

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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JANUARY 1961

TEXTS FOR THE YEAR

“ . . . one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:13-14).

“Recall the former days . . .” (Hebrews 10:32).

BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS.

THE month January receives its name from the Roman god Janus. The Latin *janua* means a door or gate. Janus to the ancient pagans was the god of doors, gates, openings, beginnings. Hence the word was given to the opening month of the year, the opening month of the Roman calendar, from which our own is adopted.

Janus was represented on Roman coins as having two faces, looking in opposite directions. He looked backwards and forwards—a fitting symbol for the ending of an old year and the beginning of a new. Another fact about Janus is of particular interest to Christians: he was the god of war, and whenever Rome was at war the doors of his temple were kept open, as though the Roman legions had marched out through them and would return in triumph through them. It is evidence of the warlikeness of the Romans that on only half-a-dozen occasions in the 700 years since the founding of the city were these doors closed. Caesar Augustus boasted that three of these occasions were during his reign. We know from Luke 2:1 that Augustus was the Caesar at the time of the birth of Jesus Christ. This adds point to the statement in Gal. 4:4 that “when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son . . .” Only when in the sight of God everything was perfectly prepared did Jesus come. One of these events that contributed to the “fulness of the time” was that at the birth of Christ the temple of Janus was closed, for it was one of the rare occasions of “universal peace.” At such a time the gospel could better be spread throughout the Empire.

It is a trite saying that the beginning of a new year is a time for looking backwards and forwards. We are exhorted in the New Testament to do both. True, Paul says “forgetting what lies behind . . .”; but the Hebrew epistle counsels Christians to “Recall the former days.” These passages do not form one of those Bible “contradictions” that scoffers are so eager to lay hold on. They have only to be read in their setting to understand what they mean. Nor is this looking back and looking forward illustrated by Mr. Facing-Both-Ways in “Pilgrim’s Progress.”

Janus was not two-faced in that sense!

In looking back over 1960 we can all recall experiences of the guidance and faithfulness of the living God. Though we are yet too near these experiences to evaluate them in their full significance, we can see that what at first might have completely puzzled us, and have seemed without meaning or even against God's will and purpose, is taking its shape in the pattern of our lives, for God's glory. By looking back we receive encouragement and inspiration for the present and the future. We can sing

"When all Thy mercies, O my God
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view I'm lost
In wonder, love and praise."

Recalling God's mercies is the surest incentive to face the future with assurance and confidence. What God has been, He is and will be. "I am the Lord: I change not." In the same epistle in which we are exhorted to "recall the former days," the grand truth is revealed that Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, today and forever."

"This, this is the God we adore;
We'll praise Him for all that is past
And trust Him for all that's to come."

To those without a living faith in God the future is ominous, dark and uncertain. But to the Christian, even though he lives in the same circumstances as his fellows, the very darkness and uncertainty only reveal in greater contrast the certainty of the triumph of Christ's cause. In that grand Psalm 110, which depicts the majesty of the Messiah, the inspired David writes of his "greater Son," "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." Not simply over them, but in the midst of them, while surrounded by them.

The seldom-quoted prophet Habakkuk, in his third chapter, draws a picture of utter hopelessness and despair, when all things should fail which were then held most precious and vital. He says, "Though the fig tree does not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the field yields no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls . . ." Could there be a darker picture from the material and worldly viewpoint? Yet what is the prophet's reaction? Not despair and hopelessness; not the philosophy "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die," but a declaration of joy and triumph: "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

In this joy and triumph let us go into 1961, another year of proving God's goodness all the days. And if it be that the Christ should come during the year, who should be more joyful and expectant than His people? He has said, "Surely I am coming soon." Let our response be "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" May He find us ready.

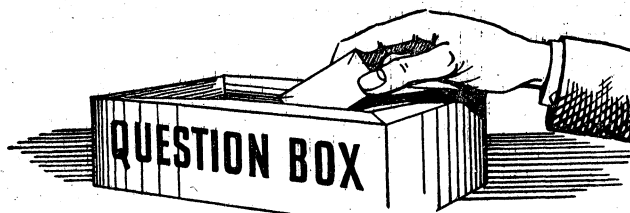
EDITOR.

TEN WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR-

1. A few friends who understand me and remain my friends.
2. Work to do which has real value, and without which the world would feel poorer.
3. An understanding heart.
4. A few moments of consolation.
5. A mind unafraid to travel, even if the trail is not blazed.
6. A sight of the eternal hills and the unresting sea, and of something beautiful not made with hands.
7. The power to laugh.
8. Nothing at the expense of others.
9. The sense of the presence of God.
10. And the patience to wait for the coming of these things with the wisdom to know when they come.

