

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

A couple of months ago I mentioned that the 'in' thing, these days, in many religious groups was experiencing Holy Spirit Baptism, and demonstrating 'the gifts of the Spirit'. Funnily enough, just the other day, I received an invitation to a two-day 'Workshop' in Edinburgh, at which a certain Ian Andrews, and wife Rosemary, will give teaching and practical instruction on "Healing The Sick" and also on "Experiencing the Gifts of the Holy Spirit". In the printed invitation Mr. Andrews claims that "Many mighty miracles" have been seen as a result of his own prayers, his very clear teaching and his envisioning of others." He further claims that the first-day Workshop is designed "to heighten your faith to a point where you, in your situation, can see the healing power and authority of Jesus manifested as you pray for the sick." The second-day Workshop's purpose is "to stretch your faith into the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in your own life". The invitation promises that "Ian, accompanied by his wife Rosemary, will be majoring on:- Tongues; Interpretation; Phrophecy; Wisdom; Knowledge; Faith; Miracles; Healing and Discernment of Spirits." Naturally I would like very much to accept this invitation and see how Ian would 'heighten our faith' so that we could see the healing power and authority of Jesus manifested; or 'stretch our faith' into the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I would also be intrigued to see Ian and Rosemary 'majoring' (whatever that may prove to mean) on things like Tongues; Miracles, Prophecy, Healings etc. As I say, I would like to accept this invitation but I can't bring myself to part with the £15 for both sessions. I suppose that £15 is not really much to pay for learning how to cure the sick or work miracles but, then again, I hesitate to believe that I could learn to perform miracles (or that Mr. Andrews can perform them either).

There seems no limit to the claims men make – the problem seems to be living up to them. As James Anderson says, (in "The work of the Holy Spirit"), "If a man possesses miracle-power he is bound to know it; if he does not have such power he is bound to know it. Therefore when I meet a man who lays claim to the power, I do not think he is deceiving himself; I only think he is anxious to deceive me. All the while I remain open to conviction." We are all, like James Anderson, open to conviction but are these special gifts of the Spirit in the world today?

Holy Spirit Baptism

According to the New Testament, Holy Spirit baptism seems to have occurred only twice. Certainly no others seem to be recorded. This baptism was a promise (given as far back as Joel) where the prophet predicted that God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh (Jews and Gentiles). This came to pass (in the case of the Jews) on Pentecost when the apostles were indeed waiting 'for the promise' and were duly 'baptised with the Holy Spirit' amid the amazing phenomena of howling mighty wind and tongues as of fire. (Acts 1:5;2:4).

An entirely similar event took place, some time later, when Gentiles, in the person of Cornelius, and his household, received Holy Spirit baptism. The apostle Peter (Acts 11:15-17) recounts the incident and admits that God thus gave the Gentiles "the like gift He gave unto us", (the apostles) and tells how the Holy Spirit fell on them "as on us in the beginning". Those who had accompanied Peter had been amazed that "on the Gentiles also was poured out of the Holy Spirit for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God". (It is very worthy of note that, notwithstanding the fact that these Gentiles had just been baptised with the Holy Spirit and could speak in tongues, the apostle Peter still required them to be baptised (immersed) in water for the remission of sins. It was not a matter of preference, for Peter commanded them to be baptised in water.) (Acts 10:47,48; see also 19:1-7).

Notice that **Holy Spirit baptism** is, more than once, referred to as "a gift" and was imparted, it seems, to only a few of Jews and Gentiles. **Baptism in water** was, however, a requirement of all those who would be disciples of Jesus. It was a direct command to all (Acts 2:38), just as repentance was, and even the apostle Paul was instructed to "arise and be baptised and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord". (Acts 22:16). One of the primary effects of Holy Spirit baptism was that it enabled the recipients to speak in tongues (in languages they had not had time to learn) and, in the absence of any written New Testament, herald forth the wonderful works of God. They were able to preach and teach the unsearchable riches of Christ, "God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will." (Heb.2:4). These incredible happenings: the signs and wonders, the miracles and gifts of the Spirit were supernatural but temporary in purpose. — for 'confirming the word' and the rapid establishment of the Lord's church. Albert Barnes (in his Commentary) says, "If it be asked why this power was conferred on the early Christians, it may be replied that it was to furnish a striking proof of the truth of the Christian religion; to impress the people; and thus to win them to embrace the gospel. This extra-ordinary attestation of God to His message was one cause of the rapid propagation and permanent establishment of the gospel." Today, there is no place to which we can go for Holy Spirit baptism, just as there is no person qualified to impart Holy Spirit Baptism. Those who, nevertheless, claim to have received it have a duty to prove their words.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

