

The Wicket Gate Magazine

A Continuing Witness



Internet Edition 51 issued November 2004

Index

1. Encouragement by Comparison - The Pastors Letter (Aug. 1968)
2. Boys and Girls Page - The Young Governor
3. Gleanings from the Psalms - Psalm 16
4. Pictures from Pilgrim's Progress - Christian Meets Evangelist.
5. The Chained Bible - Issued by the Scripture Mission (1968)
6. A Sermon for Parents (part one) - by J.C. Ryle

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Encouragement by Comparison

(Pastor's Letter August 1968)

Dear Friends,

Very often in the Scriptures we find those who are believers in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ being contrasted or compared with those who are not believers; and being contrasted or compared in such a way as to "provoke" the believers to "jealousy".

For example, in the first epistle to the Corinthians we find the great Apostle Paul contrasting the behaviour of the believers in that place with the heathen, and assuring the believers that the sin that they are committing is a sin that is "not so much as named among the Gentiles". Here he is not so much praising the Gentiles as provoking the professors of Christ's name by way of comparison.

In this letter, I would like to endeavour to use that same scriptural line of approach and see if the facts that are going to be laid before us now should not provoke us to jealousy and to greater endeavour in the things of our God. The "Gentiles" - the "heathen" that I have chosen for this contrast and comparison are those people who call themselves by the high-sounding name of "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints". Perhaps they are more familiar to most of us as "The Mormons".

Needless to say, we utterly abhor and detest the teaching of this body which denies the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ, the justice of God, the Gospel of Grace, and a dozen and one other basic doctrines of the Faith once delivered to the Saints. We abhor it just as much as Paul must have abhorred the teaching of those Gentiles with whom he compared the Corinthian Christians. Nevertheless, we have no hesitation in using their whole practical approach to their religion as a means of provoking those who profess the name of Christ to jealousy for that Name, and to action in making that Name known throughout the world, which is the Church's great mission.

Mormonism is a **conversion** religion; i.e. it isn't simply having your name nominally placed on a Church roll, but implies the involvement of every member. Each member must tithe, and fast at least two days per month, giving the money that would have been spent on the meals to the work of the Church. Mormons have a vast system of "Welfare"; something that is tragically lacking in Evangelical Christianity. At various centres there are erected what are known

as "Bishops' Storehouses". Into these storehouses every Mormon contributes food and clothing as he believes he has been prospered. The "needy" - those out of work, etc., can then be supplied from these storehouses until they come to more prosperous times again.

For years, most people have associated the name Mormon with the sin of polygamy, but this no longer holds good except in some remote "sects" which have been outlawed by the main body of the Church. In fact, the living habits of the Mormons are high.

Young Mormons, of course, are a familiar sight to most of us, and we have all, no doubt, found ourselves opening our door to find two young Mormon evangelists on the step. This is part of the Church's programme. Every year about 6,000 of these young people are sent to the far corners of the world with the gospel according to Joseph Smith. The cost of their two-year "mission" is borne entirely by themselves or by their parents. Churches are established wherever the message of Mormonism finds a foothold, and as these churches increase in membership, they are divided into two or three separate churches so that the work might have a wider influence.

This is Mormonism. Perhaps this month's letter sounds like a "commercial" for the cult. But, I have already stated the motive behind the presenting of these stark facts about a religion that is completely and entirely of man. Surely it is to "stir us up" who name the Name of the only true God. Remember what the Hindu once said to the Christian missionary - "Your Christians", he said, "seem to be a lot of pretty ordinary people who make a lot of rather extraordinary claims".

Let us be frank and honest. Is our Church a Church of Jesus Christ, the only Begotten Son of the One and only God of this world and all creation; is our Church equal in zeal, in practice, in devotion, in sacrifice to the Church that calls itself the Church of Latter Day Saints? We claim to be those who are counted among the inhabitants of Zion; surely we are "at ease in Zion", and this ought not to be. Surely the Lord's voice is clear - "Do I praise thee for this? I praise thee not"; "Awake thou that sleepest and put on light".

Yours faithfully

W. J. Seaton

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BOYS AND GIRLS PAGE

By Mrs Seaton

The Young Governor

I wonder how many of you know where you would find Formosa on the Map? Yes, that's right; it's an island separated from the mainland of China by the Strait of Formosa. Great numbers of Chinese people have fled there to escape from the Communists.

To this lovely island there once came a young Chinese governor named Gohu, to be their leader. When he saw how cruel and wild these people were, and how they went on head-hunting raids and offered human sacrifices to their gods, he became very sad.