OUT IN THE COLD.

I've suffered cold when winds were bleak,
I've spoke to folks who wouldn't speak—
I never knew their frame of mind,
Nor why they chose to be unkind.
The coldest thing isn't ice or sleet;
Nor driven snow beneath the feet,
There's nothing colder, nor could be,
Than some cold shoulder turned to me.



CONDUCTED BY
L. CHANNING

Send your questions
direct to L. Channing,
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Aylesbury, Bucks.

Q. Matt. 27:52-53: Where did these people go after they were raised from the dead?

A. This incident is without parallel in the New Testament and indeed the whole of the scriptures, which is not surprising, for it is connected with an event that is unique in history—the Lord's resurrection. It cannot be explained in the light of such incidents as the translation of Elijah into heaven, nor the raising of Lazarus. It lies in the realm of things that are beyond human knowledge and the limits of revelation, such as the appearance of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration. We must accept the facts, but cannot explain them.

Because of the difficulties involved many have tried to dismiss these verses as an interpolation, but all reliable scholars agree that this contention cannot be sustained.

The Saints. Who the saints were that came from the tombs we are not told. They may have been some of the Old Testament saints who were buried near Jerusalem. On the other hand, the whole incident seems to suggest that they may have been those righteous ones who anticipated the coming of the Messiah, such as Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:25 and 36), who died before the Lord's crucifixion.

It is evident that the earthquake which took place as our Lord died, rending the rocks and splitting open the rock-hewn tombs, was particularly severe in the Jerusalem area. The dead did not arise however, until our Lord's resurrection, for Christ Himself had to become "the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20).

The Bodies in Which They Arose. Again, the question arises in regard to the bodies in which the dead arose at this time. Some have suggested that the passage simply means that the tombs being opened the dead were exposed to view. But this completely reverses what it says, for it speaks of the dead arising and going into the city to appear to many, not of the people in the city coming out to see the exposed dead.

The passage also clearly shows that the appearance was more than a mere spiritual manifestation, although whether the dead appeared in their new and resurrection bodies (1 Cor. 15:35-38) or in the bodies in which they had been buried is hard to say. The language of Matthew rather suggests that it was their earthly bodies.

Where Did They Go? As to where they finally went after being resurrected, again we can only surmise. Seeing this seems to have been an earnest or firstfruits of Christ's resurrection, we assume that they went to heaven, for unlike Lazarus, they would be raised to die no more.

The wisest comment this writer has found on this passage is made by Edersheim, one of the great authorities on the background of the life of Christ. He says, "I dare not express myself dogmatically on the precise import of St. Matt. 27:52, 53. . . . We know too little of the connection between the other world and this, and the mode in which the departed may communicate with those here, to venture on a decided statement, especially as we take into account the unique circumstances of the occasion." (Footnote to chap. 11, book 5, vol. 2).

Plain-Heartedness.—As you love your peace, Christian, be plain-hearted with God and man; keep the king's highway, the plain honest way of God's commands and Christ's doctrine.

Conscience.—A troubled conscience is the first-fruit of hell. Conscience is God's preacher—a preacher who never flatters. They who will not hear the voice of conscience will be made to feel the worm of conscience.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JANUARY, 1961

1—Isaiah 1:1-20.	Hebrews 4:1-13.
8— " 6.	Heb. 4:14 to 5:14.
15— " 28:1-16.	" 6.
22— " 35.	" 7.
29— " 42:1-17.	" 8.

Readings for 1961: We have continued our orderly readings through the Old Testament to complete the exercise by the end of the year, and then resume the more normal practice of connecting with the New Testament readings (God permitting and subject to approval). The greater importance of the New Covenant is recognised, but all were written for our instruction. This year we shall be occupied with the epistles for doctrine and behaviour, and resume gospel readings with John in October.

Rest for the Christian

The letter to the Hebrew Christians was written at a time when they particularly needed to be warned of the danger of falling away. Obviously the Temple and the Temple services were in use, and it was necessary to show that the new covenant in Christ had superseded them. The whole matter was confirmed beyond possible doubt when those relics of the old law were finally destroyed in 70 A.D., but in the meantime they constituted a stumbling-block for those to whom they had been the God-appointed essentials of true worship.

