

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

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

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A Text for the New Year.

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"THEREFORE, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2, Rev. Stand. Vsn.)

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AT THE OPENING of another year no more appropriate word from God to His people could be given than the text quoted above.

It begins with the word "therefore," a significant word in the epistle. "Therefore" means "because of what has been said; consequently," and links up this twelfth chapter with the eleventh. When the Scriptures were written they were not divided into chapters and verses as we have them today. Thus, we should read right through from chapter eleven to chapter twelve to understand the full meaning of what the writer is exhorting us to do. Indeed, we shall find that the whole epistle is connected at the head of almost every chapter with the words "therefore" or "now."

In the eleventh chapter we read of the great men of God, the heroes of faith of the Old Testament. These are set before us to encourage us by their example to persevere and to be determined in our following of Christ Jesus. The usual exposition given to the words "surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses" is that those men of faith are, as it were, watching around the arena our conflict with the powers of evil: they are witnesses of our strife, and the fact of their witnessing acts as an encouragement to us. But these "witnesses" are more than spectators. In the Greek they are "martyrs," who have borne testimony with their blood. If we read chapter eleven we shall see that these heroes are witnesses to the faithfulness of the living God, and by that fact we too are exhorted to depend upon His faithfulness. For, after all, it is not the strength of my faith which saves me, but the faithfulness of God: "If we are faithless, he remains faithful—he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. 2:13).

In the second verse we are given another infallible incentive to continue steadfastly to the end. The perfect example of Jesus is set before us. He is the author, the origin, the forerunner, the pioneer of faith, in that He has shown that absolute faith in God and the glory that was yet to be which impelled Him to "endure the cross, despising the shame." Man has practised some fearful means of torturing

or putting to death his fellow. All the ingenuity and calculated cruelty which his brain could devise have gone into these instruments of torture, both of body and of mind. The guillotine in France, the gallows in this country, have their stigma of ignominy and shame. But nothing approaches the cross as such an instrument of punishment and death. Crucifixion was a death held in horror even by the brutal Romans: a death reserved for the most despicable and atrocious criminals and for slaves, who had fewer rights in the Roman Empire than dogs. Their great orator, Cicero, said, "As for crucifixion, let it not once be named among Romans." Paul catches its horror when he writes to the Philippians that Christ "became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." Yet Jesus, "endured the cross, despising the shame." He took that Roman instrument of torture and transformed it into an emblem of glory and life and joy, so that Paul could say, "Far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14).

Yes, Jesus has gone the way, run the race before us, and triumphantly reached the goal. The runners in the Greek games at Olympia set their gaze wholly on the pillar which marked the end of their race, the winning post. There must be no looking around or back, no divided interest or attention, no being entrammelled with unnecessary or trivial things. Just so, we as Christians are to set our eyes upon Jesus, "My Lord, my life, my way, my end" as the hymn says. We are to look away from anything that would distract, and, like Paul, "forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).

How does this work out in our daily living? It means that all our service must be rendered as to Christ, not even to our fellow-men, nor even to His church. Then there will be no thought of our giving up because we do not feel we are appreciated by our brethren as we should be, or because we have been offended or hurt, or any personal differences with brother or sister, or any other human reason. Looking to Jesus, our lives and service will have a new incentive, new power, new meaning. For we live and serve not in a dogged weary struggle, but in the strength which Christ supplies by His Holy Spirit. He is with us always; His strength is ours for the receiving. So long as we keep our gaze upon Jesus, "consider him," the triumph is assured, the end certain.

Let us live, not only throughout this year, but moment by moment, in this assured faith. Let us realise that every thought, word and action are forming a part, good or bad, in the whole of our lives. A few weeks ago a woman speaker on the B.B.C. programme, "Lift up your hearts," asked that we might present every day to God as a perfect thing.

There is an old saying, "Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves." Spiritually let us take care of the moments and the year will take care of itself.

EDITOR.

Bible Business Booming

BIBLE business is booming, on both sides of the Atlantic. In this age of doubt a solid faith in Holy Writ is suddenly being displayed by cultural tycoons.

With huge personal investments they are testifying their belief that though congregations may still be shrinking in the churches, there's a bigger audience than ever before for the Bible stories.

First, the Theatre. On Broadway the Book of Job—freely edited by Elia Kazan and Archibald McLeish—is a smash hit, now in its 46th week.

Then the Cinema. Millions are staked in new scriptural spectaculars, whose subjects include Goliath, Bathsheba and Christ Himself.

Above all Publishing. New Testaments in modern dress are now runaway sellers. The Penguin Gospels have nearly reached the quarter-million mark.

Another version is selling over 1,000 a day—at 45/- and 12 dollars.

But what about The Book itself? Sales of the Authorised Version, it seems, are still climbing. Over 2,750,000 Bibles were sold last year, I estimate, by British publishers.

