

The Wicket Gate Magazine

A Continuing Witness



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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

Roman Catholicism and the Gospel

(Pastor's Letter dated February 1969)

My Dear Friends,

There was a time when the believers in Christ had no doubts whatsoever concerning the church of Rome and its teaching. Being instructed in the Word of Life they were enabled to take the Romish dogma and apply it to the divine standards of Gospel truth. In doing this, it became obvious to them that Romanism was not only non-christian, but positively UN-christian; and it also became obvious that the everlasting issue with the Roman system would centre upon the nature of the everlasting Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. These times now seem to have passed and the doors of acceptance for the Romish gospel of "works" are opening wider and wider with each passing month. In the light of this state of affairs I want to bring before you the outline of our sermon on "Roman Catholicism and the Gospel".

Please note the title and bear in mind that our conflict is not with individual Roman Catholics, who, like unconverted Protestants, are heirs of God's wrath and in need of His salvation in Christ Jesus. Our conflict is always and only with that gospel which Rome presents and which is no gospel at all, but the devil's counterfeit.

"Roman Catholicism and the Gospel"

Introduction: The church's great commission is to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel". Therefore, before there can be any talk of uniting churches there must be absolute clarity as to what the Gospel is. Does Rome preach the Gospel that our Lord and Saviour told His own redeemed church to proclaim?

1. First of all, we know and believe that if God were going to send His Gospel into this world, then He would employ a vehicle for the task. This He has done in His Word which is a "light unto our feet and a lamp unto our path." But, one thing of which there can be no doubt – Rome separates men from this "vehicle" of the Gospel. Rome separates men from this pure Word of God! In many ways, this is what the great Reformation was all about. Oh yes, the over-riding theme was the justification of the sinner through faith alone: but it was no less the battle for the vehicle that was to carry that

message of justification to the ends of the earth. The Reformers fought for this; the Romanist fought against it: this was the Reformation.

We are inclined to imagine that things have changed today simply because Rome now make some kind of outward show towards God's Word and says her people may read it. But, they must read it in the light of the 15 books of the Apocrypha, the writings of the "Fathers", the pronouncements of the Councils and the Papal letters. A whole "paper wall", in fact, that still separates men from the Word of God today as much as ever.

Rome separates men from the "ethic" of the Gospel. There is no gospel of Free and Sovereign Grace that does not include the absolute moral demand of God.

"Teach me, Lord, on to show,
By my love, how much I owe".

But, from this ethic – from this moral demand, Rome separates men and women. Read some of her "Laws of Mental Reservation:" read her teachings of "Clandestine Compensation." This is one fact that we seem pathetically ignorant of today in all our so-called "dialogues" with Romanists; we fail to realise how the Roman theologian thinks!

2. Rome separates men from the "grace" of the Gospel. This goes without saying. How are we saved? "By our own merits," says the church of Rome. But, what saith the scriptures? "By grace ye are saved," they say. But Rome separates from this grace, and so the very warp and woof of the gospel must become the platform where all ecumenical discussions must end. Of course, Rome is wrong at the very source of things. She has no doctrine of the Total Depravity of human nature, and, therefore, she has defective views on the nature of man's salvation.
3. Rome separates men from the "peace" of the Gospel. The very best that Rome can offer the dying soul is Purgatory at last. What peace is this? What a contrast to the whole assurance of our Saviour's blessed words: - "My peace I leave with you."
4. Rome separates men from the "author" of the Gospel. Rome separates men from Christ Himself. (a) The church does this, for she claims to be "the life", receiving and excommunicating at her will. There is "nulla salus" – no salvation – apart from Rome. (b) The head of the church separates men from Christ. He is the Vicar of Christ and the "door." (c) The Pope's men – the priests also separate when they say they are men's mediators with the Father. (d) The doctrine of Mary separates men from Christ. "Our co-redemptress" she is called on that cross where she is crucified along with Christ. "Let us

direct our gaze to Mary, " said Pope Paul in his closing benediction at the Vatican Council; "our heavenly mother and Queen ... in whom the image of God is reflected with absolute clarity." Ah, my friends, there is only One who is "the express image" of the Father, and that is Jesus Christ, the righteous.

