

Hopes And Fears Of All The Years

Christmas trees are beginning to dot the curbs waiting for the rubbish collectors — or are being saved for "Twelfth Night" bonfires sponsored by scout groups.

Wreaths are drooping, toys are broken, and Christmas is just about over and done with for another year.

While we knit for a last visit at the crib, the organist in church was playing the familiar "O Little Town of Bethlehem." There in that out-of-the-way crossroads hamlet, so the music told us, "the hopes and fears of all the years are met in these tonight."

For centuries so long that scientists don't dare even estimate the number, the human race had heard and hoped of the day when a Saviour would come.

And other elements of that same human race feared the coming of that Saviour.

Once Christ would speak His words, "The truth shall make you free," once He would announce the mystery that all men — regardless of their rank or wealth or relatives — were equal under the common Fatherhood of God, then there could no longer be slavery or tyranny — at least not for long.

Even this week as the years 1956 and 1957 met, again the world's hopes and fears centered on the Infant of Bethlehem.

The Kremlin must have shuddered as it witnessed crowds pack churches in the restless satellite countries — the Christmas bells must have seemed more a death knell for the communist tyranny shattered by the recent revolts in Poland and Hungary.

For the rest of the world there was new hope this Christmas season in the realization that the subjugated people still crave for the faith, the freedom which Christ proclaimed over 1,900 years ago.

But there is also fear — the Moscow empire in despair might launch a suicidal, world-destroying war against the free nations. More than once this past year, America's Atlantic and Pacific navies were ordered to the open seas and huge bombers patrolled the approaches to our coasts to prevent another "day of infamy."

Agas ago, the aged Simeon foretold, "This Child is set for the rise and fall of many..."

Poznan and Budapest rose in revolt against those who rejected this Child — and the symbols of His enemies fell in rubble in those cities.

Facing 1957, maybe we should listen to one last echo of our Christmas carols — "laeti triumphantes — joyful and triumphant," as Christians with God's help we can cast out fear. We know that the ultimate victory belongs to the Babe of Bethlehem.

The Name Jesus Means Our Salvation

Respect for the sacred name of God is rooted in the history of every religion.

The ancient Jews had such a tremendous respect for God's name that they permitted only one man and only once a year to pronounce it. The High Priest spoke the holy name in humble prayer on the annual Day of Atonement. Modern Jews say that the name of God in the Hebrew language is actually unknown — having been lost to memory because the ordinary person never heard it, never spoke it.

Catholics are still required by the Second Commandment not to take "the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

Shops, factories, offices; amusement centers are too often dens of blasphemy where the holy names of God and His Son Jesus Christ are abused in the most vulgar of conversations. To combat this evil, the Church organized the Holy Name Society especially for men to call them to a personal reverence for the name of God and to make reparation for those who sin against it.

Ordinarily the Church sets aside the Sunday after New Year as Holy Name Sunday. This year Epiphany falls on Sunday so the Holy Name feast was kept on January 2nd. Popular observance will still mark this coming Sunday as a tribute to the Holy Name of Jesus.

We too have a sacred name.

"We are Christians — a name which immediately identifies our character and our work. Our name means that we are followers of Christ, that we are meant to be like Him — not just in the doctrines we say we believe but in every action we perform at work, or home, or in our leisure.

A mere negative reticence about profanity is therefore only a very small aspect of keeping the Second Commandment. We are expected not just to bite our tongues when we are tempted to "swear." The Church calls us to respect the Holy Name with a burning zeal to make Christ better known, better loved, and better imitated in my own life and in the lives of my associates.

This kind of apostolic reverence will mean, as Scripture itself indicates, our salvation and the salvation of those we love.

Joseph Breig

Hollywood Fumbles, Fails To Focus On Ideals

The American movie industry for years has been tumbling its tremendous opportunity to become a crucial force for good on this troubled earth.

In all history there are few ironies more depressing than the contrast between Hollywood's triviality and the grandeur to which its own Production Code invites it to rise.

The recent alterations in the code are all very well; but what is needed is not so much revision as realization.

Purposely, I say "realization" rather than "compliance." The code is not, as some producers seem to imagine, a handicap. It is a blueprint for better things and for real success. The trouble is that the movie people have never opened their eyes to their possibilities.