And the British and Foreign Bible Society tell me that last year they distributed nearly 3½ million complete Bibles, 3¼ million New Testaments, and about 20 million "portions" of the Bible throughout the world.

Does anybody make a profit out of The Book? Certainly not, it seems, those dedicated scholars who do the hard labour of translation.

Evelyn Waugh has just revealed that Monsignor Ronald Knox received less than £500 from the Roman Catholic Church for his years of work on the Vulgate.

I estimate that if Knox had lived he would have earned to date—on a standard royalty rate—over £30,000.

Mr. Waugh criticises his Church for treating Knox so shabbily. Yet the translators of the Bible have always been expected to do their duty without hope of reward—in cash, at least.

Forty-seven men fashioned the world's best-seller as we know it, back in 1611. It took them nearly three years. Only about half a dozen were paid—about £50—for revising the text. The rest were promised good jobs in the Church.

Another band of scholars toiled over the Revised Version for 15 years. A million copies were sold on the day of publication. But the men who wrote it, as far as I can discover, received not a penny.

Now yet another version of the Bible is on the way. For over 10 years a secret committee of experts—sponsored by all the Churches but the Roman Catholic—has been putting the New Testament into modern English.

They have finished the main part of their work. The eagerly-awaited text is now being revised for publication in 1961. And the translators, whose names are still shrouded in mystery, are apparently doing it all for love.

No official information is yet available. But I am assured that "nobody has given a thought to payment." The £ s. d. of the Bible is indeed cloaked in a quasi-reverential hush.

Questions about its economics are regarded in some quarters not only as impious but as unbusinesslike. One man politely refused me information about Bible sales last week because he said, it was "controversial." Another explained that "you don't tell your competitors how well you're doing."

But it is clear that some people have done very well from the Bible in the past.

There was an enterprising King's Printer who bought the copyright of the Authorised Version for only £3,000 in 1611.

There was the enterprising Eyre who paid £10,000 for the right to be King's Printer—and own the Bible copyright—for only 30 years. (He didn't possess so much as a stick of type).

That was nearly 200 years ago. But Charles Eyre's descendants still keep that royal patent today.

Their former monopoly is shared with three other firms.

Yet anybody who wants to print a part of the 773,697 words in the Authorised Version must apply to Col. Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre, M.P. for the New Forest and chairman of Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd., the Queen's Printers.

Today there is no profiteering in this unique privilege. An attack on it at last year's Church Assembly was not pressed home. The public service of the Queen's Printers is beyond reproach.

No objection is raised to the fact that Colonel Crosthwaite-Eyre is himself a Roman Catholic, and that his son, who will inherit the patent, might become a Hindu or a Muslim, yet retain his rights over the Protestant Bible.

Nor, it seems, is the Church worried by arguments that the Crown's perpetual copyright, administered by the Queen's Printers, has no basis in fact.

Profits from the Authorised Version are now, I'm told, kept to a minimum. But no such restrictions govern later versions of the Bible story.

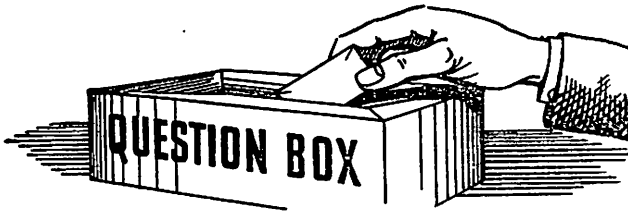
There is, for example, the sensational success of the Wiccamical Prebendary of Exceit in Chichester Cathedral, J. B. Phillips. This 53-year-old clergyman began in wartime—fired with crusading zeal—to put the New Testament into everyday English. Now he finds to his embarrassment that his evangelism has brought him a small pre-tax fortune.

His books have sold over 2,500,000 copies to date, and I estimate they have earned him about £150,000.

Then there is the amazing bonanza which the Bible brought to the heirs of Fulton Oursler, an American journalist who rewrote the Old and New Testaments. His New Testament version, *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, has been bought by Twentieth Century-Fox. And next summer it goes into production in Israel, if George Stevens, the producer, has solved his difficulty in casting the role of Jesus.

The price? A record payment of two million dollars.

—*Blackburn Evening Telegraph* (November 5th, 1959).



CONDUCTED BY
L. CHANNING

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Q. Was the apostle Paul baptised with the Holy Spirit, and if not, why not?

A. The question itself can be answered very briefly, but it raises other issues concerning the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the laying-on of the hands of Ananias, which ought to be dealt with more fully.