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel." Rome's gospel, brethren? Rome's gospel? May God help us in our day to be His people.

Sincerely,
W.J. Seaton



Sermon in Candles

By
C.H. Spurgeon

(Part 1)



During an address that Charles Haddon Spurgeon was giving to some of his students in the Pastor's College he was urging on them the value of "illustration." One of the students apparently remarked how difficult it was to find good illustrations for one's sermon, to which Spurgeon replied "... ... if your minds were thoroughly aroused, and yet you could see nothing else in the world but a single tallow candle, you might find enough illustration in that luminary to last you for six months". This remark was met with some doubtful expressions, Spurgeon tells us, and so, to prove the validity of his words he produced his famous "sermon in Candles" which we hope to adapt for this magazine over the next six editions.

I am not an adept at lecturing, and when I take to it under constraint, I either signally fail in it, or else the successful production is a sermon in disguise. You cannot drive out nature by a command: the old pulpit hand must preach, even though you bid him do somewhat else. I have preached now for so many years that use is second nature; and a lecture, a speech, and address, and I fear even a conversation, all have a tendency to mould themselves sermon-fashion. This lecture has become a cairn, upon which stone after stone has been thrown. To use a figure from the subject itself – my candles have been dipped again and again, and each time they have grown in bulk, till I feel that they are now ready to go from the makers to the consumers.

Candles were far more familiar objects in my boyhood than in these days of gas and electricity. In my time the greatest of wonders was a Lucifer-match.



We had practical fun with candles too; for we would scoop out a turnip, cut eyes and a nose in the rind, and then put a candle inside. This could be judiciously used to amuse, but it might also be injudiciously tuned to purposes of alarming youngsters and greenhorns who ran away, under the apprehension that a ghost was visible. Other things besides turnips can be used to frighten foolish people; but it is a shame to use THE LIGHT OF TRUTH with such a design.

By the way, a candle blown out does not yield the most delicate of perfumes. If the light of professors of religion is blown out, the result is most unsavoury. How well it is for us that we have to deal with One of whom it is written "A smoking flax will he not quench"! Even when faith is so low that we are rather an offence than an illumination, He will not quench it, so tender is His love.

Solomon spoke of a candle when he said, "The spirit of man is as the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly". Did he not refer to conscience? Did he not mean that conscience is in some respects a divine light – "The candle of the Lord?" and in all respects a discovering light – searching all the inward parts? Take care that you never trifle with this candle. A loss of light in the conscience means decrease of light for our whole manhood. I am afraid that conscience in many persons has become no better than an unkindled candle, not giving light, nor even making darkness visible. I have heard of a man who said "Conscience! Conscience! I have plenty of conscience," "Yes," said one, "and it is as good as new, for I have never known you to use it". In that case it was a candle unlightened, and as the old rhyme has it: -



"A candle that affords no light,
What profit it by day or night?"

God grant that we may never do violence to our conscience even in the least degree; for this is to quench our own light!

On one occasion, having a candle on each side of me in a small pulpit, I was somewhat vigorous, and dashed one of the luminaries from its place. It fell on the bald head of a friend below, who looked up with an expression which I can see at this moment, and it makes me smile still. I took no more notice of the

accident than to weave it into what I was saying: and I believe most of my hearers considered it to be a striking practical illustration of the remark which accompanied it, "How soon is the glory of life dashed down!"

"The Lord will light my candle so, that it shall shine full bright ... The Lord my God will also make my darkness to be light". (Psalm 18:28 from the Metrical Psalms).