The movie code, like the Ten Commandments, is couched in negatives rather than positives for purposes of enforcement. But by its strongest implication the positives are contained in it — as they are in the Commandments.

"No picture," says the code, "shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it." But surely this is a minimum; it is not the splendid ideal toward which the films ought to strive.

THE HIGHER meaning of the code is that the industry ought to produce pictures which will inspire audiences to the highest morality — to real goodness, and even heroic goodness.

"Correct standards of life," the code asserts, "shall be presented. Law, divine, natural and human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation."

Scrolls Discovered In Dead Sea Caves Claimed Prelude To Christian Church

By REV. HENRY ATWELL

Presses are scheduled this year to pour out books and pamphlets on a religious subject still very little known to American Catholics.

They will deal with the enigmatic writings of a Jewish monastery near Palestine's famous Dead Sea dating from the days just prior to the life of Christ.

The writings are said to teach a form of "Christianity before Christ."

Striking similarities have been noted between the doctrines of this Jewish sect and the teachings of Christ.

Some of the first authors who studied the writings expressed the opinion that Christ simply "took over" the Jewish doctrines and taught them as His own.

During the past year, radio broadcasts, magazine articles and popular low-price books have discussed the topic and many Catholics are puzzled, "What does it all mean?"

To answer that, some knowledge is needed about the identity, origins, practices, and teachings of the people who wrote the controversial documents.

TWO BEDOON Arab in 1947 discovered in a desert cave near the Dead Sea some scrolls, carefully wrapped in linen, and sealed in jars. The manuscripts included a 2000 year old copy of the prophecy of Isaiah's oldest available copies before this discovery dated back only 1000 years — several scrolls giving details about the life and doctrines of the Jewish monastery built near the cave, and the lost "Apocalypse of Lamech" perhaps an inspired book which had not survived in any other copy and has never appeared in any edition of the Bible.

Ruins of a monastery large enough for about 100 monks were excavated near the cave where the manuscripts were discovered.

The area today is called Khirbet-Qumran by the Arabs. It is in the bleak, mountainous section at the north-west tip of the Dead Sea.

Scholars have termed the discovered documents the "Dead Sea Scrolls" and the Jewish sect they called the "Qumran Community."

The monastery was apparently destroyed by Roman armies known to have been in that area about the year 70 A.D. Excavators state that there is ample evidence pointing to the fact that the buildings were wrecked by war.

RUINS of the ancient buildings include a spacious central building, a lookout tower, a kitchen, a "writing room" equipped with benches and tables — with inkwells — storage rooms, kilns for pottery making, and a chapel or ritual room.

The approach of Roman legions must have alerted the Jewish community to hide their scrolls in pottery jars in the numerous caves which dot the area. The community probably expected to return to their monastery after the Roman legions left the area. After the Jews escaped to the Palestine cities to the north they were probably killed or scattered by the subsequent Roman destruction of their nation.

THE DEAD SEA Scrolls describe a community of devout Jews who lived a rigorous, celibate life, organized almost two hundred years before Christ by a leader called "the Teacher of Righteousness."

The Qumran rule required its members "to live according to the rule of the community, to seek God, to practice what is good and just in His sight, in conformity with what He has commanded through Moses and through all His prophets, to love all that He has chosen and to hate all that He has rejected, to practice truth, justice, and right on the earth, no longer to walk in the obstinacy of a guilty heart..."

Principal ritual of the group was a solemn banquet which climaxed with the leader blessing bread and unfermented wine.

Prayers, Scripture reading, writing, work in the fields or monastic potterly shops filled the day's schedule.

Members were admitted to the community only after a three years' (or longer) trial period. Members were required to turn over their possessions and incomes to the monastery head.