An Assumption. It is generally assumed that the baptism of the Holy Spirit received by the apostles on the day of Pentecost also conferred upon them the promises of inspiration and authority given to them by the Lord, especially those contained in John, chapters 14 and 16. But those holding such a view are faced with a formidable difficulty concerning Cornelius and his household. Peter emphatically declares that Cornelius and his household received exactly the same gift, in being baptised with the Holy Spirit, as the apostles had received at Pentecost (Acts 11:15-17; 15:8-9). If the baptism of the Holy Spirit conferred inspiration and authority upon the apostles, then Cornelius and his company must also have had these powers. It is also further assumed that the power of inspiration once given was continuous. Cornelius and his friends must have received this also. But such a conclusion is not only not substantiated by the scriptures, but is quite contrary to them, since it virtually raises Cornelius and his household to the level of apostles.

The Two Gifts. But the promises given to the apostles of inspiration and authority, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit were two different gifts, and should not be confused. The baptism of the Holy Spirit did not confer anything more upon its recipients than the ability to speak in tongues (Acts 2:1-11; 10:44-48). In this it was exactly the same in its results as the gift of tongues given by the laying-on of hands (Acts 19:6). The only difference between the two was the manner in which the gift was made: the one through human instrumentality, the other direct from heaven. Further, the baptism of the Holy Spirit served only as a sign. On Pentecost, it was a sign that the Lord's kingdom had been established (Acts 2:14-21). In the case of Cornelius, it was a sign to Peter and his fellow Jews that the Gentiles were to have equal place with the Jews in the kingdom (Acts 10:44-47; 11:12-18; 15:6-11).

The gift of inspiration through the Holy Spirit, promised by the Lord to the apostles, embodied a three-part promise: that of bringing to their remembrance all

the truth that the Lord had taught them, revealing to them new truth, and guiding them into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13). In the declaring of this truth lay their authority—the power of binding and loosing on earth and in heaven (Matt. 16:19; 18:18; John 20:23). Contrary to the usual assumption, Jesus shows that inspiration once given was not to be continuous, but was to be given as and when needed—“in that same hour” (Matt. 10:19-20; Luke 12:11-12). Like all the gifts of the Spirit, it was to be at His will (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:11; Eph. 4:11; Heb. 2:4).

On the day of Pentecost, the baptism of the apostles by the Holy Spirit arrested the attention of those who came together as a result of this sign, providing Peter with an opportunity to preach the gospel, and thus the power of inspiration was given. The two gifts, then, were coincidental with each other, but were not the same gift: the one provided opportunity for the use of the other. Inspiration continued to be given as and when needed. This is clearly shown throughout the Acts in such expressions as “being filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8). If the apostles and others were filled with the Spirit’s inspiration all the time, there would be little point in such expressions. Cornelius and his household, on the other hand, received only the baptism of the Holy Spirit, giving them the power to speak in tongues and nothing more.

Further signs unnecessary. If the foregoing is true, and we believe that it is, then the question concerning Paul can be answered. Paul is not recorded as having received the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the other apostles. He clearly states to the Corinthians, however, “I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all,” but how or when he received that gift is not revealed, for it is not significant. At Paul’s conversion, no such sign as the baptism of the Holy Spirit was needed, for even greater signs had been given: Paul had seen the Lord on the Damascus road; those with him had witnessed a great supernatural manifestation, although not realising what it was; Ananias, who was sent to Paul, had received a direct commission from the Lord in a vision; and Paul had received a vision preparing him for his coming (Acts 9:3-16).

The Work of Ananias. However, Paul did receive the Holy Spirit at his conversion, as the scriptures plainly state. But now the questions arise, in what degree was the gift given, and in what way was it imparted? Again, it has been generally assumed that Ananias went to Paul in order to impart to him the Spirit by the laying-on of hands, and that Ananias was given special power to accomplish this purpose. But again, this is creating unnecessary difficulties, besides failing to harmonise with other passages of scripture on the subject.

We know that only an apostle had power to impart the Holy Spirit by the laying-on of hands. This is clear from Acts 8:14-17, where Philip is shown as being unable to impart gifts of the Spirit to those who had come to Christ as a result of his preaching. The apostles Peter and John had to go from Jerusalem especially for this purpose (see also Rom. 1:11; 2 Cor. 12:12). There is no exception to this in the New Testament. Further, a careful reading of the account of Paul’s conversion shows that Ananias was not told by the Lord to go to Paul for the purpose of giving him the Spirit by the laying-on of hands, but “that he might receive his sight” (Acts 9:12; 22:13).