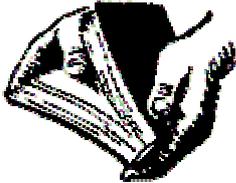
After some time he called them all together one day, and begged them to give up these terrible practices, and he told them of his plans for living together in peace. They agreed to try out his plans, and for some time peace and happiness reigned, and the boys and girls of the island played without fear. As this continued Gohu was very pleased and happy.

Then trouble came ... a terrible drought. At once they began to think that their heathen gods were angry. The priests went about the people saying that a human sacrifice would be necessary, and all the mothers and fathers, and boys and girls became very afraid that their home would be chosen for a suitable sacrifice. Gohu loved his people, especially the children, and he could not bear that one of them would be cruelly killed. So as the priests demanded a sacrifice, he said to them: "Let it be so. Tomorrow morning there will come from the forest a man wearing a long red cloak and hood. Strike him and offer him as your sacrifice". Next morning, as Gohu had said, a man wearing a long cloak and hood walked out from the trees. As he fell to the ground with a knife stuck in his heart, his hood fell off! It was none other than their beloved leader, Gohu.

The people never forgot the happenings of that day, and it turned out to be the very last human sacrifice in the island of Formosa. Gohu bravely and willingly died for his people who loved him. But boys and girls, just think, Jesus died on

Calvary for those who hated him. The Bible tells us "While we were yet in our sin, Christ, (that is Jesus) died for us". How great His love must have been.

Trust Jesus, boys and girls, and He will save you.



Gleanings in the Psalms (Psalm 16)

Title: - "Michtam of David". Some look upon "Michtam" as being derived from a noun which means "gold", and they understand it as denoting a golden psalm - a psalm of surpassing excellence, and worthy of being written in letters of Gold. This was the opinion of our translators, and hence they have rendered it on the margin - "A Golden Psalm of David".

Andrew Bonar

Verse 1. The *Seeking* of the Gold.

The believer conscious of danger, trusting in God only for deliverance.

Verses 2-3. The *Possessing* of the Gold.

The believer looking for justification to the righteousness of God alone, while maintaining personal holiness by companionship with the saints.

Verses 4-5. The *Testing* of the Gold.

The believer finding his present portion, and expecting his eternal inheritance in the Lord.

Verse 6 The *Prizing* or *Valuing* of the Gold.

The believer congratulating himself on the pleasantness of his dwelling and the goodness of his heritage.

Verses 7-8. The *Occupying* of the Gold.

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The believer seeking instruction from the counsels of the Lord by night, and realising His promise by day.

Verses 9-10 The *Summing* or *Reckoning* of the Gold.

The believer rejoicing and praising God for the promise of the rest in hope and resurrection into glory.

Verse 11. The *Perfecting* of the Gold.

The believer realising at God's right hand the fulness of joy and the pleasures for evermore.

Canon Dale

Verses 2-3. "... My goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints that are in the earth..." "My *well-doing* extendeth not to thee". Oh, what shall I render unto Thee, my God, for all Thy benefits towards me? What shall I repay? Alas, I can do Thee no good, for mine imperfect goodness cannot pleasure Thee who art most perfect and goodness itself. *Wherefore* I will join myself to Thy people, that whatsoever I have they may profit by it.

R. Greenham

Verses 2-3. "... My goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints". God hath left his poor saints to receive the rents we owe unto Him for His mercies. An ingenuous guest, though his friend will take nothing for his entertainment, yet, to show his thankfulness, will give something to the servants.

William Gurnall

Verse 5. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance..." When Basil the Great was offered many things by the Emperor Valens, so that he might deny Christ, he replied to the bribes - "Offer these things to children, I regard them not". When the Emperor then threatened him, he replied "He who has but a few books and a wretched garment can suffer nothing from confiscation... Put me to death and you do me a favour, for you send me early to my rest". "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance".

Verse 6. "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places". Probably alluding to the division of the land by lot, and the measuring of it by ropes and lines. David believed in an over-ruling destiny which fixed the bounds of his abode, and his possessions; he did more, he was satisfied with all the appointments of the predestinating God.