Gleanings in the Psalms

(Psalm 21)

This Psalm has been called David's Triumphant Song, and we may remember it as the Royal Triumphal Ode. "The King" is most prominent throughout, and we shall read it to true profit if our meditation of Him shall be sweet while perusing it. We must crown Him with the glory of our salvation; singing of His love, and praising His power. The next Psalm – Psalm 22 – will take us to the foot of the Cross, this introduces us to the steps of the Throne.

C.H. Spurgeon

Verse 1. "The King shall joy in thy strength, O Lord". Jesus is a royal personage. The question "Art thou a king then?" received a full answer from the Saviour's lips: "Thou sayest that I am a king". To this end was I born, and for this purpose came I into this world, that I might bear witness unto the truth". He is not merely A King, but THE King: king over minds and hearts, reigning with a dominion of love, before which all other rule is but brute force. Jesus has wrought out the salvation of His people, but as a man He found His strength in Jehovah His God. That strength so abundantly given is here gratefully acknowledged and made the subject of joy – "The KING shall joy in thy strength, O Lord".

C.S.H.

Verse 3. "For thou preventest him with the blessing of goodness..." The word "prevent" is now generally used to represent the idea of hindrance. "Thou preventest him," would mean commonly "Thou hinderest him". But here the word "prevent" means to "go before". Thou goest before him with the blessings of thy goodness as a pioneer, to make crooked ways straight, and rough places smooth; or, as one who strews flowers in the path of another, to render the way beautiful to the eye, and pleasant to tread.

Samuel Martin

Verse 3. "Thou preventest him with the blessings of thy goodness". A large portion of our blessing is given to us before our asking or seeking. Existence, reason, intellect, the calling of our nation to the knowledge of Christ, and Christ Himself, with many other things are unsought and yet bestowed on men; as was David's right to the throne. No one ever asked for a Saviour till God of His own motion promised "the seed of the woman".

William Plumer

Verse 4. "He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever". The first words may suit king David, but the "length of days for ever and ever" can only refer to the King Messiah. Jesus, as man, prayed for resurrection, and He received it... and "because I live, ye shall live also" is the delightful intimation which the Saviour gives us, that we are partakers of His eternal life. We had never found this jewel if He had not rolled away the stone which covered it.

C. H. Spurgeon

Verse 5. "His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him". Christ was "a man of sorrows" on earth, but He is full of joy in heaven. He that "wipes away all tears from the eyes of His people" surely has none of His own. There was a joy set before Him before He suffered, and doubtless it was given Him when he sat down at God's right hand.

John Hurrion

Verse 9. "Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger". Those that might have had Christ to rule and save them, but rejected Him, and fought against Him; even the remembrance of that will be enough to make them to eternity a fiery oven unto themselves.

Matthew Henry

Verse 9. "... the time of thine anger". If God be willing to pour out His heavy displeasure upon those that displease Him, what can hinder His mighty arm from performing? Creatures indeed may be angry, but oftentimes, like drones without stings, cannot hurt. Saul may be angry at David, but cannot find him; Satan may desire to kill Job; Jonah may be angry till death for Nineveh's preservation; princes, if they take prisoners, may have them rescued from them again – as Lot was from the king of Sodom; or bought with a price – as Joseph of the Ishmaelites. BUT, no power can rescue us from God's anger, no ransom but Christ's blood can redeem us.

John Cragge

Verse 12. "Therefore ... thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thine strings". The judgments of God are called his "arrows", being sharp, swift, sure

and deadly. What a dreadful situation, to be set as a target at which these arrows are directed. No further commentary is needed on this verse.

George Horne

While I draw this fleeting breath – when my eyes shall close in death.
When I soar to worlds unknown – See Thee on Thy Judgment Throne.
Rock of Ages Cleft for me – Let me hide myself in Thee.

BOYS AND GIRLS PAGE

By
Mrs Seaton

Dear Boys and Girls,

Here is a "Bible Search" for you in this edition.
Search for the answers in each question and find the word that tells of – "One of the seven men of good report."

