

# The Wicket Gate Magazine

## A Continuing Witness



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- 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

# The Proof of the Pudding's in the Eating

(The Pastor's Letter September 1970)

Dear Friends,

It is perhaps symptomatic of these days of spiritual poverty that we find many within the ranks of the evangelical churches (and others) turning to new forms of worship and experience. What has been described as a "new Pentecostalism" has been gaining followers in most of the non-Pentecostal churches and the "gifts" of "tongues", and "healing", and other manifestations of the Holy Spirit now have exponents among Anglicans and Baptist, Methodists and Presbyterians, and the rest.

In this letter I want to bring just a few practical considerations before you with regard to these movements, for, very often, what a theological and Biblical argument fails to do, a practical consideration accomplishes, if only we are honest enough to face the naked facts. "The proof of the pudding's in the eating" is an old maxim, but one that has good scriptural backing; for, if the tree is planted in the best of doctrine, it will bear the best of fruits.

(1) First of all, then: What manner of life does the claimant of these gifts manifest? In other words, what kind of life does the average new pentecostalist lead? And this is not a frontal attack on the members of this movement, but more a general reflection on the manner of living of the majority of professing believers today and **the lack of any uniqueness on the part of any one body**. The sad things that characterise evangelicalism at this present time are absence of Holiness and devotion to Christ, failure to bow to the whole Word of God and exercise the power of God in our pulpits, determination not to know anything among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified and to take up own cross and follow after Him. But this is a general condition, and those who claim to have been "baptized" with the Spirit, or "filled" with the Spirit in this modern sense, and have spoken with tongues and prophesied are no less part of this general condition and declension, nor are they any more marked by spiritual living. Surely, the one demand that we might make from a man or a woman, or a young person who claims to have "received the Holy Spirit" in this unique sense is a unique life – far and above the average run of professing souls.

(2) Now, this leads to a rather disturbing feature of this new avenue of Christian experience, and that is: What frame of mind does this doctrine leave the believer in? Although it appears quite open and obvious to those outside of the movement that there is really nothing unique in the lives of its devotees, nevertheless, there does seem to be the impression created that those who have "manifested the gifts" are further up the spiritual ladder than others. We recollect hearing of one woman member of this movement who believed that the Godly Murray McCheyne was a great man, "but," she was quick to add, "just think how much greater he would have been if only he had had the baptism of the Holy Spirit." The most outstanding feature of a Spirit-filled life, one would have thought, should be a spirit of humility, kept low

by that most searching of all words of scripture, “Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” A far cry that from our penny-in-the-slot automated spirituality and instant sanctification, and a vastly different spirit of condescension on the part of the “Spirit-filled” towards those who have not yet “attained.”

(3) A further practical consideration of the new movement is this: What spiritual knowledge do these gifts convey? Among the hotbeds” of this new experience are the Bible Colleges and Missionary Training Institutes of our country today, and some of these establishments have witnessed a virtual breakdown in their normal curriculum on account of so-called “winds of revival” rushing through their corridors. Now, let us be assured of this: generally speaking, students, are notoriously lazy and will do almost anything but study. But, of course, with the “fulness of the Holy Spirit” as part of one’s equipment, study becomes almost obsolete. Again, however, “The proof of the pudding’s in the eating,” and whereas, we might expect those who possess, in all fullness, the Spirit of light and truth to shine like stars in the heavens, we find, as always, that it is the diligent slogger who holds his head high at the end of the day and who, on account of his studious labours, is able to show himself approved unto God “a workman that needth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”.

(4) On the question of “spiritual knowledge”, perhaps we should mention a pertinent question as it relates to those who have received these gifts but who are still in denominational attachments: How tender a conscience to wrong do these gifts impart? When I hear of “Spirit-baptized” brethren or sisters who, through their denominational ties, are in ecumenical situations that have now accepted Romanism and Modernism as aspects of “the gospel”, I immediately want to know how the Blessed Holy Spirit – Whose glorious office it is to lead us into all truth, can, at the same time – permit us to remain in all error! How can the one and same Spirit of God who pronounces as “accursed” that “other gospel” (of which Rome and Modernism are the custodians) also, at the same time, uniquely bless those who are bound up with it? Strange fruit, indeed, for a doctrine that has such high-sounding terminology. The one thing that we might rightly demand from anyone – and especially Ministers and preachers of the gospel – who have testified to receiving this remarkable degree of growth in the knowledge of Christ is a spirit of obedience with regards to associating their “temples of the Holy Spirit” with that which defiles. But, again, is the movement not symptomatic of an age of disobedience among the Lord’s professing people? When we fail to obey explicit truth, then it is often tactful to redirect any criticism of our disobedience by laying claim to a more enlightened or advanced degree of spiritual growth. The argument then quite easily runs that a man so filled with the Spirit would never be part of a wrong association, therefore, the association that he is in cannot be that wrong. However, the true statement is this, that a man in such wrong association cannot be as filled with the Holy Spirit of Light and Truth as he would have us believe, for, “When he the Spirit of Truth is come he shall lead you into all truth,” and, it goes without saying, out of all untruth.