C.H. Spurgeon

Verse 8. "I have set the Lord always before me: *because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved*". Of ourselves we stand not at any time, by His

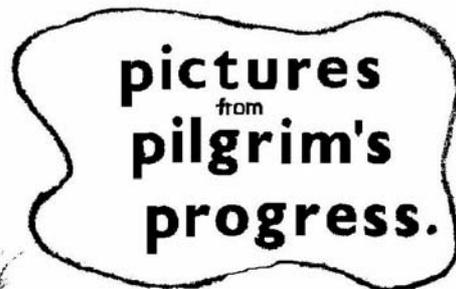
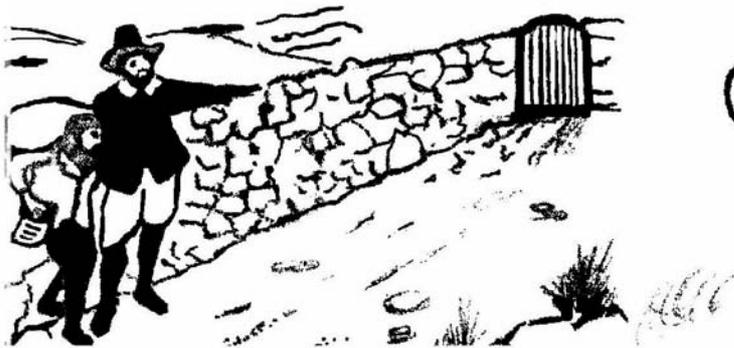
power we may overcome at all times. And when we are sorest assaulted He is ever ready *at our right hand* to support and stay us that we shall not fall. He hath well begun and shall happily go forward in His work, for true grace well planted in the heart, how weak soever, shall hold out for ever.

John Ball

Verse 11. "Thou wilt show me the path of life..." In this verse are four things: (1) *A Guide* - "THOU wilt show me the path of life." (2) *A Traveller* - "Thou wilt show ME the path of life". (3) *A Way* - "Thou wilt show me THE PATH of life". (4) *An End* - "Thou wilt show me the path of LIFE".

The guide is but one; the traveller one; the way one; the life the only one. To meditate well on this is to bring all together; and at last make them all but *one*.

William Austin



In the frontpiece of many of the editions of John Bunyan's great book, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the words of Hosea 12: 10 are quoted: - "I have used similitudes". *The Pilgrim's Progress* is the story of a man's pilgrimage "from this world to that which is to come"; his journey from "the City of Destruction to the Celestial City". And in the course of this journey this man, this "Christian", as Bunyan calls him, meets with many situations which set - in similitude - the situations which every believing child of God meets as he follows in the footsteps of those who have gone before.

Over the next six issues we are going to look at some of these "Pictures from *Pilgrim's Progress*", and trust that they may help to show us that, indeed, not only is "there no temptation taken you but such as is common to all", but no joy,

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no perplexity, no situation either but that some of the Lord's people have met before you. The pictures may come at random from edition to edition, but in this first article of this series let us begin with the very first two characters that the book confronts us with, i.e. Pilgrim and Evangelist.

"As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den, and laid me down in that place to sleep; and, as I slept, I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold I saw a man clothed in rags standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein; and, as he read, he wept and trembled; and, not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying 'What shall I do?'"

This is the man that the book is all about. This is the Pilgrim. Let's just look at him for a moment, and see how Bunyan draws his picture for us. He was "clothed with rags", we are told; i.e. the rags of his own self-righteousness. He had come to that point in his life, no doubt, where he had done many things in an effort to make himself appear righteous before God and so *obligate* God to grant him heaven and rest for his soul at last. All those works and efforts had now appeared in their true light before him, and now he stands "clothed in rags".

He had "his face from his own house". What had our Lord said about loving loved ones more than Him and not being worthy to be called His disciple? Pilgrim was now ready to give up all for peace with God. He had "a book in his hand". No other book but the Word of God. And "a great burden upon his back". This burden he had through reading that book, for what he had read had told him that he was under the Divine wrath of God. "Flee from the wrath to come" this book told him, and this only added to his burden - the burden of his own sinfulness before God and fear of hell that possessed him - and made him cry out all the more as he read and re-read this book's words. "Not being able to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying 'What shall I do?'" He knew that he must flee, and what he must flee from, but where to flee to he had not yet discovered from his book.

Enter Evangelist! "Wherefore dost thou cry?" These are Evangelist's first words to the burdened sinner, and these words speak volumes regarding the nature of this one who has been sent to direct the feet of the wandering Pilgrim. Later on in this book we are given a picture of the Evangelist. "The man whose picture this is, is one of a thousand ... And whereas thou seest him with his eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, and the law of truth writ on his lips, it is to show thee that his work is to know and unfold dark things to sinners; even as also thou seest him stand as if he pleaded with men". The Evangelist's eyes are "lifted up to heaven"; i.e. he is much in prayer for the souls of men: he

too has "the best of books in his hand," - the Bible, and "the law of truth is writ on his lips". And because he knows the needs of sinners, so he "stands as if he pleaded with men".

