

The Wicket Gate Magazine

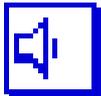
A Continuing Witness



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Index

1. The "Blessed Promise" – The Pastor's Letter January 1975
2. The Convicting and Converting of John Warburton
3. A Church Desired – Poem by an Unknown Writer
4. Mrs Seaton's Letter to Boys and Girls – What Happened to Adam and Eve?
5. Gleanings in the Psalms – Psalm 67
6. Snippets



At the Web Site of the Wicket Gate magazine www.wicketgate.co.uk you will also find the following recordings:

- Through the Bible with the Children – Bible Stories told by Mr Seaton.
- Congregational Praise – the singing of our Church during Worship Services
- Sermons preached by Dr Needham and Mr Seaton
- Historical Lectures given in the Church by Dr Needham



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The "Blessed Promise"

(The Pastor's Letter January 1975)

Dear Friends,

It was the taunt of the unbelievers in the early days of Christianity that Christ had failed to "come again" for His church, as He said He would. "Where is the promise of his coming?" they taunted. And, of course, they knew where to hit the believers hardest, for the great motivating power of the church of that day was the blessed fact that "this same Jesus," who had been taken up into heaven, would "so come again in like manner" as they had seen Him go into heaven. Jesus was coming again! That was all they knew and all they wanted to know. And although some of the saints had acted somewhat foolish with regards to the blessed hope, it was still the blessed hope for all that, and well the unbelieving sceptics realised it and so, used its apparent failure to occur as a handle for their attacks on that young church.

Now, the devil doesn't seem to stir up the unbelievers in our own day to throw doubts, and scorn, and disbelief on the truth of our Lord's coming again for His people, and this is significant. You see, as believers, we should be on the alert concerning, not only what the devil is doing, but what he is *not* doing. And why he is *not* attacking this great doctrine of the second coming of our Saviour – this blessed truth? Well brethren, perhaps it's because it is not a "blessed truth," in the hearts and minds of so many in the Lord's professing church today. Oh! A truth, it may be, but a *blessed* truth it certainly does not appear to be.

Of course, some of the Lord's people have acted foolishly in the past with regards to the doctrine of our Lord's second advent – and there, the devil has been busy, filling the minds of many with mere speculation and fanciful fables. But surely, if ever there was an age that needed a firm grip of the *fact* and the glorious prospect of Christ's appearing for His Bride, it is this age in which we find ourselves.

Every one of us needs that same yearning that was in the heart of the church in the last chapter of Revelation: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." She had got a glimpse of her Heavenly Bridegroom and she had heard His voice speaking to her and reminding her of His tender mercy in sending His Word of truth throughout the churches – "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." He has also shown Himself to her in all his Kingly, Sovereign Majesty – "I am the root and the offspring of David." And in all His enlightening grace – "And the bright and morning star." And, beholding that vision, the espoused of the Lord can do nothing else but plead for His appearing again: "And the Spirit and the bride say, come."

Is the desire "of the flesh"? Ah, no; it is "of the Spirit" Who is dwelling in the church and holding sway in the church and prompting the desire for Christ's coming. And surely, brethren, the very absence of such a desire in the professing church of Christ today only betrays the absence of the Spirit of God in those places where the Name of Christ is named. It was said of Andrew Bonar that he would look out of his window every morning to see if "Christ was coming."

Why are we so impotent? So ineffective? So unholy? So lacking in testimony? So compromising? So Un-Christline? So slothful in our day and age? ***Where is the promise of His coming?*** In our plans? In our hearts? In our minds? In our behaviour? In our churches? In our words and actions? "Where is the promise of his coming?"

Would that we really felt the darkness of the days in which we live, then, perhaps we would yearn – like the church in the Revelation – for the appearing of "the bright and morning star" to scatter our darkness. Would that we knew more of the burden and heat of the battle for surely, that would put a new, much needed song, into our mouth in these days.

