

The Wicket Gate Magazine

A Continuing Witness



Internet Edition 65 issued March 2007

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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

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Issued with the permission of the Elders & Deacons of the Reformed Baptist Church, Inverness Scotland

The Pastor's Letter

“Do you see Yonder Wicket Gate?”

The cover picture of the Wicket Gate, which was drawn by Mr David Lang of Musselburgh in 1970 for the Wicket Gate, admirably captures the spirit of good John Bunyan. Let me emphasise the theme of our little magazine.

It was through the Wicket Gate in the Pilgrim's Progress that the burdened Pilgrim found the House of Interpreter and the Cross of his salvation, so that the journey that had started from the City of Destruction finally ended in God's Celestial City. It is our desire that the Wicket Gate may be the means of entrance into a Christian pilgrimage for some, and a House of Interpretation of the things of the Lord, and a signpost on the way to Immanuel's Land for all who read it. Our cover sets us right at the beginning, almost, of the Christian pilgrimage and shows us the spiritual genius of the great “Bedford Tinker”.

“As I walked through the wilderness of this world,” Bunyan tells us in the very opening words of his outstanding work, “I lighted on a certain place where was a den; and I laid me down in that place to sleep ... I dreamed, and, behold, I saw a man clothed with rags ... with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back ... And this is what we see in our cover. The man is clothed in the “rags” of his own self-righteousness; he has turned his “face” away from his own house, for there is none there that can help him; and the cause of his despair that weighs as a great burden upon his back is the “book in his hand.” That “book” is the Word of God and it has told him of his sinnership before his God in heaven, and this knowledge makes him cry out “with a lamentable cry, saying, ‘What shall I do?’”

It is in answer to this heartfelt cry that God, in His mercy, eventually send Evangelist – the second figure on our cover – across

the Pilgrim's path, and Evangelist's direction is clear and plain: "Do you see yonder wicket gate?" The Pilgrim fails to see it at first, but God has set a shining light above it, for the Pilgrim must enter in at the Wicket Gate to find rest for his soul.

May our little "Wicket Gate", then, be a true reflection of that one and only way of everlasting life, which is in Christ our Lord. So be it.

W. J. Seaton (April 1970)

The Victories of Faith

(By C.H. Spurgeon)

In almost every capital of Europe there are varieties of triumphal arches or columns upon which are recorded the valiant deeds of the country's generals, its emperors, or its monarchs. You will find, in one case, the thousand battles of a Napoleon recorded, and in another, you find the victories of a Nelson pictured. It seems, therefore, but right, that faith, which is the mightiest of the mighty, should have a pillar raised to its honour, upon which its valiant deeds should be recorded.



The apostle Paul undertook to raise the structure, and he erected a most magnificent pillar in that chapter 11 of the epistle to the Hebrews. It recites the victories of faith.

It begins with one triumph of faith, and then proceeds to others. We have, in once place faith triumphing over death; - Enoch entered not the gates of Hades, but reached heaven by another road from which is usual for men. We have faith, in another place, wrestling with time; - Noah, warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, wrestled with time, which placed His deluge a hundred and twenty years away; and

yet, in the confidence of faith, Noah believed against all rational expectation, against all probability, and his faith was more than a match for probability and time too. We have faith triumphing over infirmity – when Abraham begetteth a son in his old age, and then we have faith triumphing over natural affection, as we see Abraham climbing to the top of the hill and raising the knife to slay his only and beloved son at the command of God. We see faith, again, entering the lists with the infirmities of old age, and the pains of the last struggle, as we read – “By faith, Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.” Then we have faith combating the allurements of a wealthy court. “By faith Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” We have faith dividing seas and casting down strong walls. AND THEN, as though the greatest victory should be recorded last, we have faith entering the lists with sin, holding a tournament with iniquity, and coming off more than conqueror – “By faith the harlot of Rahab perished not with them that believed not ...”

BOYS AND GIRLS PAGE

Dear boys and girls,

There was once a young girl who became very upset at the thought that in the land of China, where there are so very many people, there were so few people telling them about the Lord Jesus. She was always pestering people, trying to encourage them to go and preach the gospel in that great land.

One evening, as she was talking once more to her brother, he very impatiently said to her: “If you’re so concerned for these people, why don’t you go yourself?” On saying this, he went out of the room, slamming the door behind him.