And with our Pilgrim he pleads: "Wherefore dost thou cry?" And to this man Pilgrim unburdens his heart: "Whither must I fly?" he asks him, for that's the question uppermost in his mind, remember. Listen to Evangelist's answer: - "Do you see yonder Wicket Gate?" There is a place where poor, burdened Pilgrim can find relief from his burden of sin; it's through "yonder Wicket Gate", for that's where the Cross of Christ stands, where burdens are taken away. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate", said our Lord; "Knock and it shall be opened unto you".

"Do you see yonder shining light?" Evangelist asks again. Not only is Christ "the door", through which we must enter to know the joys of sins forgiven, but He is also "the light" to guide us to himself. Good, faithful Evangelist who points the burdened sinner to Christ and Christ alone.

And so, Pilgrim runs to "yonder Wicket Gate". "Life! Life! Eternal life!" he cries. And Eternal life he finds through Christ our Lord.



The Chained Bible

It is more than 400 years since King Henry V 111 declared that a large copy of the English Bible should be set up in every parish Church in England, so that the poor as well as the rich might hear the Word of God. To guard against theft the Bibles were chained

... ..

For some the Bible is still chained.

1. For those who will not read it.

In most of the great languages of Europe the whole Bible has been available for over three hundred years. Those who have sincerely obeyed its message have received riches which cannot be

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measured. They have come to know personally the only true God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; "and this," says the Bible "is life eternal". Others, choosing not to open the Bible, have lived all their lives in ignorance of its vital truths. They have remained paupers, a treasure within their grasp. For such people the Bible remains a "chained" book.

2. For those who cannot read it.

Millions, in whose languages the Scriptures are already printed, cannot read. Thus the Bible remains for them, too, a "chained" book. Yet multitudes of these people are learning to read every year. How important is the task of ensuring that new readers have the Word of God immediately available before producers of harmful literature capture their minds. Missionary teachers are required to teach people to read and understand the Scriptures.

3. For those who do not possess it

Ponder the following facts (quoted from 1966) - the fruits of the efforts of devoted men and women down the ages. The whole Bible has been translated into 240 languages, the New Testament into another 301, and 739 languages more have at least one book of the Bible ... the total number in which the whole or some part of the Bible exists is now (1966) 1300.

BUT, did you know that there are at least 3200 languages in the world? For the people of these many, many tribes the Bible is still "chained" and they themselves are "chained" too.

Issued by the Scripture Gift Mission.

A Sermon for
Parents
by
J.C. Ryle

(Part One)

"Train up a child in
the way that he
should go".
Proverbs 22:6

I suppose that most professing Christians are acquainted with this text. The sound of it is probably familiar to your ears, like an old tune. But, after all, how

little is the substance of this text regarded! The doctrine it contains appears scarcely known; the duty it puts before us seems fearfully seldom practised.

Your own eyes are witnesses that I speak the truth. ... We live in days when there is a mighty zeal for education in every quarter; we hear of new schools rising on every side; we are told of new systems and new books for the young, of every sort and description; and still, for all this, the majority of children are manifestly not trained in the way that they should go, for when they grow up to man's estate they do not walk with God.

Come now and let me place before you a few hints about right training. Reject them not because they are blunt and simple; despise them not because they contain nothing new.

First then, if you would train up your children rightly, ***train them in the way they should go, and not in the way that they would.***

Remember that they are born with a decided bias towards evil, and therefore, if you let them decide for themselves, they are certain to choose wrong. The mother cannot tell what her tender infant may grow up to be - tall or short, weak or strong, wise or foolish; he may be any of these things, or not - It is all uncertain. But, one thing the mother can say with certainty, he will have a corrupt and sinful heart. "A child left to himself," says Solomon, "bringeth his mother to shame". It is the sin of man, says Isaiah, that "we have turned every one to his own way". It was an unsatisfactory state of things in Israel when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes". Then be merciful to your child and leave him not to the guidance of his own will. Think for him, judge for him, act for him, just as you would for one weak and blind; but, for pity's sake give him not up to his own wayward tastes and inclinations.

It must not be his likings and wishings that are consulted: he knows not yet what is good for his body. You do not let him decide what he shall eat, and what he shall drink and how he shall be clothed. Be consistent and deal with his mind in like manner. Train him in the way that is right, and not in the way that he fancies.

Train him in the way that he should go, and not in the way that he would.

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