To understand aright this vast subject (the Holy Spirit) requires much study, and there are difficulties, but there is also much that we can learn. We know, for instance, that those extraordinary "gifts of the Holy Spirit" could be, and were, conferred by the laying on of the hands of the apostles. Indeed when the Samaritans received the gospel, the apostles at Jerusalem sent down Peter and John to them that they might impart to them the Holy Spirit. When Simon (the Sorcerer) saw "that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money." (Acts 8:18). We should also be careful not to confuse the Holy Spirit as "a gift" with

the "gifts" bestowed by the Holy Spirit. "The gift of the Holy Spirit" is a term occurring only twice in the N.T. (Acts 2:38; 10:45) whereas reference is made to the "gifts of the Holy Spirit" many times. We ought also to differentiate between the ordinary indwelling of the Holy Spirit (given to every one who obeys the gospel) and the extra-ordinary gifts given to only certain individuals in the early years of the church. There seems little doubt that each Christian had the indwelling of the Spirit. Paul could say, quite generally, to the church at Corinth, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." (1 Cor. 3:16) and there are a great many other such references (James 4:5; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6; Acts. 5:32 etc.). While this indwelling was a 'gift' from God it did not confer any special powers for there were many of the early Christians unpossessed of any super-natural gifts of the Spirit. As we noticed earlier, this was why Peter and John were sent to the Samaritans. As these supernatural gifts of the Spirit were given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, it follows that as the apostles died and passed away so did the gifts (as did the purpose). The apostle Paul more than hints at these things in 1 Cor. 12 & 13. He says that God "set some (just some, not all) in the church, firstly apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers; after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." Those who had no gifts were to covet (seek) the best gifts but yet in the next chapter Paul describes this 'more excellent way' and shows that, whereas these gifts were but temporary, love would remain. "Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail, whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away". Thus these gifts of the Holy Spirit (prophecies, tongues, knowledge) would pass away but hope, faith and love would remain (with love being the pre-eminent). (1 Cor. 13:8).

The Real Gifts — Our Natural Talents

And so, even if I had £15 to spare, I would be unlikely to spend it on Ian and Rosemary 'majoring' on gifts of the Holy Spirit which passed away a long time ago (unless Paul was mistaken). What prophecies, I ask myself, could Mr. Andrews produce which are not already in the New Testament.? What 'tongues' could he invoke which would add to the words already spoken by the Holy Spirit and penned in the word of God? What 'interpretations' could he impart that have not already been discovered by Bible students.? What 'faith' can he muster other than the faith which cometh by hearing the word of God.? What 'knowledge' has he received from heaven that we cannot glean from the scriptures.? What miracles can he really perform? (based on the N.T. meaning of 'miracle'). (Nowadays it seems that even the term 'miracle' has been watered down to include any unexpected occurrence. Ray C. Stedman in his book 'Body of Life' (which deals with the gifts of the Spirit) relates how that a man drove 600 miles to consult him in his capacity of 'pastor' and confessed his inability to forgive a man who had previously done him an injustice. It was affecting his health and family. 'Pastor' Stedman and the man prayed together and during the prayer the man's face and attitude changed completely and he felt much better, and more forgiving. Mr. Stedman describes this as a 'miracle' which took place "before his very eyes". This was nice but certainly not a miracle in the scriptural sense). There are also twelve Mormon 'apostles' in the world who claim to be able to perform miracles (even to raising the dead) but they never seem to bother to exercise these wonderful powers. It is an extremely easy thing to claim to have these supernatural gifts of the spirit —

the trouble is in trying to match the performance with the claim.

It seems fairly certain that all the extraordinary gifts have gone. Most Bible students admit that their purpose was temporary (for confirming the word, and until that which is perfect should come). They were part of the scaffolding and removed when the church was built. Natural gifts remain, however. Each church member has the indwelling of the Spirit and has, additionally, some natural talent or ability which is to be used in the service of Jesus. The church flounders and languishes today because all members do not exert that ability that they have. The servant is not above his Master and even Jesus came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and give His life as a ransom for the many. Let us be faithful stewards of the manifold grace of God. Our abilities are the real gifts; the true talents. Let us use them to the glory of God and for the extension of His kingdom. Let us throw off indifference and create enthusiasm for God's purposes. The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a vineyard (not a place of rest) and we should be the labourers bringing in the harvest. The fields, today, are white unto harvest but the true labourers, as Jesus said, are (still) extremely few.

Let none hear you idly saying
 'There is nothing I can do'
 While the souls of men are dying
 And the Master calls for you
 Take the task He gives you, gladly
 Let His work your pleasure be
 Answer quickly when He calleth
 Here am I, send me, send me.

EDITOR.

GLEANINGS

"Let her glean even among the sheaves." Ruth 2:15

WE QUOTE — ISSAC SELBY

"I REASON FROM THE LIVING FORMS OF MATTER UP TO THE GREAT SOURCE OF LIFE. Now I come to another line of argument when I proceed to examine these living forms. Be they the minutest forms of animalculae, we find that there are undoubtedly marks of arrangement in their composition, which suggest a plan — which suggest a design. For instance, here is a man wheeling a barrow down one of our public thoroughfares. I examine that barrow and I find that it is composed of parts, and evidently put together for some purpose, because, there is a bottom to the barrow, there are sides and an end, which help to contain the material that the man is wheeling. There is a wheel that aids in locomotion; there are two handles to the barrow by which he clutches it, and which enable him to propel it; and so, from the marks of adaptation in that barrow, I reason up to the fact that that barrow was planned or designed, and therefore it suggests to me an intelligent barrow-maker. Now turn from the contemplation of the barrow to the contemplation of the man who is wheeling it, and we discover that that man, just like the barrow, is composed of parts, and evidently put together for a given purpose. We find that that man has a brain which aids him in the duties of life; he has a heart that propels the blood on its mission of life through the crimson arteries of the body and back by way of the violet tinted veins for purification. He has arms for manual labor, and legs for locomotion. And so, in that man

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“Nothing useless is, or low,
Each thing in its place is best;
And, what seems but idle show,
Strengthens and sustains the rest.”