Worship in spirit and in truth, the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper and lives of self-denying love and service to others, were replacing altogether the physically propagated nation and the material central shrine. From being members of a proud race steeped in the national tradition, they had become members of the "sect which is everywhere spoken against." A strong, virile faith in the unseen God, and continual prayer should be every Christian's rest here and now, but just as truly "there is a rest that remaineth to the people of God." Both the present rest and the final future rest depend upon our remaining faithful, and this is of course the final point of stress in the section of the letter 3:7 to 4:11: "For we share

in Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end" (3:14 R.S.V.). So far they had remained faithful, but they were wavering because of the difficulties and the deceitfulness of sin. It would be so much easier to relapse into ease.

So then first the pre-eminence of the Christ is proved—from the very scriptures they revered—His superiority over angels. The certainty of the divinely attested message is emphasised, the resurrection in particular, and then the humanity of the Son, providing us with a, high priest in heaven itself, who nevertheless shared our nature. How can we then let go our privileged position? Just by failing like the people of old, who lost their rest in Canaan because they were disobedient. It is still "Today" as it was with Moses, Joshua, and likewise David, that is, the day when we may accept or reject the possibility of rest. Here is indeed the need for constant vigilance, expressed thus in the R.S.V. of 3:13, "But exhort one another every day." I wonder how often we do this! Paul's counsel, not just to Timothy or Titus, or Philemon, but to all the Thessalonian Christians, was "Admonish the idle, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with them all"—a lifetime of work! But if we do not work we shall neither deserve, nor properly want rest. Is there not a significance in the fact that Jesus offered rest to "all ye that labour and are heavy laden?" He did not offer it to the idle or satisfied. So we note that God rested on the seventh day when His creating work was done.

We have not to face the discouragements of those Hebrew Christians to whom the letter was originally addressed, but I think it surely true that all Christians at one time or another are, or have been similarly, placed. In the present time in many parts of the world the profession of Christianity does not involve direct persecution, but there are many places where our brothers and sisters are in great peril, and it may be many have faced death—let us not forget that death is "entering into rest"—the heavenly rest. There is, however, very serious discouragement due to lack of unity, open divisions, and an indifference to divine things. The warnings and encouragements therefore, are always in place, and we ought to read with solemn and earnest thought the passages in this letter which put before us the fearful

consequences of departing from the living God. The world is going madly after amusement and recreation (so-called), and alas many professing Christians are going with it, to discover, when it is too late, that friendship and fellowship with the world is enmity against God. The R.S.V. gives here an emphasis lost in the earlier versions, "Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4). The desire for popularity as well as its fulfilment bring us into great spiritual danger.

"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (4:16). Otherwise how shall any of us escape the deceitfulness of sin? R. B. SCOTT.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Bro. Editor,

During the past few weeks a series of events which, no matter how we look at them, are both important and historic, has occurred. First, we have the election of Mr. John Kennedy as the first Roman Catholic President of the U.S.A. Secondly, we had the Prime Minister of this country visiting the Pope. Finally, Dr. Fisher, the Archbishop of Canterbury, also visiting the Pope. I am beginning to visualise the time when every true Christian must take his stand for New Testament truth. These leaders of heresy will drag millions with them into the abyss of eternal condemnation, because men and women are so gullible as to follow them.

There has never been a time in history when a sincere study of New Testament principles is so vital, so that we may give a reason for the hope we have. To my mind, these men are banding together, so as to present a united front against communism, but does the end justify the means? As Christians we do not accept either alternative, because both are wrong and foreign to New Testament teaching.

My purpose in writing this letter is to warn brethren against these false teachers who are trying to tell us that their main purpose is to bring about Christian unity, when in fact they do not obey the basic essentials of Christ's teaching and they are evading the issue. Let us do all we can to promote New

Testament truth, in the workshop, mine, office and home. As we talk to people, the ignorance that we meet with of New Testament teaching is appalling. Ignorance will not be accepted by God, when a New Testament can be bought so cheaply.

But, brethren, a responsibility rests upon us to do all we can to promote New Testament teaching and lead many from condemnation.

JOHN BREAKELL.