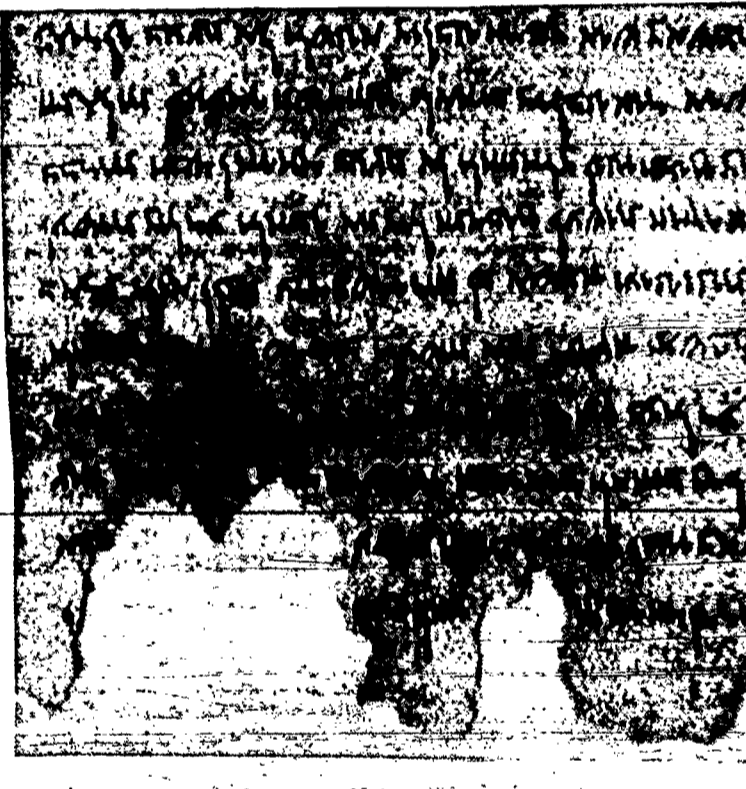
THE COMMUNITY of the Old Testament religion, based on what Moses taught, Christ's Church promptly discontinued the old Mosaic ritual and traditions, and taught "a new commandment" based on Christ's life, death, and resurrection. Qumran was a sect looking forward in hope for what was yet to be. Christianity is a religion of accomplishment, of looking back to what Christ has done for our salvation.

ALTHOUGH there are superficial similarities between the Qumran doctrines and the teachings of Christ, striking differences are also quite obvious:

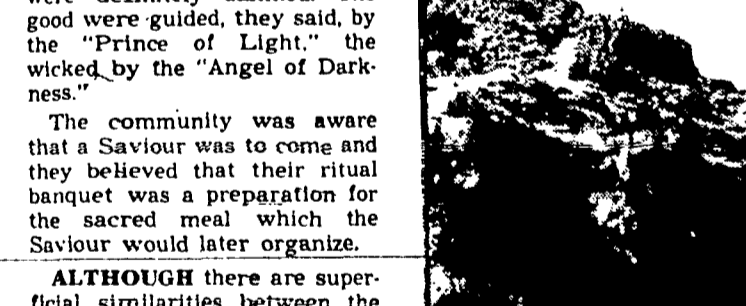
1. Qumran was a closed sect, with jealously guarded practices, beliefs, and memberships. Christ's Church was clearly intended for "all nations," "the whole world."



Remnants of Jewish Monastery overlook Israel's Dead Sea, in background in picture above. Priest research expert from Jerusalem's Ecole Biblique (Biblical Institute) celebrates Mass as sunrise begins another torrid hot day. Members who lived in the ancient monastery wrote scrolls discovered in nearby caves in 1947 beginning debate among experts about origins of Christian faith.



Fragment of one of the 'Dead Sea Scrolls' describes beliefs and practices of 2000 year ago Jewish religious community whose monastery overlooked the Dead Sea.



Cave in mountain side is typical of over 40 in Dead Sea area where Jewish group hid its manuscripts as Roman legions invaded their nation.

Making Marriage Click

Dad Should Be Boss

By MSGR. IRVING A. DE BLANC
(Director, Family Life Bureau, N.C.W.C.)

A recent Cans Conference was almost brought to an abrupt uproarious finish when one of the parents asked the conductor: "Father, do you believe in capital punishment for young children?"

Along another line, the Children's Division of UNESCO has reported that in 1953 in Germany, 28,000 children under 14 were considered to have committed criminal acts. A horrifying number especially when we remember that it does not include young people over 14. But what about the year 1895, the birth year for people who are now 62? The annual statistical report for that year shows that 44,000 children in the same age group were guilty then!"

The adolescent generation of America has also often been stigmatized by the elder generation as unruly, dangerous, delinquent. This condemnation is just as calumnious as the implied German accusation. It would be an intensely interesting case if some 16 million youngsters went to court and sued some of the older generation for defamation of character.