How Paul received the Holy Spirit. Yet when Ananias came to Paul he put his hands on him and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 9:17). How then could this statement be true if Ananias had no power to impart the Holy Spirit? The answer is seen in the general promise made on the day of Pentecost. To all who believed, repented, and were baptised, the promise of the gift of the Spirit—the new life in Christ—was made (Acts 2:38; John 3:5; Eph. 2:10; 2 Cor. 5:17; Tit. 3:5). Paul received the Spirit, the gift of the new life, when Ananias baptised him. This readily accounts for the words of the latter, for it made the baptism of Paul, and his subsequent reception of the Holy Spirit dependent upon Ananias. The laying-on of the hands of Ananias was solely for the purpose of restoring Paul’s sight. This is consistent with the gift of healing which was given widely in the New Testament church (1 Cor. 12:9, 28).

The Answer. Thus the answer to the question is clear, and the scriptures are shown to be in perfect harmony. It is not recorded that Paul received the baptism of the Holy Spirit at his conversion, for such a sign was not needed. He did, however, receive his sight by the laying-on of the hands of Ananias, and the gift of the new life in the Spirit at his baptism. One thing more was needed: the inspiration and authority as an apostle, according to the promises given by the Lord in John, chapters 14 to 16. This, as with the other apostles, was given subsequently as and when needed, and in Paul's case is manifested immediately after his three years' training by the Lord in Arabia (Gal. 1:11-17; 1 Cor. 2; 1 Thes. 1:5; 2:13). Thus Paul could say that in everything, power, as well as qualifications and authority, he was "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. 11:5; see also 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:1-11; Gal. 1:1).

Is Mark 16:9-20 Spurious?

MOST of the newer versions of the Bible leave out Mark 16:9-20. Modern scholarship is pretty well agreed that it doesn't belong in the text. Since a very vital point is at stake we wish to make a few observations in favour of the inclusion of the passage. We are well aware that one runs a terrible risk in expressing an opinion contrary to the scholars. He is generally considered to be little better, if any, than a nincompoop.

On the other hand, since scholarship is not in total agreement on the subject, that minority of them in favour of the inclusion will be in the same class. With them we are not in the least ashamed to be found in company.

The very fact that the scholars themselves disagree on this, or any other matter, is proof that scholarship is not infallible, and at best is but a commentary. Scholarship cannot, and does not, establish the scripturalness of a position or practice. Let it be remembered that the Word of God alone does that. Our authority must be the Word—not scholarship.

For several months we have been carrying on lengthy correspondence with Dr. Phillip C. Landers, Director, Committee on the Use and Understanding of the Bible, and Dr. J. Carter Swaim, Executive Director, Department of the English Bible, or The Federated Council of Churches, the group responsible for the production of the Revised Standard Version, regarding what we consider to be a rather deliberate attempt to engraft modernism into this translation. One of the passages under study has been Mark 16:9-20.

The principal argument made seems to rest upon the fact that Dr. Scofield leaves out the passage with this note: "The passage from verse 9 to the end is not found in the two most ancient manuscripts, the Sinaiticus and the Vatican. Others have it with partial omissions and variations."

We would, first of all, eliminate Dr. Scofield upon the basis that his testimony is subject to bias. He, being a Baptist, learned Baptist doctrine before he learned scholarship. And original bias, like bitter herbs in milk, tends to flavour.

Be it further noticed that the fact that the "two most ancient manuscripts" do not contain it is not conclusive proof. No scholar today knows exactly the value of these two manuscripts. Their age alone is a good argument, but not a conclusive one by any means. Their real value is a relative thing that can, and does, change with every new discovery in the field.

The common mistake is made of saying that the oldest manuscripts are of the greatest value, and that what cannot be found in the oldest must have crept into the text through error. This is a mistake unworthy of scholarship. The oldest manuscripts date from the first half of the fourth to the middle of the fifth centuries. They were not written until some 250 years after the death of the last apostle.

These manuscripts were all in a single language, done in hand-copied letters and subject to all the errors and accidents of uncaredful handling and frequent transcription. They were not translations—they were transcriptions. Nothing could be more subject to human error.

The first translation of which we have a copy appeared somewhere around the first century. Something like a dozen translations dating before the end of the fifth century are available. Because of the care taken in translating, translations are far better evidence than transcriptions. This is doubly true with respect to omissions in the text.

Many, if not all, of these translations were taken from either the original letters of the apostles or from transcriptions antedating both the Sinaiticus and the Vatican manuscripts, and which have never been and may never be, uncovered.

The fact that Mark 16:9:20 is freely quoted by the first generation of writers following the apostles, and whose writings antedate the oldest manuscripts now available is abundant evidence that the passage was in the original text, and was so accepted by the entire brotherhood before its omission from the two manuscripts mentioned.

Added to this is the clinching "circumstantial evidence" of the two manuscripts themselves. Space was left in which to copy this passage. This indicates that a fragment of the manuscript from which either or both the Sinaiticus and Vatican manuscripts were copied was missing, and that the copyist knew it and left space for it.

As further evidence that Mark 16:9:20 belongs in the text, we now consider the third of the older manuscripts—the Alexandrian. There are many reasons why we believe this to be the best one, and the correct one. The Alexandrian manuscript contains the above passage.

