

The Wicket Gate Magazine

A Continuing Witness



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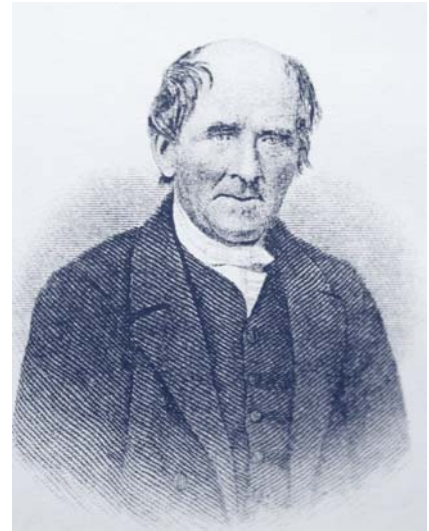


At the Web Site of the Wicket Gate magazine www.wicketgate.co.uk you will also find the following recordings:

- 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
- Friday Evening Lectures given by Mr Seaton in 1970

Billy's Pulpit

One of the most heart-warming books that could possibly adorn any Christian's bookshelf is surely the life of that old Cornish miner, "Billy Bray – The King's Son." Some books have a particular kind of ministry to the reading Christian – exhortation, comfort, instruction, and so on. The pages of Billy Bray's biography minister nothing short of downright pleasure and satisfaction in the God of our salvation whom Billy so "matter-of-factly" proved on so many occasions.



One such occasion was the provision of a "pulpit" for a new chapel that Billy had recently built in order to preach the gospel to those who stood in need of its saving power. The chapel had been substantially built and completely furnished except for one very special piece of equipment – A PULPIT.

Completely undaunted, Billy set out to find the pulpit that he believed the Lord had laid up for him somewhere in that town in which he lived, but no pulpit was apparently forthcoming. He happened into the local auction rooms, and as he strolled among the rows of discarded furniture his eyes fell on two large corner cabinets, beautifully carved and greatly resembling the pulpits in many of the Methodist chapels in Billy's day. "If I could just lay my hands on one of those cabinets," he thought to himself, "I could cut a space in the side, hang a door over the space, put a Bible board on the top, and I would have my pulpit."

Billy ran to the auctioneer. "How much do you reckon these cabinets will fetch?" he asked the man. On being told the likely price, Billy fumbled in his pocket and discovered that he had just enough cash to secure one of them for his chapel. "Mercy me," he thought himself, "the Lord has given it into my hand."

Next day was auction day and Billy hurried along to the sale. Soon it came the turn of the corner cabinets to go under the hammer. Billy was so convinced that he would have the piece that he held his money at the ready, but, his heart sank as the bidding rose higher and higher, and far and above, out of his reach. "Oh well," he thought again, "the Lord must intend me to have the other one." But, again, he was doomed to disappointment, for, the second cabinet, too, fetched far more than Billy could offer. Somewhat at a loss for an explanation as to what the Lord was performing at this particular time, Billy absent-mindedly followed the purchaser of the second corner cabinet out of the auction rooms where the "valuable" piece was loaded on to a small barrow and trundled up a hill to its new owner's home.

Billy followed!

On reaching the front door of the house, the man turned the cabinet, first this way, and then, that, in an effort to get it through the space, but to no avail. The back door was no more accommodating and the man bad-temperedly announced to his wife that he was going to "chop the thing up for firewood." "Please sir," said Billy, stepping forward from viewing the proceedings, "If it would be more profitable for you to sell the cabinet again, I'll gladly offer you what I've got in my pocket for it." "It's a bargain," said the man, "and on top of it, I'll take it on my barrow to wherever you what to have it." How Billy danced with joy as the barrow was trundled back down the hill again towards the chapel with him dancing by its side. "Mercy me, Lord," he sang, "Mercy me; you knowed that I could never have carried that old cabinet from the auction rooms to the chapel by myself and so, Ye arranged to have it delivered for me. Mercy me!"

Any wonder Billy Bray once said that if they locked him in a beer barrel, he would shout Hallelujah through the bung-hole!

W.J. Seaton (February 1970)

Luther's Table Talk

Preaching God's Word. I have often considered a thorough investigation of the Ten Commandments, but at those very opening words – “I am the Lord thy God,” – I stuck fast. That very one word, “I”, put me to a non-plus. He that has but one word of God before him, and out of that word cannot make a sermon, can never be a preacher.