And if I had the right to reason from the composition of a barrow up to an intelligent barrow-maker, surely I have the right to reason from the composition or the plan of man up to that divine man-maker who gave him all the powers that he now possesses.”

THE SUPREME POINT OF ENERGY

“Put on thy strength.” — Isaiah 52. 1.

Men can rouse themselves to action. In every man there is more or less of latent energy, unknown under ordinary circumstances, and flaming out in exceptional hours to the surprise of the man himself. We cannot live continuously in ecstasy; we must live under ourselves, so to speak, or life will become a pain and a failure. We are, however, to have periods of special effort, hours of rapture, times of inspiration and sense of mightiness beyond all that is ordinary. In the text the captive daughter of Zion is exhorted to put on her strength; that is, to rouse herself and claim her whole dowry of privilege and influence, — there is strength in her, and she must rouse it; there must be an effort of will, — life must conquer circumstances. In view of these reflections it is proposed to insist upon the suggestion that there is more power in man than he may be aware of, and that he should inquire what objects and pursuits are worthy of his enthusiastic devotion.

Joseph Parker.

TO SHOW WHERE HE WALKS

“Sometime ago when in a mine, looking through its dark corridors, I every now and then saw the glimmer of a moving lamp, and I could track it all through the mine. The reason was that the miner carried it on his hat; it was a part of himself, and it showed where he went. I said: “Would that in this dark world every miner of the Master carried his lamp to show where he walks.”

Cuyler

TURNED THE RIGHT WAY

“When Robert Moffat, the Chesire gardener, offered himself as a missionary, some of his friends thought, and others actually said, that his brains were turned. His reply was: “Turned ? So they are. But they are turned the right way.”

Dr. Clifford.

COURAGE TO FEAR NONE BUT THEE

“The following prayer was found in the desk of a schoolboy after his death: ‘O God! give me courage to fear none but Thee.’”

I KNOW WHOM I BELIEVE

“Paul never said, “I know what I believe,” but, “I know whom I believe.””

C. R. Scoville.

Selected by Leonard Morgan.

INVADING THE CITY

(Concluding instalment)

I have just finished a door-to-door canvass of the area. I visited seven hundred homes using the storefront as a center. I found houses which had been in the same family a hundred years. These were well-kept, neat, and clean. I found other houses which were run-down, decrepit, filled with cockroaches, and rat-infested. I saw half-naked children living in decadent apartments unfit for habitation. And it came to me one day as I was climbing the stairs to the third-story apartments that the one word which sums up the Christian in the inner city is "vulnerable." This means capable of being wounded or injured. The word "culture" is from the same root. It literally means "tearing apart." When Jesus came among us in the flesh, He literally became vulnerable. I'm not especially referring to physical injury, although to go into a culture where violence is a way of life increases the chances of it. I speak particularly of a lifestyle which figuratively drives a spear into your side.

In one morning I encountered four types of people I would never see at Oak Hill Chapel or in any other kind of religious structure or earthly "holy place." The first was a huge bearded man who had just been released from prison after serving half of a seven year sentence. Since I purposely was not dressed up, he had no way of knowing I was a preacher. He thought of me as a friendly wanderer interested in his plight. He asked me if 'I had ever done time.' He "fried my ears" with the language he used, but I realized it was all he had heard for almost four years. We talked for almost a half hour sitting on the steps. Even when I introduced him to Jesus, he still did not grow suspicious. He apparently thought of me as a harmless "Jesus freak."

A half block further on I saw an old man just sitting down on the curb with a cup of coffee and a doughnut which he had cadged. When I sat down beside him, he almost jumped out of his skin. I found that he was one of several thousand homeless who live in our city. He had slept the night before in a garage which he pointed out to me, but he had to vacate it at 5.30 a.m. The owner had given him permission to bed down in it provided he was out of it by daylight. He was reluctant to talk. When I told him about heaven, he said he would swap his part of it for a plate of chicken and dumplings and a bottle of whiskey. But he turned out to be a neighbourly soul when he found out that I was not a member of the "fuzz" and had no intention of "railroading him to the slammer".

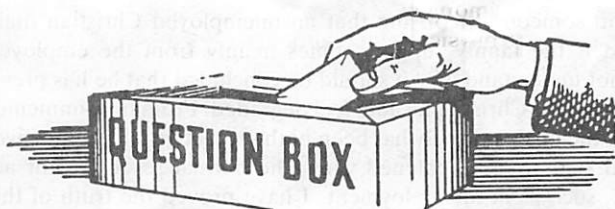
I turned the corner and came face to face with two prostitutes. The younger one had an obscenity printed on her sweat shirt which was hotter than the sun at its meridian. I talked to them and told them that I loved them not for anything they had to give but because I could introduce them to One who would teach them how to live in the Spirit and above the flesh. I quickly moved, without embarrassment, to Jesus and His love. I spoke of what He had done for me and of what He could do for them, handed both an invitation to our meetings, and walked on. I turned and looked back. Both of them were watching me intently. I said a silent prayer that if they came to our prayer meeting, the one would be moved to wear a different shirt.