"THE LAW OF OFFENCES"

Dear Bro. Editor,

I read the article "Law of Offences" by Bro. Wood with considerable interest; but though I agree with practically all that was written, I must confess I am a little perplexed by the argument leading to the culmination of step three. Perhaps this is due to a lack of understanding on my part. However, let me briefly recapitulate. The offender and the one offended meet; no reconciliation. So that every word might be established, they meet again in the presence of witnesses; no reconciliation. A church meeting is convened at which the guilt of the offender is established and he is called upon to repent; still no reconciliation. The authoritative teaching of Jesus is then applicable—"let him be unto thee as a heathen man, and a publican." In explanation of this our brother adds (I quote): "one of a very low type, not of the brotherhood." I take this to mean, rightly or wrongly, that if one is not of the brotherhood then one is not a brother. As if to substantiate this point of view, the writer goes on, "A brother is not cast out from us for all time. He is cold-shouldered and admonished, but the door is left open always for repentance and reconciliation." Do the words "cast out" mean "put out of the assembly"? If so, who is responsible for casting out—the Lord, the assembly, or both? Or is the writer, when he refers to "cold-shouldering" and "ignoring", advocating some kind of congregational "sending to Coventry"? This part of the argument concludes with the words, "There is no authority here for excommunicating a brother, but to ignore him, if he is declared guilty."

Now, if I can no longer look upon the offender as a brother, theoretically excommunication has taken place. Ratification of this theoretical assumption

would be evident in his being denied normal church privileges. The whole question of if, and under what circumstances, a person can be denied church privileges, is clouded with doubt and indecision. When the "Law of Offences" has been administered, unless there is a satisfactory conclusion, not only does the offence remain between two contending parties, but on top of this, and perhaps of a more serious nature, is the offence caused to the whole church and to the Lord Himself by the unrepentant attitude of the offending party. Surely this attitude cannot go unpunished. Again, if I am to practise restoration after repentance, what have I previously taken away from the offending brother which I now "give back" to him when I restore him?

These and other considerations have prompted this letter: perhaps there is a simple answer. A. MARSDEN.

REPLY TO BRO. MARSDEN

Dear Bro. Editor,

When I wrote on the Law of Offences I did not expect my letter to appear as a leading article; indeed, I must admit that it was not until fairly recently that I came to realise how important this law is. I am indebted to certain experiences and to the guidance of an elder brother for putting me on the track of truth in this respect. When the implications of the law became clear, I began to realise how necessary it is for every faithful brother to have a sound grasp of the principles of the law, in order that we might not err through ignorance, or become a prey to the unscrupulous, with which we sometimes have to contend. The law is given for our protection, and without an understanding of it we are at a great disadvantage.

The article was not intended as an exhaustive exposition of the law, for obviously much more could be said. It is my earnest hope and desire that others may be able to cast more light on this vital subject. I should welcome any such contributions to this study and should be grateful for any correction of what I have written. Our search is for truth, and personalities should not be allowed to enter into the matter.

In answer to Bro. Marsden's inquiry I see the matter as follows:—

"If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" (Matt. 18:17).

The application of the third step of the law being ineffective, the Lord commands that certain action be taken against the offender. The question is what? and by whom?

"A heathen man, and a publican" In Matthew 18:17, the Lord is talking to Jewish disciples who were then living under the Law of Moses. His statement must be related to what they would understand by "a heathen man, and a publican." The "heathen" to a Jew was one outside the Commonwealth of Israel, a stranger, or foreigner. (Eph. 2:11-12; Gal. 2:9; 3:8; 2 Cor. 11:26). The "publican" was a Jew, but also a Roman tax-collector. He held a position of great contempt among the Jews. Because the office was so despised, only the lower types would accept such a position, and as a result the publicans were a low class of men (Matt. 9:10-11; 11:19; 21:32; Luke 3:12-15). They were even conscious of the fact (Luke 18:11). In view of this I have written "One of a very low type, not of the brotherhood."

The question is, what do we do with such? "Let him be unto thee as . . ." Does the "thee" refer to the offended party only, or to the whole church? Does "as" mean to cast out, or does it imply an attitude that we should regard this unrepentant brother *as if* he were . . . ? I do not think the matter can be decisively settled in Matthew 18, but if the law is meant for the church there should be some evidence of it in the apostle's writings. We therefore compare with Romans 16:17, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them." 2 Thessalonians 3:6-14: "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the traditions which ye have have received of us. . . . And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he might be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

To my mind, these would undoubtedly include unrepentant offenders in personal disputes. The conclusion is that they should be shunned by every loyal brother. The fact that an appeal has been made to the church and the guilt of the offender proved before all, demands the same conclusion.

However, it seems to me that in the case of personal offences, no further

action is authorised, and that the terms of 2 Thessalonians 3:15 are definitely against any such measures. This is as far as we can go. The spirit of Romans 16:17 and Thessalonians 3:6-14 agrees with that of Matthew 18:17. It is a matter of withdrawing from, and not of casting forth.