Sincerely
W. J. Seaton

Maranatha – The Lord Cometh.

"I've wrestled on towards heaven,
'Gainst wind and rain and tide;
Now like a weary traveller that leaneth on his guide.
Amidst the shades of evening,
While sinks life's lingering sand;
I'll hail the glory dawning, in Emmanuel's Land."

"... I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you *I will come again and receive you unto myself*, that where I am, there ye me be also."

The Convicting and Converting Of John Warburton

And then God sent home that text to my soul with so much power that I thought I was dropping into hell at once: "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." (Galatians 3:10) I now saw as clearly as at noon-day, God's holiness, and his justice in my damnation; and I told him that when I came into hell, I would tell all the devils there that no injustice had been done me, that I would take all the blame to myself and clear God of all wrong in executing his wrath upon one so vile, who had gone to such lengths in iniquity. Now, however, I saw clearly that my doom was sealed, for these words come on the back of the other – "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." Thus, I saw that God is immutably fixed in his holiness and justice, and that he can no wise acquit the guilty.

Well, thought I, let me have a little enjoyment here to drown the misery of my present feelings; as to the hereafter, I can be but lost. The best method of fulfilling this resolution appeared to be by going hay-making. But, upon joining the men, who all knew me, and had

heard that I had turned "Methodist", some jeered me and others called out, "Warburton is turned Methodist", and all joined in laughing at me.

I tried to put it off with a laugh, too, but it was with a heavy heart. Yet, thought I, these are all going to hell as well as I, and see how comfortable they are! And again, I resolved to be as comfortable as they; for if I do go to hell, said I, they will go with me, and I shall not be alone. In the afternoon of the first day there was what we call a "*Wake*," held at a place about four miles distant, and my fellow-workmen asked me to accompany them. To this I consented; and seven of us according set out. But, O what feelings I had upon the road! When we arrived there, the first thing was, of course, the public-house, and I determined to get drunk and drown my misery, and to enjoy myself as well as others. I had not, however, been many minutes in the house until that text of scripture sounded like thunder in my poor soul: "Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man, Jesus Christ, whom he hath ordained." And that other text followed upon it like flames of lightening: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." My poor knees smote together, my very hairs began to move upon my head, and I got up and went out with all the horrors of damnation in my soul.

What dreadful and rebellious thoughts arose in my mind against God for having made me a human being, that had a never-dying soul that must endure all the torments of his wrath in hell. How I envied the very beasts of the field. "These poor creatures," said I, "have no souls to be judged." And O the anger and wrath that boiled up in my heart against God, because he had not made me a dog, or anything without a soul to be judged at this righteous bar.

I had frequently before this time had many powerful temptations to put an end to my miserable life, but now I was fully determined to do it. Several times I went into my bedroom with my razor, being fully determined to cut my throat; but instead of so doing, was always obliged to fall upon my knees and implore the Lord that, if it were

possible, he would show mercy to one so vile as I. I think I shall never forget the night before God delivered my poor soul.

Fully resolved to destroy myself, I went on Saturday about midnight to a pool of water, making, as I proceeded thither, a solemn vow that nothing should prevent my fulfilling my purpose. I rose up to take a leap into the pool, when these words sounded in my ears – as loud to my thinking as if a man had called them out to me – "Who can tell?" I made a dead stand, and said, "What can that be?" "Who can tell?" The words sounded again and again in my very soul and something seemed to spring up in my heart, and thus interpret them. Who can tell but God may yet have mercy upon my poor soul? Manasseh, the thief upon the cross, Saul of Tarsus, Mary Magdalene, and many others have experienced his pardoning mercy; and who can tell but that poor wretch, John Warburton, may find mercy yet?"

This put a stop to drowning myself. I felt my heart a little softer, and if ever my soul went out to prayer, I believe it was then. I began to feel a little hope shine into me. Who can tell, thought I, but that God will at length hear my cry? I made up my mind that, as the next day was Sunday, I would go in the morning to Manchester, and try once more to obtain a little consolation.

