 500 sinners.'

All of us must agree with this statement. The greatest problem the Church faces is not that of winning others into the kingdom, but of arousing those who are already members to a feeling of their responsibility. Surely an enthusiastic Christian could win at least one other for Christ each year. We need to wake up. Too many of us are playing with Christianity. We are not taking it seriously. But we must begin to take it seriously if we are to be saved and if we are to save others.

'It is high time to awake out of sleep' (Rom. 13:11).

—Radio programme, Covington, U.S.A.

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

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