As Bro. Marsden has pointed out, this conclusion seems unsatisfactory and indecisive, in fact almost contradictory. The dividing line seems uncertainly drawn in that he who is to be regarded as "a heathen" man and a publican" is allowed to continue with us in worship, if he will. However, unless other evidence can be found, this is the stated will of the Lord with which we must all agree, for He must know best.

I am also convinced that this arrangement is right for these reasons: (1) This action is not intended to alienate the offender, but to restore him (spiritually) through repentance. This is one of the primary objects of the law, "that he might be ashamed" (2 Thess. 3:15); (2) we may do more harm than good to the

church by excommunicating a brother in certain circumstances. I think something can be learned here from the Parable of the Tares (Matt. 13:24-30). There are things which the Lord does not entrust to our care, but in which He exercises the Divine prerogative. Neither it is for us to persecute such offenders, but to call them to repentance by the word of God. Time often heals a breach that no other means can. We all have weaknesses, and where can we combat those better than in the environment of the word of God?

(3) The judgment of man can never be absolute, and it is better that some things are left for the Lord to deal with personally. "We shall all appear before the judgement seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:10, and see Matt. 13:41-43). We can rest assured that no deliberate offence will go unpunished. There can be no doubt that "sending to Coventry" is a severe form of punishment, as any social outcast can testify, e.g., the "publican"; and there is yet a more fearful judgment to come, for the unrepentant.

JOHN M. WOOD.

"ALL THINGS PRAISE THEE."

IT may be that the hymn named above is one of the best-liked hymns we have. It is a metrical version of the great theme of the Psalms, from which so many hymns have their inspiration.

In a sense, the hymn is unique. The opening four words of the first verse are used to begin the verses that follow, and the last line of each verse repeats and stresses the same or a similar phrase. In between these portions the lines comprise imaginative expressions of praise, and each verse closes with the same three words, "Lord, may we."

These last words are neither prayer nor petition, but in effect are a self-exhortatory acceptance of the Psalmist's "all that hath life and breath, praise ye the Lord."

This sudden juncture of exclamation and exhortation raises a difficulty when we come to sing the words, that is, if they are to be sung as they should be—and as the psalmist observes—"with understanding."

The choice of tune to which this hymn is sung is clearly of some importance to the right singing of it. I have long sought for such a tune, one that will accommodate itself to these words, but without success. I still have a 1914 hymn book, used when a precentor, which has the solfa notes of five tunes surrounding this hymn. Four of them I have heard sung at one time or another, but they all fail to deal properly with those last lines. The other tune is one I learned from Bristol as a youth, and I think it the best 77.77.77 tune there is, though it also fails on this hymn.

One of my pleasant recollections of radio is to have heard the late Sir Walford Davies take this tune as his example in a music lesson, and I was delighted to hear him praise it, calling especial attention to the third line, which he described as a lovely line. I would have liked to have named this tune here, but am not sure what it is called, and my Bristol has gone astray. Anyone having the book and

wishing to look it up, may find it from these solfa notes of the first line: M M S S D R M—each note is of the same length, except the last, which is longer. I may be excused for adding that, shortly after hearing that broadcast, I heard Elizabeth Schumann also sing the same tune beautifully to German words.

The trouble with this hymn is that the satisfaction which comes from the conclusion of a musical phrase does not allow of any break such as these two diverse expressions require. When reading, one would inevitably pause after the words "All things praise Thee." The printer's device of a —(dash) is there for that purpose, and if we must sing understandingly, it is necessary there should be a pause before taking the last three words.

Below is a tune written after many attempts, which may be found acceptable. It does certainly aim to allow of the proper expression of both the four words and of the three.

As indicated on the music, the four words are to be retarded slightly, increasing with each word, and broadening and stressing the words "praise Thee"; completing with a distinct but momentary pause, then the musical phrase (which covers the last two lines) that is held in abeyance should be taken up in strict time as in the first part of the verse, but with two notes only to the bar. It needs to be gracefully and graciously done, which is something the singing leader should give attention to.

W. BARKER.

77.77.77

ALL PRAISE.

W.B.

THE WISDOM OF GOD

"And count the forbearance of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, beware lest you be carried away with error of lawless

men and lose your own stability" (2 Pet. 3:15, 17).

By their own vain reasonings men twist these Scriptures to their own destruction, reasoning that they've no chance of eternal life without worldly education.

But we must grow in the Spirit rather than in wisdom of man.

Reputation is valuable, true character is priceless; guard them carefully.

INFANT BAPTISM IS PAGAN —Minister

(Edinburgh Evening News, 25-10-60)

Infant baptism was pagan and could not be reconciled with the Gospel, the Rev. William Whyte, Portobello, said in his presidential address at the opening of the Annual Assembly of the Baptist Union of Scotland in Aberdeen last night.