In the morning I went to Mosley Street Chapel, and soon after I was seated, a solemn old man ascended the pulpit, and O how my soul trembled lest he should bear a message from God to me of wrath and condemnation. What horror and distress I felt when, in reading the chapter, he came to these words, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." I saw that my soul was doomed to certain destruction for ever and ever. What the old man preached about I could not tell; but this I knew, that damned I was, and sometimes thought I should have dropped into hell whilst in the chapel.

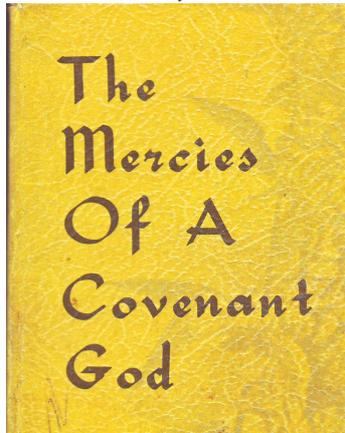
The service being concluded, I thought I would go home and put an end to my miserable life. "Yes," said I, "I will come to an end, and know the worst at once." On my way home, I got into Cannon Street,

and observing a chapel there, into which people were then crowding, I remembered it was the chapel of Mr. Roby, to which I had been once or twice in company with my mother. I stopped and said, "Shall I go in?" "No," thought I, "I will not. The minister will take as his text, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.'" I proceeded a short distance down the street, and stopped again. "Who can tell?" came once more into my mind. "Well," said I, "I can but be damned." And so I came to the resolution of going into the chapel, and "If I perish," said I, "I perish."

At the conclusion of the first hymn, Mr. Roby went to prayer, and towards the end of it he dropped a few words which I believed were for nobody but me. He begged God that if there were any one present who had come to make a last trial of his mercy, he would show himself to such a one as *His* God. It was hard work that I could keep from calling out, "Yes, here is poor lost John Warburton. Here I am, come to make the last trial." But all my hopes seemed dashed to pieces, however, when I saw the minister take the Bible from the cushion to find his text. "O," thought I, "he is certainly seeking for that awful text which has so torn my heart asunder all these months." O the feelings I experienced! I could not imagine why he delayed so long to put the Bible back upon the cushion.

At last he did so, and I could see that it was opened about the middle. "Blessed be God," my soul whispered, "The text is not, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not ...'" O the expectation that sprang up within me. And when Mr. Roby read his text, O the wonder and the glory that shone into my soul! The precious text was this, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou has received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." (Psalm 68:18.) O the love, peace, and joy that broke into my heart as the words came out of his mouth! They were truly sweeter to my soul than ten thousands of gold and silver. I wondered again with astonishment, and said in my soul, "What can this mean? Where are my sins? What can be the meaning of all this? Where is my burden, and the wrath and terror I have had so many months?" And again the text flowed into my soul, "Thou hast led

captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them."



(Taken from, the Mercies of a Covenant God - the autobiography of John Warburton of Trowbridge.)

A Church Desired

How beautiful that Church must be
Where Watchful is the Porter,
While Prudence has the oversight,
And Patience the exhorter.
Where Harmony conducts the praise,
And Reverence the worship,
Where Loyalty ascribes to Christ
The undisputed Lordship.

Humility prevades the place
And Piety sweet smileth.
Where Purity her fragrance breathes,
And Gentleness beguileth.
Simplicity adorns the walls,
And Grace all captivating
Benevolence is prominent
While Zeal is operating.

Here Mercy wears her diadem,
And Meakness conquers friction,
While Truth exerts its influence,
Joy adds its benediction.
Here Righteousness is placed on guard,
And faith is ever active;
While Goodness evermore abounds
And Christ is all attractive.

O Lord! Restore Thy Church to this
Her primitive position
And let us taste on earth the bliss
of this divine condition.