(5) Just one last practical consideration: What kind of views of the Holy Spirit do these doctrines leave the believer with anyway? Who would deny that the church on earth today needs a great outpouring of that blessed Third Person of the Trinity? But is it really the Spirit of the Word of God that is thought of in these circles today? At the drop of a hat the “gifts” may be turned on, or turned off by the adept exponent of the craft. No notion of a Sovereign, Almighty Spirit here; One, Who Jesus said – as He spoke to that other unknowledgeable man, Nicodemus – was “like the wind” that blew where it listeth. No thought of “manipulation” there!

Yes, my friends, we need the fullness of the Holy Spirit today, but it is that same Spirit Who came at Pentecost “as a rushing mighty wind,” and filled the believers with the powers of glory itself so that the world was turned upside down. Until we have such “fruits” again, then we can only conclude that the “roots” are planted in a different soil after all. May we have enough of the Spirit of God to honestly face our wretchedness today and lay ourselves before the Throne of God above.

W.J. Seaton  
(September 1970)



### John Brown Of Haddington.

The vast majority of the mighty servants of the church of a bye-gone day walked “the studious cloisters pale” of the world’s great Universities and Halls of learning. Few, if any, had a Divinity School such as young John Brown attended, for there, he formed, not only one half of the entire student body, but one half of the entire teaching staff, as well. Two pupils! – young John Brown and old John Ogilvie. Two teachers! - Young John Brown and old John Ogilvie! Such was the staff and students of “The Tabernacle” as it sat snug and safe from the eye of man amidst the Perthshire hills – “four turf walls and a heather thatch.”

John Brown, whose name was to be linked so unbreakably with that of Haddington, was born in the year 1722 in the village of Carpow near Abernethy. The “Day of his Salvation” dawned early, for it was in 1730, while still only a boy of eight, that a visiting preacher at the Communion season in Abernethy “spake much to the commendation of

Christ” and there began a life of growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ that has had few equals. The young convert’s faith was soon to be tried, however, and both of his parents were taken from him within a few short years. It is here that the older half of the “student-staff” occupants of the Tabernacle – and, indeed the Tabernacle itself – enters into the picture.

John Ogilvie was born during the “killing times” in Scotland and so, was an old man by the time young John Brown had entered into Christ’s flock. The old man opened not only his home, but his heart and his mind, to the young fatherless bairn and he began to “instruct him in the ways of the Lord more perfectly.” John Ogilvie had never had the opportunity of any “formal” education, but although unable to read or write had stored his heart and his mind with the riches of God’s grace and Word. These he imparted to his young friend, who, in turn, instructed the old patriarch in the “learning of letters.” From thence rose the Tabernacle. “For their mutual improvement,” we are told in one sketch of John Brown’s life, “the two Johns constructed their moorland shelter, and there, as circumstances of employment permitted, young John improved and extended old John’s knowledge of the letter of Scripture, and old John, in turn, gave his herd-boy the benefit of his long experience of the Christian warfare, and of his intercourse with the saints of a former generation... .. A turf shelter on a rugged hillside! A barley-bannock to ward of the attacks of hunger! A vessel of clear spring-water to slake their thirst! Above all else, the Book of Life!” This was “The Tabernacle.”

With the passing of the older saint, however, this happy state of affairs was brought to a close; but upon the foundation that he had helped to lay in his young fellow-soldier’s heart there was to rise up an edifice of power to the great glory of God’s own Name.

The story of how John Brown walked over 24 miles to St. Andrews to purchase the Greek New Testament that he had toiled and saved to buy is one of the gems of the Christian church. The incredulous bookseller in St. Andrews took one look at the young herds-boy from the Perthshire hills and would probably have chased him from his premises but for the intervention of some of the University professors who happened to be browsing around at that particular time. “Bring him the book,” they declared, “and if he can read it he shall have it free as a present from us.” Thereupon, young John opened the book and in fluent Greek read the desired portions thus obtaining his prize.