The girl, whose name was Gladys Aylward, got down on her knees and prayed that she might, indeed, be able to go to China as a missionary. She applied to the China Inland Mission, but was turned

down by them. However, she knew that God had called her to go to China and she would go! She took all her savings, filled a large case with tins of food and clothes, bought a ticket on the Trans-Siberian railway, and off she went to serve the Lord.

Miss Gladys Aylward died in January 1970. But she is happy with Jesus, whom she loved and served with all her heart. She loved boys and girls very much; especially those who had no mummies and daddies to love them and take care of them.

In 1941, after the Japanese had invaded China, she led nearly two hundred boys and girls to safety in a long, long trek over the mountains away from the enemy.

There is a book called, “The Small Woman”, which is all about Miss Aylward’s work and her many adventures as one of the greatest missionaries that China had ever seen. I am sure that the older boys and girls would enjoy reading it. You could get it at your local library.

Miss Aylward once said, “When the Lord calls you, He will always show you the way to go.” I trust that each one of you will listen for the Lord’s call, and when you hear it, you will obey.

Love
Mrs Seaton



Billy Bray

Every now and again, there springs up in the Church of Christ a character whose overflowing joy in the God of his salvation lays the stern hand of censure upon our coldness and upon our formality. Such a one was Billy Bray – “The King’s Son.”

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Billy was born in the Cornish town of Twelveheads in the year 1794; his father was a Godly man and reared up his children in the ways of truth. In 1811, however, when Billy Bray left his native hearth to work in the county of Devon, he also left all the influence that his Godly father had surrounded him with. He became a blaspheming drunkard, and remained so, until the Lord placed the claims of an eternal hell before him through the reading of John Bunyan's "Visions of Heaven and Hell."

For the first time in his married life, Billy Bray came home to his wife with his wages intact and a clear eye to look on her with. "How is that you have come home so early tonight?" she asked him. "You will never see me drunk again," said Billy; "and", he could say in later years, "she never has."

These, however, were merely the first-fruits of an awakened spirit, and Billy Bray – although dreading the flames of hell with all his heart, stillwithall, had, as yet, no real assurance that his soul was saved. This same assurance was only to come through many days and many nights of heart-searching and bitter crying before the Lord. But, when the day of his salvation finally broke in upon Billy Bray, bringing with it the joy of sins forgiven before his God in heaven, that joy of the Lord was to remain almost entirely unbroken in the life of this new "King's son," and was to serve, as we've said, as a censure upon many of us who spend a great deal of our Christian lives locked up in Doubting Castle.

"I think it was in November 1823," he tells us, "but what day of the month I do not know. I remember this," he goes on, "that everything looked new to me ... I was like a man in a new world. I spent the greater part of my time praising the Lord ..." And here was the story of Billy Bray – "I spent the greater part of my time praising the Lord ..." "I was born in the fire," he used to say, "and I could not live in the smoke." "He could no more help speaking of Christ and His salvation," says his biographer of him, "than the sun can help shining." "His religion," says another, "was not a **safety lamp**, laid

by till he should be going down into the dark valley – nor like the chapel gaslight, that burned only on Sundays and at the week-night meetings.” “I spent the greater part of my time praising the Lord ...”

Of course, it goes without saying, that Billy Bray had his trials and temptations like all the Lord’s people. “The devil knows where I live,” he could say with an ironic smile. But it was his behaviour in these trails that set him so much apart from so many believers in his day and in our own day. At a meeting one evening where one believer after was relating the most recent trial of the Christian life, Billy Bray brought the meeting to an abrupt halt when he rose to his feet, clapping his hands, and told those about him; “Well friends, I’ve been taking vinegar and honey, too; but praise the Lord, I’ve had the vinegar with a **spoon**, and the honey with a **ladle!**” Times were hard and employment scarce in those days, but “If Billy gets work,” he used to say, “he praises the Lord; when he gets none, he sings all the same. Do ‘ee think that **He’ll** starve Billy? No, no; for there’s sure to be a bit of flour at the bottom of the barrel for Billy. I can trust in Jesus and while I trust Him, He’d as soon starve Michael the Archangel as starve Billy!”