The rest of the day I met older people characterized by one thing: hopelessness. Most of them feel trapped. Their older houses are like animal cages. They walk from one room to another, filled with fear of vandalism, sickness, and dying alone. As I talked to them of the Divine Presence in our lives, some of them brightened. It has been so many years since they worshiped that worship has been crushed out of them. One by one they have laid away their loved ones. Now they are awaiting the inevitable. They do not realize that I stopped on every front sidewalk and breathed a prayer for

them.

That will be enough now. The Cornerstone is alive and well. On the second and third stories above it are families with rooms full of children. The other three corners are occupied by a dog-grooming place, a pizza joint, and an apartment building run by a blind man whose white cane can be heard tapping along the sidewalk. Our expensive project is occupied by some of the finest Christian young people you could ever meet. I'll tell you about them later!

W. Carl Ketcherside, Missouri.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

"I have asked to further explain some of the comments I made in the June issue regarding the subject of 'womens meetings'."

I have had quite a number of comments relating to that specific 'Question Box' subject. I am most grateful for the opportunity to answer some of the points raised because anything which is not understood can give rise to problems in the future. I believe that a feature like 'Question Box' should be conducted in this way, otherwise, the writer may get the impression that what he writes should be believed without question. God forbid that I should ever fall into that category.

'Keeping' Women in Subjection

At no point in my answer did I suggest that women should be 'kept' in subjection by men; such an idea would be anathema to me. **Every** Christian, male or female, is liberated when he or she obeys Christ through the Gospel. Each has a specific and unique role to play in the Church. I am well aware that Paul argues that seen from the standpoint of the new spiritual creation in Christ Jesus there is "neither male nor female" (gal. 3:28), but it is very obvious that our physical and earthly status marks us out as male or female, and this physical distinction forms the basis of his argument concerning the relative positions of men and women in the Church. Furthermore, it places a severe responsibility on male and female Christians to **understand** their respective roles, and to carry them out as meticulously as they are able to.

As regards the relationship in marriage, I would suggest that a man's **right** to lead is not based on the **respect** which a Christian wife and children may have for him in the home, but rather on the **God-given** nature of that right as revealed in the Word. I think we have all had to operate under the **authority** of someone for whom we have held little respect, but the authority has not been dependent on our respect; it has been given from another source. We have to respect the authority, even though we may not respect the person who wields it. I must choose my words very carefully here because I realise that I am skating on extremely thin ice, for I would seem to be saying that no matter how monstrous a husband's attitude toward his wife might be, she, under all circumstances, must subject herself to him. I am not going to attempt to

answer that question now, but I am not afraid to tackle it. Suffice it to say for now that I believe the Church would have travelled far along the wrong road if it was ever felt by male Christians that female Christians had to be kept in subjection.

Theory and Practice

There is quite a gap between what **should** happen in theory, and what **actually** happens in practice. Theory is the formulation of a systematic conception of something, stated or unstated; practice is the habitual action of carrying out the thing. Theoretically, the ship Titanic should not have sunk according to the systematic conception of its design; in practice, it did. In theory, marriages between Christians should not break down; in practice, they do.

I can well understand someone theorising that an unemployed Christian male should not feel degraded if the family support comes mainly from the employed Christian wife, but I cannot understand why it should be concluded that he has previously lived for his job, and not for Christ, if he **does** feel degraded. From time immemorial the role of the male in the nuclear family has been both protective and supportive; the ability to protect and support is threatened when the normal resources for accomplishment are cut off, such as in unemployment. I have proved the truth of this when I have interviewed men, Christians included, who have found themselves in such a condition. I have seen grown men almost in tears as they have sought any kind of work.

The Hierarchical Structure

The hierarchy as laid down in 1 Cor. 11:3 is God, Christ, man, woman; in this particular instance the question of elders and deacons is not relevant, except to say in passing that when they can be appointed they should be male. The point to be made is, according to Paul, that "the head of the woman is the man". As I pointed out previously, this has nothing whatever to do with changing conditions or social emancipation; it is rooted in the order of creation, and in the age-old principle that the woman should be "a help suitable for the man".

I cannot say why a Church should have reached the state when there are only Sisters remaining; nor can I say that God would not accept what such Sisters had to offer by way of devotion and worship. It bespeaks a tremendous achievement on their part to keep the work alive in the area in which they find themselves, and perhaps male members from other congregations are to be blamed for not supporting the Sisters in their work of faith and love. It is my firm conviction that such Sisters should be supported in the work by a full-time worker who is in receipt of financial support and who is willing to move into the area of need. I have never seen the sense in a full-time worker remaining with a congregation which is numerically and spiritually capable of conducting its own affairs, but the answer to such a question is for others to decide, not me. What **can** be said, and should be, is that the **situation** in which Christians may find themselves should not be the basis for altering what God in His wisdom has laid down.