1. Scene of the Revelation of John.
2. Elisha's home.
3. The good Samaritan promised to do this to the innkeeper.
4. Absalom's steed.
5. What Paul did to the disciples before going to Macedonia.
6. David prepared iron in abundance for these.
7. Paul was persuaded that the Roman Christians were able to do this to one another.
8. David promised that Abiathar with him would be in this.

Good hunting, boys and girls; but remember that verse in the Bible where God says "Ye shall seek ME and find ME, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." Don't just be content in searching the Bible to find answers, boys and girls; search until you find God and know that He is in your life for evermore.

Love,
Mrs Seaton

Sweet Notes From The Song of Songs

(Part 1)

Introduction:

"The song of songs, which is Solomon's." The lessons that we draw from the Song of Solomon are lessons that apply to the union that exists between Christ and His Church, or Christ and the individual believer in that church. The "Beloved" of the Song of Solomon is a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the "Bride" of the Song of Solomon is a picture of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, or the individual believer in that church. As Christ's love for His church "endures unchanging on", so we see how the love of the "bridegroom" of the Song of Songs remains steadfast to the end. But, just as the believer's love for Christ very often ebbs and flows, so we see the "bride" in the Song of Songs sometimes completely devoted to her "beloved", sometimes completely separated from him and a stranger to his presence.

At the very beginning of the Song, as the young bride receives her first real impression of "King Solomon in all his glory", her love for him wells up within her, and her heart and affections go out towards him.

Chapter 1:2ff. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine. Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth..." These very first words of the bride concerning her bridegroom launch us right into the theme of our salvation. Every converted soul this day can go back to that time when they first got that grand glimpse of Christ in all His splendour and in all His saving power. Before that day, He was like the "root out of a dry ground", and was "without form or comeliness" to our souls. But, when the Holy Spirit of God made the spiritually blind eyes to see, then, the spiritually dumb lips sang out to the Prince of the house of David: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth..." Let us never be backward in speaking in "Rutherfordian" terms of our Saviour. The unconverted person will always misconstrue the believer's love for Christ anyway. Let us never lose any of the joy of the beauty of Jesus just because we are backward in speaking about it. God's gracious Spirit showed you Christ as "altogether lovely" for your soul's need and salvation. It was He who caused you to cry out, just as the young bride cries out again at the beginning of verse 4: - "Draw me, we will run after thee..." He gave you that prospect of Christ that melted your heart and caused you to seek His powerful call and drawing love. "No man cometh unto me except the Spirit draw him," said Jesus. "Draw me," we cry, when Christ's great co-worker in our salvation presents Him to our view.

Angels Pockets

The first pastorate of Charles Haddon Spurgeon was a little Baptist Chapel in Waterbeach near Cambridge. The following is an anecdote take from his ministry there.

"One day a gentleman who was then mayor of Cambridge asked the youthful preacher if he really had told his people that if a thief got into heaven, he would pick the angels' pockets. 'Yes, Sir,' replied Mr Spurgeon; 'I told them that if it were possible for an ungodly man to get into heaven without having his nature changed, he would be none the better for being there; and then, by way of illustration, I said that if a thief were to get in he would remain a thief still, and go round the place picking the angels' pockets!'

'But my dear young friend,' said the mayor, 'don't you know that the angels have no pockets?' 'No Sir,' said the young Spurgeon, 'but I am glad to be assured of the fact from a gentleman who does know. I will set it right'.

The following Monday morning, Mr Spurgeon walked into the mayor's shop and said: 'I set that matter right yesterday, Sir'. 'What matter?' asked the mayor. 'Why, about the angels' pockets!' 'What did you say?' 'Well, I told the people that I was sorry to say that I had made a mistake the last time I preached; but that I had met a gentleman – the mayor or Cambridge – who had told me that the angels had no pockets, so I must correct what I had said, as I did not want anyone to go away with a false notion about heaven. I would, therefore, say that, if a thief got among the angels without having his nature changed, he would steal the feathers out of their wings!'