About three hundred delegates attended the four-day assembly. Mr. Whyte, in his address on "The Authority of the Gospel," said it was well known that in recent years many paedobaptist scholars had spoken in strong terms of "the scandal of infant baptism."

Because of the evident confusion in paedobaptist denominations, various commissions had been set up to inquire into the doctrine and practice of baptism. Chief among these had been the commission set up by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

"We reject infant baptism for many reasons, but chiefly because it is a denial of the Gospel. We believe that infant baptism has no place in the New Testament and that indeed it is pagan in its origins."

It had been practised by the pagan mystery religions of the Mediterranean and by heathen religions throughout the world, including the Germanic tribes and our Druid ancestors.

A Friend in time of Trouble. — God has never promised a charter of exemption from trouble, but He has promised to be with us "in trouble." Better be in prison with God's presence and God's promises than to be on a throne without them.

LESSON OUTLINES

Series 1.

Lesson 18.

Conversion: Churches increase in membership daily.

Lesson verses: Acts 15:36-41; 16:1-5.

Memory verse: Acts 16:5.

Objective: The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

Time: A.D. 49.

Places: Antioch in Syria; Syria; Cilicia; Derbe; Lystra; Pamphylia.

Cilicia, a stretch of country along S.E. coast of Asia Minor. Its principal city, Tarsus, was the birthplace of Paul. Under the Romans Cilicia was joined to Syria.

Persons: Paul; Barnabas; John Mark; Silas; Timothy. Silas, one of two leading brethren in Jerusalem (Ac 15:22) who were chosen to accompany Paul and Barnabas after the discussion in Jerusalem on circumcision. A prophet, he took part in exhorting and confirming the brethren in Antioch. Paul and Barnabas disagreed about taking John Mark with them on a proposed tour, to see how the brethren in the new churches were faring. Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus. Paul, being commended to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, took Silas and went overland, visiting the churches in Syria, Cilicia, and Derbe and Lystra, two cities in S. Galatia. This tour of the apostle Paul is known as his second missionary journey. Silas (as Silvanus) and Timothy are associated with Paul in both 1 and 2 Thess. written from Corinth. Paul states that "God has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee," when referring to himself, Silvanus and Timothy. In Lystra, Paul decides to have Timothy as additional companion. To save opposition from Jewish believers he circumcised him. Timothy had been taught the Scriptures from childhood (2 Tim. 1:5 and 3:14-17). He had not been circumcised although his mother Eunice was a Jewess. His father was a Greek. Paul calls Timothy "my beloved child" (2 Tim. 1:2). Timothy, like Silas, continued to work in the gospel with Paul.

Message: Some brethren in Antioch, from Judea, were teaching that it was necessary to be circumcised and to keep the Mosaic Law. After discussion and debate with these Jewish brethren, the church in Antioch delegated Paul and Barnabas with certain others to go to Jerusalem and confer with the church there on the matter. Being welcomed by the Jerusalem church, the apostles and the elders, they declared the conversion of the Gentiles. But believers from the Pharisees said "It is necessary to circumcise them and to charge them to keep the law of Moses." After much debate Peter related his experience when Cornelius, his kinsmen and near friends had heard the Message of the Good News and

distinction between us and them, but cleansed their hearts by faith." "God bore witness to them, giving them the holy Spirit as he had given previously to us (apostles). Why make trial of God by imposing this condition?" Barnabas and Paul related what God had done through them among the Gentiles. Then James summed up: "My judgment is that we should not trouble the Gentiles who turn to God but write to them to abstain from (1) what has been sacrificed to idols, (2) unchastity, (3) what is strangled, (4) blood." Then the apostles, the elders with the whole church chose Judas called Barsabbas and Silas, two prominent brothers, to accompany Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch to confirm the writing by word of mouth.

As Paul and Silas went through the cities they delivered to them for observance the decisions which had been reached by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

Results: "The churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in membership daily." (Ac. 16:5.)

Emphasis "To those outside the law, I became as one outside the law—not being without law to God but under the law of Christ—that I might win those outside the Law." (1 Cor. 9:21.)

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and Death." (Mosaic law (Rom. 8:12).

A. HOOD.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Aylesbury.—We rejoice to report that the power of the gospel continues to be seen amongst us. On Saturday, November 17th, 1960, Thomas Dobinson, who had been attending our meetings for some time, was baptised into Christ. Our brother is a fine young man of seventeen years, for whom we are convinced there is a great future in the service of His Lord.