First, no scholar doubts that the school (or See) of Alexandria predominated and almost completely controlled religious thought during the two centuries following the death of the apostles. It was this school that produced the overwhelming majority of the writers and scholars of the Ante-Nicene period (before A.D. 325). Among them were Athanasius, Origen, and Clement, to mention a few.

The complete predominance of this school over the period of formation of Christian literature is readily conceded. Also, the exact and unvarying quotations of these writers from the original text indicates their universal familiarity with the actual letters, and even the actual words, of some of the apostles themselves.

In the See of Alexandria we have the merging of Latin Christianity as carried to North Africa by Arnobius, and Greek Christianity as represented in the Sinaiticus and Vatican manuscripts. Each of these two great languages acted as a double check on the veracity of any manuscript, or translation coming out of, or supported by the See of Alexandria.

There are some seventy-five writers of the Ante-Nicene period whose quotations from the New Testament are so voluminous that Professor Calvin E. Stowe, who has perhaps given more study to this field than any other man, says, "if every manuscript of the New Testament were lost, the substance of it could be reproduced from their writings." These writers repeatedly quote Mark 16:9:20, and all were quoting from manuscripts older than either the Sinaiticus or Vatican, and were all perfectly familiar with either the Alexandrian manuscript or those manuscripts from which it was copied.

There are several translations, which by their very geographical and linguistic connections were logically derived from manuscripts either contemporary with, or antedating the Alexandrian manuscript. Among them are Syrian and Egyptian manuscripts of the second and third centuries. These manuscripts all contain the passage.

It should also be noted that Irenæus, conceded to be the most scholarly of the Christian writers of the second century, quotes the passage. Irenæus was a student of Polycarp, who had studied with the apostle John. Irenæus makes

the statement that he personally had in his possession the "books of the Christian Scriptures" at the time of his study as a student of Polycarp.

All this evidence, coupled with many times this much more that could be presented, seems to us to be sufficient to establish beyond a reasonable doubt the fact that Mark 16:9:20 did actually exist in the original text, and that its absence from the Vatican and Sinaitic manuscripts resulted from a copyist error.

To completely ignore this evidence, and to omit the passage in a translation, is a grievous and serious error. Translation is a hard task at best, and to retain the confidence of the people in either the translators themselves or the translation is important. Men cannot use flagrant human discretion with such a task as translating the Divine Word of Almighty God. That is not their prerogative.

—*Firm Foundation.*

CORRESPONDENCE

[In reply to the article "Baptism and the New Birth" in December S.S., which was itself a reply to a letter from Bro. Webster, we have received this further communication from Bro. Webster. We give it full space to allow our brother the same freedom as ourselves, but have neither time nor space to reply to it in this issue.—Editor.]

Dear Bro. Melling,—I am very surprised that you should call upon and name these worthy, intelligent Christians in support of your argument on baptismal regeneration, in view of the fact they are so intelligent (which I do not doubt for one moment) yet they practise infant sprinkling; and why? Because they believe, like you, in baptismal regeneration.

If this is true, it would exclude all who had not been baptised from being saved, or born again. This so worried these intelligent Christians that they substitute sprinkling, and if you are going to use Numbers 19:20 and Ezekiel 36:25 in support of the theory of baptismal regeneration, then they are justified in adopting sprinkling, for both these scriptures speak of sprinkling. But this is not immersion, and how intelligent men can resort to the practice of sprinkling, and that God regards it as baptism, is beyond the comprehension of the reason, and no authority is given from God's Word, and yet they do it. So their comments on our subject are of little value.

I now quote from a book I have just been reading. Alexander Campbell examined the Scriptures carefully. He came to the conclusion that nothing else is taught in the New Testament than the

baptism of believers by immersion, and to this I agree, for this is not baptismal regeneration.

In every case in the N.T. they first believed, and the order throughout the book is hearing the Word, believing it, and then being baptised, that is to say I am baptised, because I am a Christian, having been born again by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever, and that I am not baptised to be a Christian, which is, some think, entirely different. In fact, these two views are poles apart. Baptismal regeneration is a denial of the Word of God, which requires a personal faith in Christ to be saved. And baptism does not beget faith, for it cometh by the hearing of the Word of God. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1). How many times our Lord said, "Thy faith has saved thee." If He had meant baptism, why did He not teach that at other times, instead of giving only this pronouncement?

In John 3, my Saviour, the great teacher, in plain speech, speaks to Nicodemus (v.15), "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." So that there can be no doubt at all, it is repeated in verses 16, 18 and 36. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

John 1:12. "But as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God." The whole gospel of John brings out this truth, also his 1 Epistle 5:13, "may know that ye have eternal life."