Womens Liberation

I have consistently held, and publicly stated, that my personal regard for the Sisters in the Church is of the very highest order. In my wildest imagination I would never conceive of them joining Womens Lib. or even supporting ideas which they might think would bring about a condition of so-called liberation as the world understands it. I am, however, very much concerned that the campaigns now going on in the Anglican, R.C., and Methodist Communions for the ordination of women into

the priesthood should not spill over into the Church of Christ. Theoretically we may say that this should not happen in the Church of Christ; practically, it may. The great danger as I see it is that God's authoritative revelation, the Bible, is being undermined on every hand and side. Campaigns are being mounted which have no scriptural warrant, and the controversies in the Church, both past and present, prove that we are not immune. We need, as Paul wrote to Timothy, to 'guard the deposit', or else we may find that we have become a 'sect among sects'. Let each one of us so uphold the Word that this will never happen.

Some readers have thought that I have condemned the concept of womens meetings in local assemblies. I would like to make it clear that this is not so. Control in local assemblies should devolve on the leadership in those assemblies, whatever that leadership may be.

(All questions, please to:

Alf Marsden, 20 Cotessy Way, Winstanley, Wigan, Lancs. WN3 6ES)

JESUS RECEIVETH SINNERS

Luke 15:2 "This man receiveth sinners."

The Pharisees were the greatest enemy Jesus had to encounter in His work of mercy and salvation.

They were filled with spiritual pride, and were so self-righteous, that they treated with disdain the message of grace published by the Saviour. In addition to this they wished to monopolise the profession of religion to themselves, and instead of rejoicing in the repentance of sinners, they treated such with disdain and contempt.

It says in verse 1 that all the publicans and sinners drew near to Jesus; this was quite sufficient for these envious Pharisees, and they murmured, "This man receiveth sinners." This sentiment was uttered in malice and wickedness and resulted in three great parables, the Lost sheep, the lost piece of silver and the prodigal son.

In a true and sincere setting this sentiment is the very epitome of the gospel. "This man receiveth sinners."

1. THE DESCRIPTION OF SINNERS WHOM JESUS WILL RECEIVE

Sin is the transgression of the law. A sinner is a transgressor. This is a character applicable to all, FOR ALL HAVE SINNED. 'All we like sheep have gone astray', but all are not equally involved in sin; some are a hundred pence debtors, some a thousand. The sins of some are as scarlet, others doubly dyed, as crimson. Jesus will receive,

(a) SINNERS OF ALL AGES

He loves such as seek Him early, He says such shall find; but He will not reject those of maturer age. There is hope even for the grey-headed transgressor. Jesus will receive

(b) SINNERS OF ALL STATIONS

God showed mercy to the royal Mannassah and to Nebuchadnezzar. He will not despise the poor and needy. Jesus healed the nobleman's son, the ruler's daughter, and He showed mercy to the poor woman of Canaan and to blind Bartimaeus. External circumstances do not affect the compassion of Jesus. Jesus will receive:—

(c) SINNERS OF ALL DEGREES

Those who have been outwardly moral as the young man; those who have been

abandoned and sinful as Mary Magdalene; those who have been desperately vile as the thief; those who have been cruel and malevolent as Saul and the Jerusalem murderers. No amount of guilt can overtop His powers and willingness to save. The disease cannot be too universal, nor the depravity too desperate.

"This is a faithful saying ... Christ 'Jesus came into the world to save sinners.'" "Whosoever cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out"

2. INTO WHAT JESUS RECEIVES SINNERS

He receives them:—

INTO HIS FORGIVING GRACE AND FAVOUR

He came not to condemn the sinner — to destroy the life of sinners, but to save them. The foundation blessing of salvation is the Forgiveness of Sins. It is His right to forgive sinners. He did so in the days of His flesh, He died for this and is a Prince and a Saviour. He not only pardons but receives sinners into His affection.

He receives them:—

(b) INTO HIS FAMILY

See the prodigal son, not only forgiven but welcome; family feast, garment, ring. Jesus has a spiritual family on earth, called His Kingdom, church, fold, an association of believers, over which He rules and whom He blesses. Into this happy fellowship He receives sinners. Aliens and foreigners are made citizens; those afar off are made nigh; those not beloved and not a people are made beloved and sons and daughters of the Lord.

He receives them:—

(c) INTO HEAVEN

He promises them Everlasting Life and a dwelling place with Him for ever. Not upon this present earth, torn with worry and strife, but in Heaven. Jesus has opened up the way to Heaven for sinners. He sits in Heaven at the right hand of God dispensing the blessings of Salvation.

He gives a title for Heaven to sinners; He has sent His Spirit and Word to convert and guide sinners to that blessed haven. After death we shall live and reign with Him in Heaven at His coming again.

3. THE WAY AND MANNER IN WHICH JESUS RECEIVES SINNERS

(a) IN THE WAY OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND CONFESSION

He who would deny or cover his sin, He rejects. He that confesses his state as a sinner, He is willing to receive. David confessed; the publican confessed; the prodigal confessed; all believers confess. If we realise our position and its ultimate end in death, we too shall confess.

He receives them:—

(b) IN THE WAY OF REPENTANCE, OR TURNING FROM SIN

He saves from, not in sin, or with sin. Rebellion must cease; sin must be forsaken; the way of iniquity abandoned. He requires that we forsake all and follow Him.