L. H. CHANNING.

Castlemilk, Glasgow.—It gives us again great joy to give the news that another lad of twelve years from our large Sunday school has been baptised. From

him, we expect an active light to help us in our great effort and service for our Saviour in Glasgow. May we have the prayers of brethren everywhere.

A. B. MORTON.

Tranent.—With great joy we record another addition to our number. Allan Inverarity (husband of Sis. Ella Inverarity) put on our Lord in baptism on Lord's Day, October 31st. We thank God for this further proof of the power of His Word, and pray that our brother may be found faithful, as he enters the new life full of promise, in grateful service to our Lord.

D. SCOTT.

ANSWERED PRAYER.

FOR about seven years the church in Tunbridge Wells has been trying to find a building site, having met in a "hired room" for about nine years. At last, after repeated disappointments, our prayers have been answered. In 1954 we enquired about a site which for years had been known as "The Site of the Good Intent." It belonged to a firm of brewers, and "The Good Intent" was the name for the public house they intended to build on it. However, they said definitely that it was not for sale. After this we grew almost weary of searching. Site after site was seen and investigated, but nothing suitable found. All kinds of buildings were inspected, again without success. Two years ago "The Site of the Good Intent" was offered for sale at £650. We again considered it, and had advice about the cost of levelling the site, which is on a slope. When we learned that it would cost some five hundred pounds to level it, we regretfully decided not to buy. Early in 1960, after much more fruitless searching, we considered it again. We had been advised that we could avoid extensive (and expensive) levelling of the land by using another method of planning. Unfortunately the price now being asked for the land was £850—a fair indication of how land values have risen in this town. After much prayer we approached the owners and told them that we wanted the land. We told them who we were, what we believed, and what we would do with the site. They said that if we offered what we honestly believed was a fair price they would seriously consider it. We prayed much, then carefully and, somewhat fearfully, offered them six

hundred pounds. They accepted without demur. We gave thanks to God, who does answer the prayers of his children.

We know that many brethren have a deep interest in the work of the Lord in this town. They will rejoice with us that we have at last succeeded in finding a site. We beseech the prayers of all the saints as we go forward in the strength of the Lord with our plans to build a meetinghouse. This is an outpost of the kingdom. Distance isolates us from many other churches of the Lord. Pray for us, brethren.

A. E. WINSTANLEY,

43a Church Road,
Tunbridge Wells,
Kent.

OBITUARY

Ilkeston.—In the passing of Bro. Samuel Jepson the church at Ilkeston has lost one of its greatest servants. We little thought that Lord's Day, November 13th would see our last handshake with him this side of eternity. Our brother took ill during the night and passed away peacefully on Monday, November 14th, at the age of seventy-eight years.

Immersed at Selston, at age of fourteen, he faithfully and steadfastly served his Lord and Saviour for sixty-four years. Over fifty years of these were spent in the life of the church at Ilkeston. It has been the privilege of the writer to have been associated with him during these years and I can truly testify to his sterling work on behalf of the church. He was a man of many talents, which he humbly used to great advantage. He was a lifelong preacher of the gospel, in early years serving the many churches in the Nottingham district, travelling week by week on his cycle, hail, rain or shine.

He filled the important office of church secretary for over forty years with great diligence, guiding the church through many difficult times. He was for many years representative on the Notts. district committee. He was one of three elders in the church and gave his long experience to the building up of his brethren in faith and love. For many years he was Sunday school superintendent and teacher. Work amongst the young was his delight, and with his cheerful disposition he was loved and respected by all. He used and excelled

in his talent of singing; and he loved to sing the songs of Zion. In this sphere he will be missed very much; he was always ready to put the church first in his life. Nothing was too great or too little for him to do. The influence of this man of God will be felt in the church for a long time. Many owe their thanks for his devoted service to them, and many older members have happy memories of the social gatherings in which he had a large share.

A colliery clerk nearly all his life, he was well known and respected by employers and fellow-workmen. He was always prepared to speak a word in the great cause he loved. To know him was a real pleasure. His work of faith and labour of love will not be forgotten in the coming great day. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." We commend his sorrowing family, our Sis. Jepson, their son and daughter, to the loving care of our heavenly Father, who is able to give all help and succour at these times.

Bro. Jepson was laid to rest on Thursday, November 17th, Bro. H. Britton of Netherfield officiating.

F.G.

Ilkeston.—Another aged member of the church has been called home. Brother Lambert Stenson passed from this life, at the age of eighty-seven, on November 16th, after being removed to the Nottingham General Hospital following a fall in his home.