Scripture, in the plainest possible way, connects baptism with death, and this is not birth. For the Christian death im-

plies resurrection but let us not confound the resurrection with the new birth.

The great apostle Paul states the very same truth in 1 Corinthians 1:17, "For Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel (v.21) it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." And baptismal regeneration by Paul (I now quote the late Bishop of Liverpool who writes) is not even named nor referred to in thirteen Epistles, and in the two pastoral Epistles to Timothy, where we might expect to read something about baptismal regeneration, there is not a word about it.

The whole of the N.T. brings out the truth, that they who by faith receive Christ into their hearts, believe in His name are born of God, and so becomes a child of God, then as children we obey our Lord, this is not baptism, and I cannot, I dare not, reverse God's order. This is God's word, not my own interpretations, nor am I influenced by Dr. Scofield. In fact, his notes on John 3 there is no reference to Numbers or Ezekiel. If only we would study theology by our Bibles, it would be far better than to study our Bible by theology.

You give a list of those who support baptismal regeneration. S.S. could not contain the names of all who speak against it

H. Todd: "It is inconceivable he meant baptismal regeneration."

Dr. W. Scroggie: "Baptismal regeneration belongs to Rome." This is the pernicious doctrine of baptismal regeneration, a doctrine which alas is not the monopoly of Rome.

Thomas Tipper: "Baptism does not, as is affirmed by some, bring one into Christian ground or profession, whatever that may mean, but is a command to be observed by those already there by their faith in the gospel."

This shameful innovation and brain-spun sophistry is really subversive of the sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In my early Christian life I heard in debate by the Wickliffe preachers on this very subject, on our own market place and they proved from God's Word that which I have written unto you.

I enclose a paper about Jehovah's Witnesses—only this last week at our own local baths—having an immersion service, they went into the water. Does this make them Christians? I would write about Sir Moncer Williams, who describes a similar rite practised in Tibet

and Mongolia among some of the Buddhists. All this shows how even Paganism can be disguised in a Christian dress. How important therefore that sinners must first believe.

My space in the S.S. must be running out this time, but I trust that we of the Church of Christ will guard against the danger of drifting into believing baptismal regeneration, and keep to God's order.

FRED WEBSTER.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JANUARY, 1960

3—	Genesis 3.	Matt. 5:1-20.
10—	" 8:13 to 9:17.	" 5:21-48.
17—	" 15.	" 6:1-18.
24—	" 28:10-22.	" 6:19-34.
31—	" 35:1-15.	" 7:1-14.

THE SUGGESTED READINGS

It will be noticed that we have departed from our usual practice of relating the two readings. We have felt that this has seriously limited our Old Testament readings to a small range of isolated passages.

Accordingly we have this year planned a series in order of the books. This should give us encouragement to fill in our blanks of knowledge of the old covenant writings, which our Saviour knew so well and used so effectively. Certainly they form an essential part of the sacred writings—the man, and equally the woman, of God needs them as part of his or her equipment. Keep 2 Timothy 3:16 in view when considering John 3:16.

The gospel by Matthew studied carefully over the year will increase our knowledge and our love of our Lord, while reminding us that He is the fulfilment of the prophecy and promise of the old covenant.

Genesis—Beginnings

Our first month's readings take us from the fall of man in the ideal surroundings of paradise, through his destruction by flood, to the time when Jacob the supplanter returned to Bethel, humbled and repentant, and worshipped God there. God renewed the covenant with him through which salvation came to all nations. In approximate figures this covers a period of 2,500 years. From

the garden to the flood occupies 1,500 of these, during which the population of the world increased very rapidly, and deteriorated so seriously that God had to destroy all but Noah.

The longevity of the ante-diluvians has been much discussed, and all kinds of alternatives to the plain facts stated in the book have been suggested. If we take the biblical narrative as a whole, and recognise that present-day conditions must be entirely unreliable as standards, no great difficulties need be felt. The falling away from truth and righteousness which took place then could have been either slowed down or speeded up by this longevity for we must remember that the father of Noah, Lamech, (not the Lamech who rejoiced in vengeance) could have walked and talked with Adam for many years. Adam died when Lamech was 56. He could learn much from the experience of 900 years of active life.

Have we considered the implications of this, applying it generally to that dispensation? One has written "Men who lived a thousand years each would easily learn more than is taught in one of our universities—none of which has yet completed its millennium—composed of men snatched from life at four score, complaining, with Humboldt, that "we die as we are only beginning to learn."

Doubtless the civilisation of Egypt began in the days of Noah. "Centuries before the introduction of the arch into Greece, it was used in Egypt in buildings which still exist." There stand the pyramids and the Sphinx. As ability to interpret the inscriptions of ancient monuments has increased, the wonders of that ancient civilisation have been revealed. Its history indicates a great deterioration due to sin and idolatry, such as was overtaking the ante-diluvian world when Noah preached righteousness, and the 120 years' limit was fixed.