This thirst for knowledge with which to glorify his God never seemed to leave him and when he was called to his life’s work at Haddington, the boy who had never known the inside of a Divinity Hall, save that rustic establishment of the Perthshire hills, was later to combine his pastoralia with a Professorship of Divinity. He was expert in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and could hold his own with Arabic, Syriac, Persic, Ethiopic, and with the modern languages of French, Spanish, Italian, Dutch and German. And yet, his language and learning was always that of the Tabernacle: “There is no language, ancient or modern,” he used to say, “like that of the grace of God...no history like that of Jesus Christ...no science like that of beholding the Word made flesh...” “I would not exchange the learning of one hour’s fellowship with Christ,” he once said, “for all the liberal learning in ten thousand Universities...” “Oh, commend Jesus,” he told his sons

on his death-bed, “There is none like Christ – there is none like Christ – there is none like Christ.”

# Gleanings in the Psalms

(Psalm 26)

**Verse 1. “Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in mine integrity ...”** A good cause, a good conscience, and a good deportment, are good grounds of appeal to God.

*Ingram Cobbin*

**Verse 2. “Examine Me, O Lord, and prove Me; Try my reigns and my heart.”** The psalmist uses three words, “examine,” “prove,” “try.” These words are designed to include all the modes in which the reality of anything is tested; and they imply together that he wished the most *thorough* investigation to be made. He did not shrink from any test.

*Albert Barnes*

**Verse 4. “I have not sat with vain persons ...”** There is a necessary commerce with men in buying and selling, or as the apostle says “We must needs go out of the world.” But do not voluntarily choose the company of the wicked. The company of the wicked is very defiling ... “They were numbered among the heathen and learned their works.” If you mingle bright armour with rusty, the bright armour will not brighten the rusty, but the rusty armour will spoil the bright. Pharaoh taught Joseph to swear, but Joseph did not teach Pharaoh to pray.

*Thomas Watson*

**Verse 5. “I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.”** Wheresoever we perceive any people to worship God truly after His Word, there we may be certain the Church of Christ to be, unto the which we ought to associate ourselves, and to desire, with the prophet David, to praise God in the midst of His Church. But if we behold, through the iniquity of time, congregations to be made with counterfeit religion, otherwise than the Word of God doth teach, we ought then to say again with David “I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.” In the Revelation, the Church at Ephesus is highly commended, because she tried such as said they were apostles and were not, and therefore they would not abide the company of them. Further, God commanded His people, but the mouth of His prophet Amos, that they should not seek Bethel, where idolatry was used.

*John Philpot (martyr). Burnt at Smithfield 1551*

**Verse 6. “I will wash my hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord.”** If *greatness* might have privileged ... David was a king. But let not great men put too much trust in their greatness; the longer the robe is, the more soil it contracts: great power may prove to be the mother of great damnation. And as for purity, there’s a generation that say that they have no sin in them, but they deceive themselves, there is no truth in them. Christ’s own apostle, stout Thomas, failed in the faith of His resurrection: Peter (whose chair is now the pretended seat of infallibility) denied his Master: David, “a man after God’s own heart,” hath need of washing; and who can say, I am pure in the sight of God?

*Isaac Bargrave*

**Verse 7. “That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.”** (1) The believer’s calling – *A publisher*: “I will publish ...” (2) The author selected – *The Lord*: “Thy ...” (3) The manuscripts published – *All*; “all thy wondrous works.” (4) The mode of advertising – *Witness and preaching*: “tell,” and “The voice of thanksgiving.”

*Hints to the Village Preacher*

**Verse 8. “Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house ...”** “I have in my congregation,” said a venerable minister of the gospel, “a worthy, aged woman, who has for many years been so deaf as not to distinguish the loudest sound, and yet she is always on of the first in the meeting. On asking the reason of her constant attendance (as it was impossible for her to hear my voice), she answered: “Thought I cannot hear you, I come to God’s house because I love it, and would be found in His ways; and He gives me many a sweet thought upon the text when it is pointed out to me: another reason is because there I am in the best company, in the more immediate presence of God, and among His saints, the honourable of the earth. I am not satisfied with the serving God in private; it is my duty and privilege to honour Him regularly in public.” What a reproof to those who have their hearing and yet absent themselves from the Lord’s house on the least pretence.

*K. Arvine*

**Verse 9. “Gather not my soul with sinners ...”** Bind me not in the same bundle with them, like the tares for the fire.

**Verse 12. “My foot standeth in an even place ...”**

“On Christ the solid rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.”