Believing God's Word. If I thoroughly appreciated those first words of the Lord's Prayer – “Our Father, which art in heaven,” and really believed that God, who made heaven and earth, and all creatures, was really my Father, then, I should certainly conclude that I also am a lord of heaven and earth; that Christ is my brother, Gabriel my servant, and all the angels my attendants, given unto me by my heavenly Father to keep me in His ways lest I knock my foot against a stone.

Guarding God's Word. No greater mischief can happen to a Christian people than to have God's Word taken from them, or falsified, so that they no longer have it pure and clear. God grant we and our descendants be not witnesses to such a calamity.

Privileges. Christ lived three and thirty years and went up thrice every year to Jerusalem, making ninety-nine times He went to that place. If the pope could show that Christ had been but once at Rome, what a bragging and boasting would be made! Yet Jerusalem was destroyed to the ground!

Sin. Original sin, after regeneration, is like a wound that begins to heal; though it be a wound, yet it is in the course of healing, though it still runs and is sore.

Restitution. If thou hast been a murderer, an adulterer, a drunkard, so I have been a blasphemer of God, for, by the space of fifteen years, as

a Friar, I blasphemed God by celebrating that abominable idol, the Mass. It had been better for me to have been guilty of another wickedness, but what is done cannot be undone. Yet, “he that has stolen, let him henceforward steal no more.”

Free-will. The very name, Free-will, was odious to all the Fathers. I, for my part, admit that God gave to mankind a free will, but the question is, whether this same freedom be in our power and strength, or not. I have often been resolved to live uprightly, and to lead a true Godly life, and to set everything aside that would hinder this. But, it was far from being put into practice – even as it was with Peter, when he swore he would lay down his life for Christ. I will not lie or argue before my God, but will freely confess, I am not able to perform that good which I intended, but await the happy hour when God shall be pleased to meet me with His Grace.



Relics. In many places, the papists boast of having some of the milk of the Virgin Mary, and of the hay on which Christ lay in the cradle. A Franciscan Monk boasted that he had some of this hay in the wallet that he carried with him. A roguish fellow took out the hay and put some charcoal in its place.

When the Monk came to show the people his hay, he found only the charred wood. However, he was not at a loss: “My brethren,” he said, “I brought out the wrong wallet, and so, cannot show you the hay, but here is some of the wood that St. Lawrence was grilled upon.”

Baptism. Some one once sent to Luther’s table to know if it was permissible to use warm water in Baptism. Luther replied, “Tell the blockhead that water, warm or cold, is water.”

Deceit. There was a miser, who, when he sent his servant to the cellar for wine, made him fill his mouth with water, which he was to spit out on his return, to show that he had drunk no wine. But the servant kept a pitcher of water in the cellar, wherewith, after taking his fill of the wine, managed to deceive his master.

The Pope. The cuckoo takes the eggs out of the linnet's nest, and puts her own in their place. When the young cuckoo grow big, they eat the linnet. The pope is a cuckoo; he robs the church of her true eggs, and substitutes in their place his greedy Cardinals, who devour the mother who has nourished them. The cuckoo, too, has a great antipathy towards the nightingale. The pope, too, cannot abide that nightingale, the preaching and singing of the true doctrine.

Reasons why Christians should Speak Together of God.

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.” Mal 3:16

(1) It was the practice of the saints of old. Elijah and Elisha went on talking good discourse until the chariot of heaven came to part them, 2 Kings 2:11. The primitive Christians, into whatever company they came, were speaking of a glorious Kingdom they expected, insomuch that some thought that thy were ambitious of worldly honour; which made Justin Martyr apologise for them, that the Kingdom they looked for was not of this world, but a Kingdom of Christ in heaven.

(2) We are bid to “Redeem the time,” Eph. 5:16. The poets painted time with wings, because it flies so fast. Time lost had needed be redeemed; and is there any better way to redeem time, that to improve it in trading for heaven, and speaking of God and our souls?

(3) Jesus Christ has set us a pattern, for his words were perfumed with holiness. In all companies He set good discourse on foot. When He sat at Jacob's well He fell into an heavenly conversation with the woman of Samaria about the water of life, John 4:14. No sooner was Christ risen from the grave than he was “speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,” Acts 1:3. The more spiritual we are in our speeches, the more we resemble Christ: should not the

members be like the head? Christ will not be our Saviour unless we make him our pattern.