This short account could never tell of the work accomplished through this very earthen vessel that God took up for His use. Of the souls saved, and the backsliders restored, and the chapels built, and the promises claimed. And all because – “I spent the grater part of my time praising the Lord.”

Even at the hour of death Billy’s theme song hadn’t lost one note or stanza: “Haven’t you any fear of death, or being lost?” he was asked on his death-bed. “What! Me fear death! Me lost!” he cried out; “Why, my Saviour conquered death. If I were to go down to hell, I would shout glory! To my blessed Jesus, until I made the bottomless pit ring again, and the miserable old Satan would say, ‘Billy, Billy, this is no place for thee; get thee back:’ Then up to heaven I should go, shouting glory! Glory! Praise the Lord.” Then, indeed, the **greater** part of his time would **be** spent “praising the Lord.”

Gleanings in the Psalms

(Psalm 28)

This is another of those “Songs of the Night” of which the pen of David was so prolific. The thorn at the breast of the nightingale was said by the old naturalists to make it sing: David’s griefs make him eloquent in holy psalmody.

C.H.S.

Verse 1. “Unto thee will I cry, O Lord MY ROCK ...” When asked how he fared as he lay on his deathbed, the godly William Evans had one sure foundation: “I am weakness itself,” he told his enquirer, “but I am on the ROCK. I do not experience those transports which some have expressed in the view of death,” he said, “but my dependence is on the mercy of God in Christ. Here my religion began, and here it must end.”

Verses 1 and 2. A Sermon on Prayer.

- 1) The NATURE of Prayer – it is a “cry”: “Unto thee will I CRY ...” A cry is - (i) The sign of life; (ii) The expression of pain; (iii) The plea of need.
- 2) The OBJECT of Prayer – it is the Lord our Rock: “O Lord my rock.” (i) a rock as a foundation; (ii) A rock as a refuge.
- 3) The REASON for Prayer – to receive an answer: “HEAR the voice of my supplication ...” (i) a speedy answer; (ii) A suitable answer; (iii) An effectual answer.
- 4) The MEDIUM of Prayer – Christ our Mediator: “I lift up my hands towards thy holy oracle.” (i) Christ the Mercy Seat; (ii) Christ the Intercessor.

Hints to the Village Preacher

Verse 3. “Draw me not away with the wicked ... which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.” Many

are like Joab: “He took Amasa by the beard to kiss him, and he smote him with his sword in the fifth rib, that he died.” All is not gold that glitters! There are some that pretend much kindness, but they are like great veins which have little blood.

Thomas Watson

Verse 4. “Give them according to their deeds ...” The Egyptians killed the Hebrew male children, and God smote the firstborn of Egypt. SISERA, who thought to destroy Israel with his iron chariots, was himself killed with an iron nail, struck through his temples. ABIMELECH slew seventy sons of Gideon upon one stone, and his own head was broken by a piece of millstone thrown by a woman. JEROBOAM stretched out his hand to destroy the alter of the Lord, and that hand was withered. HAMAN built a gallows for Mordecai, and was hung there himself. “Give them according to their deeds ...”

G. S. Bowes

Verse 4. “... render unto them their deserts.” Meditate on God’s righteousness, that it is not only His will, but His NATURE to punish sin. Impress much upon thine heart that “must”: God can only hate sin, because He is Holy; and He can only punish sin, because he is Righteous.

Christopher Fowler

Verse 6. “Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.” Saints are full of benedictions; they are a blessed people and a blessing people. Our psalm was prayer up to this point, and now it turns to praise. They who pray well, will soon praise well: prayer and praise are the two lips of the soul; two bells to ring out sweet and acceptable music in the ears of God; two angels to climb Jacob’s ladder; two of Solomon’s lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh; they are two young roes that are twins, feeding upon the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense.

C. H. Spurgeon

Verse 7. “The Lord is my strength and my shield.” Inwardly, He is my “strength”; outwardly, He is my “shield”. Faith finds both of these in Jehovah, and not the one without the other; for what is a shield without strength, or strength without a shield?

W. Wilson

Verse 8. “The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.” Not only “my” strength, says David, but the strength of every believer, and He is the strength of every believer, because He is “the saving strength of his anointed.” (1) The saving strength of David, His anointed, as the type. (2) The saving strength of Christ, His Anointed, the antitype; for God qualified Him for His undertaking, and carried Him through it.