Although our brother was not added to the church till about middle life, he was no stranger to its principles, for his wife, still living and a faithful and steadfast member of the church for over sixty-two years, patiently taught and influenced him. Our brother was of a quiet disposition, yet always willing to learn and talk about spiritual things. It was a pleasure to visit him for he had a great sense of humour and could converse on many subjects. Of late years he had not been able to attend meetings owing to advancing years, but was always interested in the work of the church.

He leaves behind him to mourn his loss his dear wife and two daughters, whom we commend to the loving care of our heavenly Father, who is able to sustain and strengthen. May the eternal God be their Refuge.

The funeral service was on November 21st and was conducted by the writer.

F.G.

COMING EVENTS

Newtongrange.—A special mission will be held in the meeting-place of the Church of Christ in St. David's, Newtongrange, conducted by A. E. Winstanley (Tunbridge Wells). Meetings will be held during January and the beginning of February, 1961: Saturdays, January 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th, at 6 p.m.; Sundays, January 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th at 6 p.m.; Wednesdays, January 11th, 18th, 25th and February 1st at 7 p.m.

We will be delighted if all in our district during the period will come and help us to extend our Lord's kingdom. We crave the prayers of all our brethren for the success of this mission.

Ince-in-Makerfield (Lancashire). Meetings to commemorate the opening of our new meeting-place will be held on Saturday and Sunday, March 4th and 5th, 1961 (D.V.). Saturday, 2.30 p.m., meeting to be addressed by Bro. Will Steele (Edinburgh). After this meeting tea will be provided. At 6.30 p.m., meeting to be addressed by Bro. Geoffrey Lodge (Dewsbury) and Bro. Tom Kemp (Hindley). Sunday, Breaking of Bread, 11 a.m.; Bible School 2.30 p.m.; Gospel meeting at 7.30 p.m., to be addressed by Bro. Frank Worgan.

A warm invitation is extended to all brethren to meet with us on this occasion. Accommodation will be provided for week-end visitors.

Important: It will greatly help us with catering arrangements and also in deciding whether our meeting-place will be large enough to house all the meetings, if all who intend to be present will notify our secretary as soon as possible. (Philip Partington, 636 Atherton Rd., Hindley Green, Wigan, Lancashire.)

Spring Conference, Sat., April 1st, 1961

Will any church desirous of entertaining the conference please write the conference secretary, A. Hood, 45 Park Road, Hindley, Wigan, Lancs., so that arrangements may be put in hand as soon as possible. It has been suggested by many brethren that meetings be held on the following Monday, as at Tranent this year.

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All matter for insertion must be sent before the 10th of the month (news items the 15th) to the Editor: C. MELLING, 133 Long Lane, Hindley, Wigan, Lancs.

Forthcoming events and personal notices: 3/- for three lines minimum; 8d. per line over three lines.

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

Secretary of Conference Committee: A. HOOD, 45 Park Road, Hindley, nr. Wigan.
NYASALAND Mission: Contributions to W. STEELE, 31 Niddrie Road, Portobello, Edinburgh, Mid Lothian.

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SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR 1961

These are again being prepared by Bro. R. B. Scott, 96 Chetwynd Rd., London N.W.5, who will also continue in writing the Notes on the Readings for the S.S. For supplies of reading cards please write Paul Jones, 41 Pendragon Road, Birmingham 22b, enclosing one penny for each card (state quantity required) and cost of postage.

BIBLES FOR AFRICA

William Steele, 31 Niddrie Road, Edinburgh, corresponds with Tabbu Chissiano, Box 100, Zomba, Nyasaland, and while he is happy to receive letters and requests for Bibles, etc. from others, he believes it is more convenient to have the Bibles sent direct to Tabbu Chissiano for distribution in that area.

If, however, brethren or churches would like to send Nyanja Bibles to any brother in Nyasaland, Brother Steele would be happy to arrange for their despatch through the Bible Societies of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

You can send 100 Nyanja Bibles for just under £35. Make your money orders or cheques payable to National Bible Society of Scotland. For seven shillings and sixpence you could let one more soul have the precious volume of God's Word. Help spread the Gospel of Peace in troubled Africa.

THANK YOU

Bro. W. T. Hurcombe expresses deep gratitude to the anonymous donor of £10 and to the many brothers and sisters who have helped him by their prayers, visits and gifts at the time of his recent accident. "The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit . . ." (Rom. 5:5).

[Bro. Hurcombe has made a wonderful recovery from his injury, but his doctor forbids his return to work before the end of the year.—Ed.]