(4) Good discourse, would prevent sinful discourse. Much sin passes in ordinary talk, as gravel and mud pass along with the water. Good discourse would prevent evil, as labour prevents idleness.

(5) We may guess at men's hearts by their common discourse. Words are the looking glass of the mind. As you may judge a face by the glass, whether it be fair or foul, so by the words we may judge of the heart. A lascivious tongue shows a lustful heart, an earthly tongue a covetous heart, a gracious tongue a gracious heart. The Ephraimites were known by their pronunciation, saying "Sibboleth" for "Shibboleth," Judges 12:6. So by the manner of our speech we may be known who we belong to.

(6) Good discourse is beneficial. "How forcible are right words," says Job, Job 6:23. A word spoken in season may make such a powerful impression upon another's heart as may do him good all his life. One single coal is apt to die, but many coals put together keep in the heat. Christians by their heavenly talk do blow upon one another's grace into flame. A Christian by divine discourse may enlighten another when he is ignorant, warm him when he is frozen, comfort him when he is sad, confirm him when he is wavering. A good life adorns religion, a good tongue propagates it.

(7) We must be accountable to God for our speeches. Words are judged light, but they weigh heavy in God's balance. "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," Matt.12:37. If our words have been seasoned with grace, then the acquitting sentence is likely to go on our side.

(8) Good discourse will be a means to bring Christ into our company. While the two disciples were conferring about the death and sufferings of Christ, Jesus Christ Himself came among them. "While they communed together, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them," Like 24:15. When bad discourse is set on foot Satan draws near, and

makes one of the company; but when good discourse is promoted, Jesus Christ draws near.

Let all that hath been said excite good conversation: certainly there is no better way than this to increase our stock of grace. Others by spending grew poor; but the more we spend ourselves in holy discourse, the richer we grow in grace, as the widow's oil by pouring out increased.

- From, "Godly Conversation",
- By Thomas Watson

Gleanings in the Psalms

(Psalm 29)

Just as the eighth psalm is to be read by moonlight, when the stars are bright; as the nineteenth needs the rays of the rising sun to bring out its beauty, so this can be best rehearsed beneath the black wing of the tempest. The verses march to the tune of thunderbolts. God is everywhere conspicuous, and all the earth is hushed by the majesty of His presence. The Word of God in the Law and the Gospel is here also depicted in its majesty of power. True ministers are "sons of thunder", and the voice of God in Christ is full of majesty.

C.H.S.

Verses 1 & 2. "Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength ... worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Let crowns and swords acknowledge their dependence upon God. Not to your arms, O kings, give ye the glory, nor look for your strength to your hosts of warriors, for all your pomp is but a fading flower, and your might is but a shadow that declineth. When shall the day arrive when kings and princes shall count it their delight to glorify their God? "All worship be to God alone"; let this be emblazoned on every coat of arms. See the call to worship in these two verses chiming in with the loud pealing thunder, which is the

church bell of the universe ringing kings and angels, and all the sons of earth to their devotions.

C. H. Spurgeon

Verse 4. “The voice of the Lord is powerful...” And yet, Thou art not so great and wonderful in creating worlds out of nothing as Thou art when Thou dost command a rebel heart to arise from its abyss of sin, and to run in the ways of Thy commandments. To disperse a chaos of crime and ignorance by the majesty of Thy word, manifests in far greater measure Thine omnipotence than the calling forth of heavenly laws and celestial suns from the first chaos.

J. B. Massillon

Verse 4. “The voice of the Lord is powerful...” Sermon – The Power and Majesty of the Gospel. Divisions –

(1) The **breaking** power of the Gospel: verse 5: “The voice of the Lord **breaketh** the cedars...” i.e., the high and mighty.

(2) The **unsettling** power of the gospel: verse 6: “He maketh them also to **skip like a calf...**” i.e. fills them with unrest in sin. (3) The **fire** of the gospel: verse 7: “The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.” i.e., the coming of the Holy Spirit.

(4) The **arousing** power of the gospel: verse 8: “The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness...”

Hints to the Village Preacher

Verse 7. “The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.” By the power of God “the flames of fire” are “divided” and sent abroad from the clouds upon the earth, in the terrible form of lightning, that sharp and glittering sword of the Almighty, which no substance can withstand. The same power of God goeth forth by His Word, “quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,” penetrating, melting, enlightening, and inflaming the hearts of men.