To gain an idea of the length of the period before the flood we could think back to 450 A.D. before the Roman Empire finally fell—and when the worship of Mary as the mother of God was invented by the apostasy. From Noah to Jacob the period would be about equal to 1066 to the present day, during which time the world had fallen back into idolatry very largely, God having by that time called out Abram as He had called out Noah.

We cannot but feel sad as we review 1,500 years of apostasy from paradise to the deluge, 1,000 from Noah's new start to widespread heathenism, and in the present dispensation the rapid decline from real—New Testament—Christianity to semi-heathenism again, resulting in the dark age, rightly so called, while the domination of Rome kept the masses in darkness, ignorance and poverty. While the light of God's truth has been won-

derfully powerful in enlightening the nations, we have to admit much more is to be done. The dissemination of Bible truth, and the preaching of the gospel, have leavened man's thinking so that he knows that kindness and love should be exercised, yet still some nations live in luxury and others in poverty, society is disturbed by constant strife of one kind and another, and large proportions of the work of nations are wasted on weapons, or rather prostituted to that purpose, and materialism dominates the world.

How small a matter it seems that God called Abraham, and that He brought Jacob through the trials of so defective a faith to maintain worship of the one true God. Nevertheless this was the way He chose. Sceptics love to dwell on Jacob's sins. Christians love to dwell on his keeping the promise he made and his trust in God. There is a great contrast with Esau who had no esteem whatever for his birthright, and no thought for God (Heb. 12:16). "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: and this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Rom. 11:26, 27). May we, like Jacob, recognise our great need of cleansing and sacrifice! (Gen. 35).

R. B. SCOTT.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Aylesbury—A most successful gospel mission was held here during the period November 28th to December 6th, with Bro. Henry Seidmeyer, of the West End Church, Frankfurt, Germany, ably and clearly setting forth the gospel. Meetings, which had been well advertised, were held every night except one during the period, and attracted a great deal of attention. Over one hundred attendances were made by people who were not members of the church, a good many of whom we had not seen before, and a number of new and useful contacts have been made.

We rejoice to report that four have been baptised. They are: Edith Arki, youngest daughter of Brother and Sister Arki; Mrs. B. Freeman, wife of Brother Freeman, an American serviceman; Mrs. Eva Smith, sister of Sister Rawlings; and Mr. Peter Egly, a Hungarian, and formerly a Roman Catholic. We are confident that with the Lord's blessing we shall reap a further harvest from this faithful sowing of the Word. Meanwhile, we pray that those who have put on Christ may grow up into Him, to become zealous and faithful servants of the Lord.

L. H. CHANNING.

Aylesbury.—We are pleased to report that work on our new building commenced at the beginning of December.

Brother Rawlings, who is a builder, is undertaking the work for us, and it is anticipated that it will take about nine months. Meanwhile, the brethren here are giving wonderfully well to make up the amount still needed to complete our building fund.

Blackburn.—We wish to put on record the news of two Saturday evening gospel meetings. The first, on November 14th, proved very interesting. We had about ninety from Wigan district churches, and Bro. Tom McDonald (Dewsbury) was the preacher. On December 5th we had another rally, but this was not as large in numbers. Bro. Geoffrey Lodge (Dewsbury) was the preacher. Our main purpose of writing is to express thanks to our two brethren for their thought-provoking addresses, and to those brethren who came so far to swell our ranks, and for the good fellowship we had together.

H. WILSON.

Kirkby-in-Ashfield.—At our Anniversary meetings held on Saturday, November 22nd we were glad to welcome a great number of visiting brethren. Over 100 brethren sat down to tea and at the evening meeting, the large gathering was further treated to a feast from the Word of God. The preachers serving us were Bren. F. C. Day, of Birmingham and Robert McDonald, of Dewsbury.

Bro. Day's address was based on 1 Tim. 3:15 on the theme "Men ought to behave themselves," and was calculated to inspire us all to greater heights of Christian living. A second repast followed when Bro. McDonald also greatly instructed us concerning the Kingdom of Heaven and complete allegiance in all things to King Jesus. It was a greatly satisfied and edified meeting which dispersed afterwards to their destinations at Eastwood, Ilkeston, Morley, Birmingham, Leicester, Loughborough and elsewhere. We thank the brethren for their support and fellowship, and our two speaking brethren for their labours with us.

Bro. McDonald also served the Church with great effect on Lord's Day, the Church here being greatly encouraged to endure and to pursue faithfully the work of the Lord. To God be thanks.

T. WOODHOUSE.

Peterhead.—We are happy to report the restoration of a young married brother. May he derive strength from Him who died for us.