He receives sinners:—

(c) IN THE WAY OF OBEDIENCE

To believe in Jesus is to accept His Word. What He tells us we should be prepared to do. He said, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved."

Let us not be like the Pharisees and Lawyers who rejected the counsel of God against themselves by not submitting to the baptism of John. We should accept the counsel of God by being immersed into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, rising to walk in newness of life.

Jesus receives sinners NOW

MOST WILLINGLY He invites, pleads and waits for an answer.

MOST TENDERLY He will not upbraid; He waits to heal. To cleanse from sin, not to blame but to pardon.

MOST READILY He awaits NOW. He can save NOW. Peace and Joy comes NOW through the knowledge that you are IN HIM and HE is IN YOU.

Tom Kemp,
Hindley.

A CHAT WITH AN 'OLD PATHER' (Cont.) (7)

(Chat between I. Davidson and the late Tom Nisbet)

IAN: Now, you have always had a great love for Robert Burns. Why is that?

TOM: Just because of his poetry. I have never studied his life carefully like Burnsians will study it. Any time that I was asked to give a talk on Burns, at a Burns' Supper or anything, I just always used his poetry, I never studied his life very much at all.

IAN: I see you have a calendar up here.

TOM: Aye, that is a Burns' calendar. I always admired his poems because they had such fine sentiment in them. I think he was a very honest man although he is much decried today. He is a very much maligned man is Robert Burns.

IAN: Just when you say maligned ... I was reading out of the **British Millennial Harbinger** – volume 14, dated 1849 – (and Alexander Campbell was writing letters back home to his daughter in America) that he visited Burns' Cottage when he was over here in 1847. He didn't think much of Burns. In fact, he said, in so many words, that it was prostituted talent or genius, because he said: "He was concerned with themes ignoble, demoralising and mean." What do you think of that?

TOM: I couldn't agree with that at all, no, no, I just couldn't agree with that. He had a very passionate nature, there was no doubt about that, but he was a lovable kind of person as well. You know, he knew his failures.

When his father was in his death-bed he said words something to the effect that he had great faith in all his family except one. The family were there. He didn't name the one at all, but Robert went over to his bed and said with tears streaming down his cheeks: "Aye faither, I suppose you'll mean me." He knew his failures as many people don't know today, no doubt about that. I wouldn't try to put the man on a pedestal, not in the least, but, you know, Ian, to me, the man that writes a poem like **To a Mouse** cannae be a bad man.

IAN: I am like you, I could recite it off by heart.

TOM: He was ploughing the field and he upturned this mouse's nest and away it went scattering over the furrows. The boy that led the horses and kept the pettle for cleaning the plough ran after it with his pettle to kill it, but Burns shouted to him: "Stop! whit herm has the mouse done you?" That stopped him. Burns was fair full of passion at him trying to kill the mouse. At that time both Burns and he were working in a farm house, and they both slept together. During the night, Burns suddenly woke him up and told him he had been sitting composing the poem **To a Mouse**. He read it out, and after that he asked: "What do you think of the mouse now?" That cannot be a bad man

that does that, and even takes notice of the crimson-tipped flow'r, the daisy. He cannot be a bad man, and yet Burns was still in his teens when he read through the whole Bible, you know. He was always praising it up.

IAN: Do you think that is where he got a lot of his moral teaching?

TOM: Oh, there is no doubt about that.

IAN: There was an incident you related to me of the time you attended a Burns' Supper and spoke on the origin of his moral teaching. Just relate that incident.

TOM: Yes, I told them – I think it was at the Woman's Labour Party in Macmerry, if I mind right – that they were all here tonight praising up Burns. I said: "Right enough, the man requires to be praised. All the good moral teaching that we find in the poems of Robert Burns he got from **the Bible**. If you read **The Cottar's Saturday Night**, he has the whole Bible in it. May-be you will stand in the stairhead tomorrow morning and criticise you neighbour. Burns did not teach that. Burns taught:

"Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,
To step aside is human:...

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord, its various tone,
Each spring, its various bias:
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted."

Burns got that teaching from the Bible. 'Judge not,' says the Lord Jesus Christ, 'that ye be not judged.' That is where he got it. You could spend the whole night talking about this. I have a book called **Burns and the Bible** and it gives you the poem and the bit in the Bible he got it from.

IAN: So he knew his Bible.

TOM: He was an outstanding man as a writer of poetry, but he was not an essentially evil man, a bad man. He was a passionate man and he was a fornicator, there is no doubt about that. We have got to admit that Ian, but as somebody once said: "How many church elders of his day were also fornicators." The very ones that brought him before the Session and got him and Jean Armour to sit on the cutty stool, the very ones would be just as bad as he, but he was found out. There is a lot in that, being found out.

IAN: You still admire him.

TOM: Aye, I still admire him. I admire his ability and I admire his sentiment. I don't admire the bits in his life that are anti-Christian, that are contrary to the teaching of the Bible. I don't admire that, but there are a lot of people living today that I admire very much, but there are some things in their lives that I don't like. The Christian has to be open minded.