Matthew Henry

Verse 9. The Concluding Note – “**Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance; feed them also, and lift them up for ever.**”

Sweet Notes From The Song of Songs (Part 9)

Chapter 3 verses 1 to 5.

The first five verses of this chapter three of the Song of Solomon might well be called, The Song of the Returning Backslider; for, such a song it is when we look at it in a spiritual light.

The young Bride of the Song had been separated from her Beloved at one point in her life, but she set about seeking him until she had found him again. And in these verses that we have before us, she allows us to set our feet in the prints of her own as she has made her way back into full communion with her Beloved again. “By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth,” she begins in verse 1, “I sought him, **but I found him not.**” And the reason she didn’t find her

Beloved at this first attempt, as it were, was on account of the fact that she was seeking him – **in the wrong way**. “By night on my bed,” she says, “I sought him whom my soul loveth ...” In other words, she **dreamed** of how desirable a thing it would be to be reconciled to her Beloved again. And many backslidden believers are just like that. They **dream** about what it would be like to know the joy of his salvation again.” Their theme song is all about the “peaceful hours” they “once enjoyed”. But that hymn, you remember, has a tremendous call to action on the part of the cold Believer who is urged, under the Lord, to “tear” his “dearest idol” from the Lord’s rightful throne.

In like manner, we see how the young Bride in the second verse seeks her Beloved, but again, “finds him not”, as she sought for him, it says, “in the broad ways”. This time, surely, she was seeking him – **in the wrong place**. Her Beloved dwelt in the King’s Palace, or abided with his “flock” according to chapter one, and was not to be found in “the broad ways” of the city. Likewise, the returning backslider will have to be prepared to abandon the “broad ways” of this world if he ever wants full communion with Christ again.

This is a true saying; and every true minister of Christ should point the true way back to Jesus for those who have become separated from Him. The “watchmen” in verse 3 do this very thing for the young Bride of the Song, and she finds her beloved again: “It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth ...” Believer! He is always in that place where we parted from Him.

ENGLAND’S CANDLE “Then the smith took a chain of Iron, and brought the same about both Dr. Ridley’s and Master Latimer’s middle ... then Dr. Ridley’s brother did bring him gunpowder in a bag, and would have tied the same about his neck. Master Ridley asked what it was ‘Gunpowder,’ his brother said. ‘Then,’ said he, ‘I will take it to be sent from God; therefore I will receive it as sent of Him. ‘And have you any,’ said he, ‘for my brother?’ meaning Master

Latimer, 'Yes, sir, I have' quoth his brother. 'Then give it unto him,' said he. So his brother went and carried off the same gunpowder to Master Latimer.

Then they brought a fagot, kindled with fire, and laid the same down at Dr. Ridley's feet. To whom Master Latimer spake in this manner: 'Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. **We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace in England, as I trust shall never be put out.**' And so the fire being given unto them, when Dr Ridley saw the fire flaming up towards him, he cried with a wonderful loud voice, 'Lord, Lord, receive my spirit;' Master crying as vehemently on the other side, 'O Father of heaven, receive my soul!' who received the flame as it were embracing of it. After that he had stroked his face with his hands, and as it were bathed them a little in the fire, he soon died (as it appeared), with very little pain or none.

Ridley lingered for some time in excruciating pain, the fire being choked, but burning fiercely beneath, while it could not reach any of the vital parts. At last the flame rose and exploded the gunpowder, and his lifeless body fell over the chain at Latimer's feet."

The following is the 'Bill of Charges' made out for burning Ridley and Latimer.

For three loads of wood fagots to Burn Ridley and Latimer.	12 shillings 0 pence
Item one load of furze fagots	3 shillings 4 pence
For the carriage of these four loads	2 shillings 0 pence
Item, a post	1 shilling 4 pence
Item, two chains	3 shillings 4 pence
Item, two staples	0 shillings 6 pence
Item, four labourers	2 shillings 8 pence
 Total bill	 25 shillings 2 pence



It appears to have cost the Government of Mary One Pound 5 Shillings and Two Pence to burn the two martyrs; such was the money value of the transaction, but the real price paid was the overthrow of the Romish religion in England.”

Demaus.

(In UK currency today = £1.27p)
(In Euros 1.89 EURO)