A. STRACHAN.

and was baptised at Gledhow Road, Leeds, fifty-three years ago. Our sister never wavered in her faith and has now gone to share in her reward.

We also record the passing of Sister E. Harris. Sister Harris had spent the last few years of her life in an old people's home in Wiltshire, and was therefore isolated from her brethren. She was baptised late in life after a lifetime spent in the Church of England. While she was able to meet, she never missed a service, and she did us good.

We were not informed of her passing until after her funeral, and could not therefore be present at the interment.

Dennyloanhead.—It is with deep sorrow that we record the passing of our brother in Christ, John Marr, on December 7th, after an illness borne with Christian patience and fortitude.

Our brother was 75 years of age and a member of the church for many years. He was of a quiet, friendly nature and was greatly respected both in the church and by all he came in contact with. Although we shall see his face no more on this side of the grave, we can nevertheless anticipate with joy the time when the Lord's loved ones shall meet, where death can never cause a tear or break a tie.

To his family and other relatives who mourn his loss we offer our sincere sympathy, especially to his wife, our sister. We commend her to the love of the Father, praying that she shall bear her loss in the strength which He alone can give. The funeral service was conducted by the writer, with Bro. Baird, Wallacestone, taking the graveside service.

JOHN WILSON.

Newport.—It is with great sorrow that we inform the churches of the passing of our beloved Sister Priscilla Blandford, on December 8th, in her 70th year. Our sister was for many years a very active member of the church and even in later years, when illness kept her at home, she made her presence felt in many ways with her advice, and by the example of her wonderful faith in our Saviour, Christ Jesus. This faith remained unshaken, although she suffered much physically, and was with her until our Lord called her home to rest.

We mourn her passing, but we rejoice in her witness.

D. H. BERRY.

Ilkeston.—The sorrow of parting from a dear one has been felt again at Ilkeston. Our Bro. H. Gee and family have been bereaved of a father in the death of Bro. Meynel Gee at the age of 75 years. Although an active member of the church in his early years, he had been out of fellowship for many years. He was laid to rest on Tuesday, November 24th. We commend his sorrowing wife and children to the care of our heavenly Father. The funeral service was conducted by Bro. R. Gregory, F.G.

OBITUARY

Bedminster, Bristol. — We record the passing to higher service of Sister Ada Hollingsworth, on 12th November, 1959. She was laid to rest at Arnos Vale. Bro. S. W. Collins officiating. Sister Hollingsworth was nearly seventy years of age,

Lesson Outlines

Series 1. Lesson 10.

CONVERSION: Many in Joppa.

LESSON VERSES: Acts 9:36:43.

MEMORY VERSE: Acts 9:42.

OBJECTIVE: Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

TIME: A.D.37.

PLACE: Joppa is a very ancient seaport of the eastern Mediterranean about 50 miles N.W. of Jerusalem to which the modern town Jaffa is connected by railway. At the time of the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan under Joshua B.C. cir. 1450, Japho, as the city was then named, was in the parcel of ground allotted to the tribe of Dan. (Josh. 19:46). The wood for the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem B.C. cir. 1015, was brought in floats from Lebanon to Joppa for transport to Jerusalem (2 Chron. 2:16). Here Jonah went aboard ship for Tarshish (Jonah 1:3).

Because of its usefulness as a seaport, Joppa has been the scene of much fighting. The town was taken by Napoleon in 1799, and captured by the British in 1917. Jaffa is famous for its orange groves and a large tonnage of crude oil is shipped here annually. Population is well over 50,000.

PERSONS: Dorcas; other disciples; dwellers in Joppa; Apostle Peter; Simon the tanner.

Dorcas, Greek for Tabitha, means Gazelle. She was full of good works and acts of charity, and while Peter was at Lydda, about 10 miles S.W. of Joppa, Dorcas fell sick and died. Two men were sent to Peter with the message, "Please come to us without delay." Soon Peter stood in the room with the many weeping women who showed him the garments that Dorcas had made. At Peter's request he was left alone with the corpse and said, "Tabitha, rise." Opening her eyes and seeing Peter, she sat up. Then Peter called in the saints and widows.

Peter remained many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner. The occupation of tanner, because of its dirty nature and nasty smell, was considered degrading. It shows that Peter was learning to walk in the steps of his Master in staying with Simon, on the roof of whose house he had the vision which led to the conversion of the Gentile Cornelius.

MESSAGE: There is no verbal message stated. The message is acted.

RESULTS: The incident became known throughout Joppa and many believed in the Master.

EMPHASIS: To give glory to God our Father in heaven, our greatest privilege, I must believe the Good News like the folk in Joppa, confess before men my belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, be dipped into the name of Jesus Christ, and then "walk in the steps of the Master" (1 Pet. 1:21) like Dorcas.

A. HOOD.

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