IAN: I'll mention a few names Tom and I want you to comment on them. First William Robinson.

TOM: I only heard him preach twice. You know, of course, that he was the principal of Overdale College. I heard him preaching in Edinburgh once and you could not find fault with one thing that he said; but that was Willie Robinson. As a

sister once said to me: "They go to Overdale College and hear Willie's teaching. There they find a different story."

IAN: John Anderson

TOM: John Anderson was a man I admired, although I differed very much with him on the war question when I was through at Motherwell. I admired him very much indeed. He understood the Bible and could teach.

IAN: John Sneddon.

TOM: Well, John Sneddon always appealed to me as very forthright man. You never got anything in "hidlans", as we would say in Scotland. He was always right to the point. If he wanted to contradict you or correct you, you got it straight from the shoulder – "without fear or favour" (as it used to be claimed for John Bull's paper.)

IAN: I will mention some names that you may have heard about, but that you haven't actually met. Alexander Brown.

TOM: Never met him, but I have heard quite a lot about him and I have read quite a lot about him in some of the old volumes. In fact, I made a photocopy of something the last time I was through at Dennyloanhead about him. Alexander Brown is the man who wrote **Conversion to God** – a wonderful book. He would not accept payment for preaching the gospel. He ran a business to pay his way and preach the gospel as well. A wonderful man.

IAN: Bob MacDonald

TOM: Well, Bob MacDonald was a man I admired very much too. I only met him or came into contact with him after the Old Paths Movement was begun and when these conferences started. I must say I admired Bob very much indeed and I stayed with him for a few days too when I was doing the work at Dewsbury. A very kindly man, a man ready to help any Christian in trouble, or anybody in trouble for that matter.

IAN: James Anderson.

TOM: I never met him. I read his books and I only wish I had heard him preach. I could have heard him preach, but he died in 1915. I never heard him because I knew nothing at all about him when I came into the Church at first.

IAN: David King.

TOM: I have read his 'Memoirs' and they are an inspiration to read. He was a highly educated man, knew the Bible very well indeed and was a great preacher. I have used quite a lot of his teaching in many of my addresses.

IAN: James Wardrop.

TOM: Now, he trained as an evangelist and was an evangelist, I understand, for some time. I liked him very much indeed. I took over from him as treasurer of the Slamannan District. He was a man that always appealed to me. I think the first time that I met him was at a Slamannan meeting. I liked James Wardrop very much.

IAN: John McCartney.

TOM: Never met him, and I don't know much about him. I only knew that he preached in Tranent here when the church in Tranent was just being formed in 1892. Both John McCartney and James Anderson preached here at that particular time. I know that. He was a wonderful teacher. I always took up his winter sessions of the oral and correspondence classes and I still retain yet some of his papers.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Sept. 7 11 Kings 4, 8-37 Acts 9, 23-43
 Sept. 14 Lev. 11, 1-34 Acts 10, 1-23
 Sept. 21 Isaiah 49, 1-13 Acts 10, 24-48
 Sept. 28 Isaiah 62 Acts 11.

SAUL ESCAPES FROM DEATH

Graphically described by him in 11 Cor. 11, 33; put into a rope basket and hand-lowered out of a window in the city wall. Loving Christians must have plotted together to find the right window, the right basket and the right opportunity for this undignified escape. How many brothers and sisters must have taken the risks involved! Saul had 120 miles to travel to Jerusalem, and was not recognised as a disciple until Barnabas that "son of encouragement" introduced him to the apostles. His brief stay of 15 days was long enough to rouse those who were his companions in persecution, and now found him a most effective teacher of the truth. Here again the brethren had to save his life by taking him to Caesarea for safety in his native town of Tarsus.

APOSTOLIC MINISTRATION

At this point in his narrative Luke seems to pause and make a thankful report — "THEN HAD THE CHURCHES REST THROUGHOUT ALL JUDAEA AND GALILEE AND SAMARIA AND WERE EDIFIED (BUILT UP), AND WALKING IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD, AND IN THE COMFORT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WERE MULTIPLIED". What a pleasing picture of spiritual progress! Then he gives a picture of Peter, district-visiting, in a comparatively unimportant area, where he works two very special miracles and gives great encouragement to all the local Christians, first at Lydda and then at Joppa. God is surely preparing him for the great move forward in

the world program — "the uttermost parts" — by opening out the great enlightenment, that Christ died for **all men** — there had to be first Peter's leading part. Paul is in far-away Tarsus while Peter is called to Caesarea. We have to realise that Peter's inborn and life-long feelings (based upon God's own requirements for His own people) have to be overcome, and the vision thrice given and divine instruction must have deeply shocked him. He was hungry at the time. It was a reversal of habits of life and thought. However he did not hesitate when the Gentile deputation arrived, but lodged them and accepted their company. To us the character of Cornelius is so outstandingly godly, but to Peter he would have to be accepted and circumcised before having the gospel preached to him. Looking forward to verses 19 and 20 of chapter 11, we see that some Grecian Jews did break a rule when they preached to Greeks (not Grecian Jews or it would not be noted as unusual). It appears that times had changed, since the persecution had failed to check progress. Apostolic miracles had assured acceptance of their preaching while still leaving them a minority group. It was necessary that Peter should be assured beyond all doubt of divine approval, and we rejoice to see him falling so fully into the divine plan. He thus became an apostle to the Gentiles on the day he preached to Cornelius. He recognised Christ's promise of baptism in the Holy Ghost (as originally John Baptist's) as fulfilled in His coming upon the Gentiles "as on us at the beginning" (11,15-17) thus displayed on certain limited occasions.