(Writer Unknown.)



Dear Boys and Girls,

Sometimes when we read the Bible we find it difficult to understand some parts of it, and need to have some things explained to us. There are some very good books to help us to understand the Bible, and in this letter I want to bring you a lesson out of one of these books, and then, you might be able to get the book and read it for yourself, or with your parents. It is called, Leading Little Ones to God, and the author is called Marian Schoolland, and it is published by the Banner of Truth Trust.

What Happened to Adam and Eve?

Do you remember what God said to Adam and Eve about the tree in the garden? Do you remember what He said would happen if they ate of it? He said "The day you eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall surely die."

Did Adam and Eve die that day?

Their bodies did not die that day. In that way Adam and Eve lived many years more. But they died in another way.

They were separated from God.

To be happy, we must live with God. It is terrible to live without God, to be separated from God. And that is what happened to Adam and Eve.

God used to come to the garden. He would walk with Adam and Eve, and talk with them.

Right after they ate the fruit that God had told them not to eat, Adam and Eve were afraid of God. And they were ashamed. They ran away. They tried to hide. They tried to hide away from God; but nobody can do that!

After a while God came to the garden. He called, "Adam, where are you?"

Adam knew he could not hide from God. God sees everything. Adam came out of his hiding place. He told God he was afraid.

God said, "What did you do?"

Then Adam had to tell God what they had done. Oh, he was so ashamed and so afraid!

God is very holy. There is no sin in God. Sin makes us unholy. And it keeps us away from God. If we are unholy, we cannot live close to God.

Adam and Eve knew they had sinned. They had disobeyed God. That is why they were afraid. They knew God is holy. They knew that they had to be punished for their sin.

God told Adam and Eve that now pain and sickness would come. He told them that after a while their bodies would die. He sent them out of the beautiful garden. They were not fit to live there any more. The garden was too wonderful for sinful people. He told them that now they would have to work hard to keep alive. And he did not come again to walk and talk with them, as He used to.

Many unpleasant things began on the day Adam and Eve sinned. The worst was this: they were separated from God, and afraid of Him.

Ever since that day, people have been afraid of God. We cannot help being afraid when we remember that God is very holy, and we are very sinful.

But on that same day God promised Adam and Eve that someday everything would be wonderful again. He promised a Saviour, who would take sin away and bring us back to God, so that we need not be afraid any more.

Something to talk about:

Why were Adam and Eve afraid of God?

What did they try to do?

Can you tell in what way they died that very day?

Can you name some other unpleasant things that happened?

Here is a Bible verse that tells why we are sometimes afraid of God: "Your sins have hid his face from you" (Isaiah 59:2).

Suggested Reading:

Genesis chapter 3 verses 7 to 10

Gleanings in the Psalms

(Psalm 67)



Verse 1 "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah."

(1) **The Psalm begins at the beginning with a cry for *mercy*.** Forgiveness of sin is always the first link in the chain of mercies experienced by us. Mercy is a foundation attribute in our salvation. The best saints and the worst sinners may unite in this petition. It is addressed to the God of mercy, by those who feel their need of mercy, and it implies the death of all legal hopes or claims of merit

(2) Next, the Church begs for a blessing; "bless us" – a very comprehensive and far reaching prayer. When we bless God we do but little, for *our* blessings are but words; but when God blesses He enriches us indeed, for all his blessings are gifts and deeds.

(3) But His blessing alone is not all His people crave; they desire a personal consciousness of His favour, and pray for a smile from His face – "his face to shine upon" them. These three petitions include all that we need here or hereafter.

C.H. Spurgeon

Verse 2. "That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." As showers which first fall upon the hills afterwards run down in streams into the valleys, so the blessing of the Most High comes to the world through the Church. We are blessed for the sake of others as well as ourselves. God deals in a way of mercy with His saints, and then they make that way known far and wide, and the Lord's name is made famous in the earth. Ignorance of God is the great enemy of mankind, and the testimonies of the saints, experimental and grateful, overcome this deadly foe. God has a set way and method of dealing out mercy to men, and it is the duty and

privilege of a revived Church to make that way to be everywhere known.