# BOYS AND GIRLS PAGE

**Mrs Seaton**

Dear Boys and Girls,

It is always good to have a try at things, you know, and especially to try to serve God with all our hearts as that great preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon tells us in these lines that I have taken from one of his books for you.

“Of all the pretty little songs I have ever heard my youngsters sin, that is the one of the best which winds up –

‘If at first you don’t succeed,  
Try, try, try again.’

CAN’T DO IT sticks in the mud, but Try soon drags the wagon out of the rut. The fox said Try, and he got away from the hounds when they almost snapped at him. The bees said Try, and turned flowers into honey. The squirrel said Try, and up he went to the top of the beech tree. The snowdrop said Try, and bloomed in the cold snows of winter. The sun said Try, and the spring soon threw Jack Frost out of the saddle. The young lark said Try, and he found that his new wings took him over hedges and ditches, and up where his father was singing. The ox said Try, and ploughed the field from end to end. No hill too steep for Try to climb, no clay too stiff for Try to plough, no field too wet for Try to drain, no hole too big for Try to mend.

‘By little strokes,  
Men fell great oaks.’

If you want to do good in the world, the little word ‘Try’ comes in again. There are plenty of ways of serving God, and some that will fit you exactly as a key fits a lock. Don’t hold back because you cannot preach in a great Church; be content to speak to a boy or a girl at school; very good wheat grows in little fields. You may cook in small pots as well as big ones. Little pigeons can carry great messages.”

The gospel is a great message, boys and girls, so take Mr. Spurgeon’s advice and “try” all you can for God.

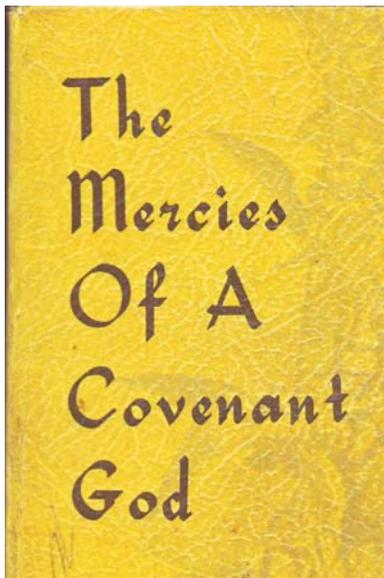
# Sweet Notes From The Song of Songs

## (Part 7)

**Chapter 2 verse 14. “O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.”** Having stepped from her winter house, the young Bride of the Song of Solomon is now, no doubt, feeling unaccustomed to her new surroundings before her Beloved. Hence the reassuring words that fall from the Beloved’s lips in this verse 14 of the second chapter of the Song.

The believer, too, needs such a reassuring word when he has first been called out of his “winter house” of sin and rebellion against his God, and the Lord of all grace is quick to grant us such a word in season. We are told –

- (1) That OUR POSITION is now one of ABSOLUTE SECURITY in Christ; “O my dove,” He says, “that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs ...” As Solomon looked at the doves nestling with their young in the cliff face of the mountains of Bether, so, he told his young Bride, she was as “secure” as that in his presence. And the words of our Heavenly Solomon tell us of our security in no less affectionate terms. Well may we sing “Rock of Ages, cleft for me,” for the Rock was smitten for us just as surely as it was smitten for Israel at Meribah and the water of life flowed as freely for us as it did to quench the thirst of Moses and his followers. The justice of God dug deeply into the side of His blessed Son on the Cross, but in that wound, the Elect’s city of Refuge was established and they abide there in the presence of their Great High Priest. But how practical this security that the Lord has given to His Church, for He has given them such a blessed truth that they might “persevere unto the end,” and “show forth the praises of him who has called the out of darkness into this marvellous light.” If our position is one of absolute security, then –
- (2) OUR SECURITY should lead to ABSOLUTE SERVICE. “O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, LET ME SEE THY COUNTENANCE, LET ME HEAR THY VOICE ...” Having brought his young spouse to himself, Solomon now desires to see her from day to day and to hear her voice speaking to him. So with us. And how we should render unto the God of our salvation the service of praise and thanksgiving. Why? –
- (3) Because, OUR SERVICE affords Him ABSOLUTE SATISFACTION. “For sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely,” says the Lord.



## *The Loaves and Fishes*

*John Warburton*

Work was now very bad, and provisions immensely dear. We had three small children, and had lost one about six months before. One circumstance that occurred about this time I think I shall never forget. Here was a gloomy scene, not a morsel of food for husband, wife, or child; the wife, too, with an infant at her breast. If ever I prayed in my life, I did that night, that the Lord would take away our appetite, and send us to bed satisfied. And, I believe, the Lord heard my cry, for the poor children wanted to go to bed, and said not one word about anything to eat, for which I felt thankful.