ACCEPTATION BY THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM

While shocked at first the brethren at Jerusalem could no more resist the Holy Spirit than could Peter, and Peter's reasoned account and explanation settled — "They glorified God and con-

cluded then hath God granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life!" Indeed the spread-out of the church made this a natural outcome.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Jerusalem remained the centre of the gospel work seeing the apostles, and the elders of that church, probably presided over by James, the Lord's brother. It is remarkable that they were able to do so for many years, thus fulfilling prophecy. It remained the centre of Jewish worship until it was destroyed about 70 a.d. by Titus. The Jews formed the backbone of the church throughout Palestine, and it was some years before the important Gentile towns became separate and self-supporting. They had ultimately to become so, and the beginnings are with us in chapter 11. How good that those foreign-born and Greek-speaking Jews took the gospel to heart and developed a loving attitude to ALL MEN. Some had special courage too in introducing the highest moral standards into heathen society. The assembly at Antioch became a centre of such behaviour that they earned Christ's name. It did become a despised and hated name when its demands upon human nature, loving enemies and doing good to those who hate us was resented. The church at Antioch exhibited a special love for the Jewish Christians by making provision for their welfare in a time of famine. We are apt to forget that "charity" hardly existed in the world until Jesus came, lived, died and rose again. The unnamed brethren, expelled by persecution into regions of their birth and occupation were surely moved by love for Jesus not to maintain the Jewish law and prejudice and saw the effect upon Gentiles of the most wonderful news ever received by man. This news coming to Jerusalem led to the sending of Barnabas, and further great encouragement, and he sought for and found Saul, bringing him to Antioch. It was a time

of vital spiritual activity through which the distinctive work upon Gentile minds and hearts produced much fruit upon social behaviour. Numbers turning to the Lord in a heathen city was a new experience. We see the sort of church which developed in ch. 13, 1-3. We might well take a lesson from Barnabas, in particular, for God used him for much progress. Luke's description is "For he was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith". Note the result: "Much people was added to the Lord". We have noticed items of human wisdom; Peter taking six Hebrew Christians with him to Caesarea. Peter reporting events in order to the Jerusalem brethren. Barnabas being chosen to send to Antioch. Commonsense guided by love!

R. B. Scott

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

New Cumnock, Ayrshire: The church in New Cumnock held its Annual Social on Saturday 14th June. This was our first Social. Around 150 brethren attended on this occasion which was 'new territory' for most of them. All enjoyed a time of Spiritual uplift, being fed from the word of Life by our two speakers, Jack and Joe Nisbet. Also the singing of various items of praise by brethren from different churches was much appreciated.

We thank our Heavenly Father for the gathering together and may all the glory be to Him who died for us all.

HARRY MCGINN, Sec.

Stretford, Manchester: Rejoice with the church at Stretford, Manchester over the baptism with Christ of Mrs Celia Burgess on Tuesday the 22nd of April and of Linda Soh and Danny Poo on Saturday the 5th June. On both occasions the Gospel Hall, Derbyshire Lane, kindly allowed us to use their baptistry.

Celia is a contact of Sister Barbara Clayton and now attends Argyle Street, Hindley. Danny and Linda are a young married couple from Singapore and through the influence of sister Rosalind Phang have been having bible studies with members of the church for several months.

We pray that the Lord will give them strength to face any hostility they might encounter, and with virtue to win their loved ones to Christ.

ALLAN ASHURST, Sec.

Cape Town, R.S.A.: I have not had any very special news to send you for quite a long time: All I have at the moment is that where I am labouring the work continues to be going along very well attendance-wise by visitors and members, and we are still praying and hopefully looking forward to more precious souls turning to the Lord, some of whom I am fully aware, children in families, neighbours etc.. But a young lady a few months ago who on request I was asked to visit while she was in hospital has not ceased from visiting our morning services on Sundays. And we have already had a cottage meeting in her home along with the rest of her family.

She is enjoying every service, and told me she is thinking about giving her life to the Lord, and she shall, Lord willing, be looking forward, to a film strip interesting lesson I hope to show her and the family, when she is available for it. So all we can do is to keep on praying. THAT, THAT DAY shall dawn when we ... shall witness a day of rejoicing and thanksgiving". That is all for the time ...

T W. HARTLE, Evangelist.

Tranent, East Lothian: It is with joy that we report the baptism, on 18th May, of two young women. Elizabeth Patterson, and Emma Foley, daughters of our sister Jean Hogg, who put on their Lord in baptism.

We commend them to our Heavenly Father as they begin their Christian journey and hope that they will prove to be a great asset to the church here.

JOHN COLGAN.

Special Meeting

Saturday, 16th August, 1986 6.30 p.m., in the Coronation Hall, Ulverston.

Speaker: Willie Black (Dallmel-
lington). All welcome.

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