IT SEEMS TRUE that there are possibly more spectacular crimes among youth in this our day, but there is rarely anything wrong with our youngsters which was not first wrong in some way with our elders. J. Edgar Hoover continues to prove that parents are the main answer to juvenile problems.

Though there is no one single factor for "delinquency" nor is there one single remedy for it — may I go J. Edgar Hoover one better and submit that misbehavior in youngsters is principally related to the father, who has abdicated his job as a father.

Many fathers have power but no authority. They may have the power to pay bills, to spank, to have but no authority to discipline. To his youngsters he is just "the old man" instead of being "some man." Other teenagers will say, "I never ask my dad for advice." It could be that the one that they do ask, the one with authority, is the mother or the nurse or some aunt or some uncle. But should they not first be able to go to the father?

Our past generation has been going through an important transition period in American culture. So many of the youngsters are getting college education, where their parents maybe have had only elementary school education — if that. It is this educational transition which is creating one of the important problems in discipline.

The problem involved here is that losing intellectual authority some parents may also lose moral authority and self-confidence. That, of course, should not be. Where one lacks one phase of authority, other phases can be intensified, where one has not intellectual authority, moral authority can be increased.

If a father is a just, good man, if he leads a sincere consistent Christian life, he can maintain great power and authority — college education or not.

FATHER SHEERIN Salt For Your Talk

Do You Talk About Religion?

A Columbia University pathologist says that salt may stimulate the adrenal glands. The rapid pace of modern life demands readiness for quick action. We have to be on our toes, alert, prepared to meet any challenge with a burst of energy.

The pathologist thinks that perhaps it is the salt in our diet that excites us out of our inertia — it is like "a shot in the arm," or rather a "shot in the glands" that enables us to get things done in a hurry.

In the United States, there is a vast inertia among Catholics in regard to the conversion of non-Catholics. Father John A. O'Brien, Bishop Sheen and the Paulist Fathers could tell you all about it. In fact, the convert totals tell their own story. That we receive only 140,000 converts a year is lamentable. This total represents about three converts per priest per year, and about one convert per 230 Catholics.

MAYBE a dash of salt is the answer. I can imagine pastors all over the country passing out to their parishioners a pinch of salt for their convert-work during the week I can imagine the adrenal glands beginning to work at top speed and the faithful teeming up with their priests in an evangelical crusade that would dwarf those of Billy Graham.

Salt is the answer but not the kind we use on our tables. The right kind of salt is the salt we receive on our tongue at Baptism — the salt of wisdom.

We have good reason to think that there is as much zeal among us as among the early Christians. What seems to be holding back the conversion of America, however, is that certain Catholics have accepted certain ideas that are a genuine obstacle to the advancement of the Kingdom. I have in mind especially a few materialistic notions. The idea that religion is a private affair is not materialistic and it is an idea adopted by too many Catholics.

Even certain daily commentators consider it bad taste to discuss religion at Schrafft's or in the local sandwich shop. They are obsessed with a fear of parading their religion because most Americans think of religion as a matter for the home or the heart but not a subject for public conversation.

THE MAIN danger is that we tend to, often to think of the Catholic Church in material terms. Many Protestants consider religion as something quite independent of an external, visible organization. They conceive of it as a purely spiritual reality. To combat this idea of a purely spiritual, invisible Church we stress the historical fact that Christ established a visible, ex-



Father Sheerin

They have wallowed in a bog of puerilities — of glamour, slight clubs, swimming pools, cocktail chaises affairs, broken marriages and the like — without even glimpsing the shining light of heaven.

Until the movie people glimpse the vision they ought to see, Hollywood will remain a spoiled boy in short trousers.

Daily Mass Calendar

Sunday, January 6 — Epiphany (white), Gloria, Creed, Preface and Canon Prayers of Epiphany.

Monday, January 7, through Thursday, January 10 — Mass as Sunday except no Creed and ordinary Canon Prayers.

Friday, January 11 — Mass as Monday except 2nd prayer of St. Hyginus.

Saturday, January 12 — Saturday Mass of our Lady (white), Gloria, Preface of our Lady, omitted at High Mass.

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