But my trouble was about the morning, for I could not leave the morrow to take care for the things of itself. I rose very early the following morning, and worked until I was obliged to leave the loom, and could scarcely walk or stand, I was so weak and faint. My poor wife, who was as weak and sickly as I, burst into tears, and cried, "O what shall we do? I cannot live; I am sure we shall die of want!" and I was sunk so low both in body and mind, that I verily believed it would be the case. But what put the finishing touch to my feelings was, that my eldest child, who was about five years of age, looked up to me with tears running down its little cheeks, and cried, "Father, give me some bread; O my father, do give me some bread." I thought my soul would have burst with grief. "O," cried I, "are my children to die of want before my face, and I cannot help them?" I ran into a little place under the cellar stairs, fell on my knees before God, and entreated the Lord with all my soul, to take away my life. "O Lord, do take away my life; let me die; how can I behold the death of wife and children?"

Whilst I was upon my knees, entreating God to take away my life, these words came with great power and force into my mind, "And they did all eat and were filled; and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets' full." (Matthew 14 verse 20) And it was repeated again, "And they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets' full." I did all I could to put it away. "What," said I, "can it have to do with me in our situation? It has nothing to do with me." I kept crying for some time, but the whole connection came so powerfully to my mind, how the Lord had fed five thousand in the wilderness with five loaves and two fishes, and they were all filled. Well, thought I, He is as able to feed us now with fish and bread as He was then. That precious text flowed into my soul with such light, life, liberty, power, and glory, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever," (Hebrews 13 verse 8) and my soul was so refreshed, and my faith so strengthened by it, that I was as sure that we should have a supply as that

there was a God. I arose off my knees as strong as a giant in mind and body, and told my wife that the Lord would most certainly send us something to eat, and very soon. She wanted to know how and when. "It does not matter," said I, "about the how nor the when; I know it will be the case, and my soul can bless God for it before it comes."

Just upon the back of this, a man knocked at the door, and I went and opened it to him. He was a gentlemen's servant. "John," said he, "my master has bought some herrings to give to his factory people I had no orders to leave you any, but I thought as I came along that I would leave you twelve, if you like to accept them." I was so overpowered that I could scarcely speak to the man. The goodness, mercy, and kindness of my dear Lord shone so brightly that I was quite lost in wonder. Whilst I was still wondering and admiring the goodness of God to a worthless worm, a neighbour sent two cakes of bread. I thought my very soul would have burst through my poor body, and taken its flight into glory, unto my dear Jesus. I withdrew into the little palace under the cellar steps, the very place in which, a few hours before, I had begged God to take away my life. And O what a heavenly palace it was.

After returning my God thanks, so of the fish were soon ready, and we sat down to table all crying together. "Come, my dears," said I, "we are now dining on the same food as Jesus and the five thousand dined on in the wilderness: and I do believe in my very soul that Jesus sat with us at the table. O the sweetness of that fish and bread!

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John Warburton was minister of the gospel at Zion Chapel, Trowbridge, for forty-two years. A reprint of his famous "Mercies of a Covenant God" may still be available.

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## **A Sunday School Teacher's Prayer**

Make of my heart an upper room, I pray,  
Swept clean of pride; let self be but a door  
Through which young lives may come to Thee this day  
To know Thee as they have not know before.  
    Speak through my voice that they may hear Thine own;  
    Shine through my life in beauty and in truth,  
    That they may see the Saviour Christ alone,  
    And in the glad impulsiveness of youth  
Rise up, as did those fisher-lads of Thine  
Who left their boats and nets to follow Thee;  
So may they walk beside Thee, these of mine  
Whom out of all the world thou gavest me.

Author Unknown.

## A Sunday School Teacher's Qualifications

... .. But far above all, it should be a Christian person not in name only, but in deed and in truth – one whose heart has been touched by the Spirit of God, and who can love the souls of little children. Any teacher who lacked this last qualification, I would look upon as a curse rather than a blessing – a centre of blasting and coldness and death, instead of a centre from which light and warmth and heavenly influence might emanate.

Robert M. McCheyne.

The Church that does not  
Evangelise will fossilize.  
Oswald Smith.

The Church which ceases to  
Be evangelistic will soon  
cease to be evangelical.  
Alexander Duff.

If I am to go to the heathen to speak of the unsearchable riches of Christ, this one thing must be given me, to be out of the reach of the baneful influences of esteem or contempt.

McCheyne.