Spurgeon

Verse 2. "That thy way" etc. Note that the spreading of the truth abroad springs out of the receiving of the truth at home – "God be merciful unto *us*; and bless *us*; and cause his face to shine upon *us*, ***that thy way may be known upon earth ...***" Spreading Christianity abroad is sometimes and the excuse for not having it at home. A man may cut grafts from his tree, till the tree itself has no top left with which to bear fruit. In the end, the power of Christian missions will be measured by the zeal of enlightened piety at home; as the circulation of the blood at the extremities of the body will depend on the soundness of the lungs and heart. I do not say that we should not send the gospel abroad! But that we may do it, there must be more of it at home. We must deepen the wells of salvation, or drawing will run them dry.

H.W.B.

Verse 3. "Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee." Mark the sweet order of the blessed Spirit: first, mercy; then, knowledge; last of all, praising of God. We cannot see His countenance except He be merciful to us; and we cannot praise Him except His way be known upon earth. His mercy breeds knowledge; His knowledge, praise.

John Boys

Verses 5 and 6. "Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee." *What then?* "Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God even our own God, shall bless us." We have comforts increased the more we praise God for what we have already received. The more vapours go up, the more showers come down; as the rivers receive, so they pour out, and all run into the sea again. There is a constant circular course and recourse for the sea and into the sea; so there is between God and us. The more we praise Him, the more our blessings come down, the more we praise Him again; so that we do not so much bless God as bless ourselves. When the spring lies

low, we pour a little water into the pump, not to enrich the fountain, but to bring up more for ourselves.

Thomas Manton

Verses 5 and 6. "Let the people praise ... then shall the earth" etc. While man is blessing God *for* His mercies, He is blessing man *with* His mercies.

William Secker

Verse 6. "Then shall the earth yield her increase ..." Those trees flourish most and bear sweetest fruit, which stand most in the sun. The praying, praising Christian stands near to God and has God near to him in all that he calls upon Him for; therefore, you may expect that Christian's fruit to be sweet and ripe. Another Christian who stands, as it were, in the shade and at a distance from God, through neglect of this duty of prayer and praise, will have little fruit found on his branches, and as such as there is will be green and sour.

William Gurnall

Snippets

✂ Measuring Time.

On one occasion, Philip Henry heard of a christian who was giving his age as being "on the wrong side of fifty." "That man should not say that", Philip Henry declared, "for if he is "over" fifty, then he is on the right side of fifty, for he will be all the sooner in heaven.

✂ Choosing Opinions

Many choose their opinions – as Samson did his wife – Just because they please him.

William Gurnall



Dr. Gill and Freewill.

Following a sermon which he preached on the doctrine of human inability in the things of salvation, Dr. John Gill was "set upon" by a man who believed that Gill had degraded human nature. "Pray, then," said Gill to the offended listener, "What do you think man can contribute to his conversion?" The man listed a whole string of qualities that he thought man could use to meet God half-way in salvation. "And have you done all these things?" asked the Dr. "Why, no, I haven't," said the man, "but I intend to do them soon." "Well," said Gill, "If you have all things in your power to do them and have not done them, you deserve to be doubly damned, and are but ill-qualified to be an advocate of that freewill which has done you so little good."



The Bird that Soars by James Montgomery.

The bird that soars on highest wing
Builds on the ground her lowly nest
And she that doth most sweetly sing,
Sings in the shade when all things rest -
In lark and nightingale we see
What honour hath humility.

The saint that wears heaven's brightest crown,
In deepest adoration bends -
The weight of glory bends him down
The most, when most his soul ascends:
Nearest the throne itself must be
The footstool of humility.