George Horne

Verse 8. “The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness...” That is, the Lord by the voice of the gospel shall go forth with power to those

Gentiles who are like a wilderness, though they dwell in well-governed cities, and are well furnished with morals. He shall go forth also to those Gentiles who inhabit waste wildernesses, and are not so much as civilised. These wildernesses the voice of the Lord has shaken before, and shakes at this day, and will yet further shake that the fulness of the Gentiles may come in. Many of these wildernesses has the Lord turned into fruitful field by the voice of the gospel sounding forth among them.

Joseph Caryl

Verse 11. “The Lord will give strength unto His people; the Lord will bless his people with PEACE.” There is a threefold peace: - External, Internal, Eternal. External peace is the blessing; Internal peace is grace; Eternal peace is the glory. As in a stately palace there is a lodge that leads into the inmost godly rooms, so External peace is the entrance or introduction to the Inward lodgings of the sweet peace of conscience, and of that Eternal peace which we shall know in heaven at last through Christ our Lord.

Ephraim Udall

Luther’s great discovery – “Therefore being justified by faith, we have PEACE with God.” Romans 5:1.

<p>Sweet Notes From The Song of Songs (Part 10)</p>
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Chapter 3: 6-8

How fitting to the present situation are the words that we come to in this edition of our Sweet Notes from the Song of Songs. Solomon has sent for his young Bride and she is now being conveyed across the desert to the place where the wedding feast has been spread for them both. But the King has left nothing to chance in the safe conduct of his spouse, and so, he has set a strong bodyguard around the sedan

couch in which she is travelling. “Behold the bed (couch) which is Solomon’s; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.”

So it is with the pilgrimage of Christ’s Bride – His Church – as she travels through the wilderness of this world. Our Lord calls each one of us to be, not only **in** that Church, but to be taking our place **around** that Church as those whom He has called to defend His cause. Our verses from the Song in this edition tell us what manner of Christians we ought to be in the wilderness journeys of our Beloved’s Bride.

(i) We are to be **valiant men**; “Behold the bed which is Solomon’s; threescore **valiant men** are about it, of the valiant of Israel ...” To whom else would Solomon have committed the protection of his young Bride than to those men who had proved themselves to be worthy warriors in the King’s cause? And how the Church of Christ is crying out in these days in which we live for men, and women, and young people who will prove themselves to be Valiant for Truth. Remember how Mr Valiant for Truth in the Pilgrim’s progress earned that title? He earned it by fighting diligently for “the Truth” – the truth that had called him, as he said himself, “out of Dark Land” – the truth that had saved him. He had fought for the gospel of God’s free redeeming grace to sinners. And even though he “bore some of the marks of his valour upon him,” still withall, he fought, as he tells us, “till my sword did cleave to my hand.” This is the spirit that we need to see manifest in those who claim part and lot in the church of Christ’s redeemed. When the enemy even threatens - (when he even **observes!**) - We need men who will drive that enemy away lest he harm Christ’s purchased possession.

(ii) But, not only Valiant Men, but valiant men who were **armed** for every danger: “Behold the bed which is Solomon’s; three score valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel; **they all hold swords ...**” Valiant men they might have been, of the valiant of Israel, but valiant men **without their swords** would have been of

little comfort to Solomon, and of little consolation to his young spouse. And perhaps this is the source of our ills today; we are engaged in the Lord's battles without the Lord's weapons, and so we are fighting according to our own notions. Search the Scriptures, believer, and tell us where we might find Rome's gospel of works, or her Purgatory, or her Mary worship, or her Mass and her daily sacrifice of our blest redeemer in that Mass, or her Priesthood, or her confessionals. Oh, yes, examine her in the light of your own reasoning and no doubt, you may well find some grounds of peace with her. But, when we "all hold swords," the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God then, there is no peace, but war, and war with that chosen weapon of God's truth that we lay aside at our peril.

(iii) But further, these men could **use** their swords: "they all hold swords," it says, "**Being expert in war.**" Their swords weren't carried as ornaments! Perhaps too many Christians today use their swords as ornaments and not as weapons! Perhaps we're fighting with the scabbard! Perhaps we need to learn what old D.L. Moody had to learn, to "throw away the scabbard and use the blade." Mary Queen of Scots thought it the most dangerous place in the world to be under the tongue of good John Knox – "I fear that man more than ten thousands of soldiers," she said. But then who would fear a feather-blow compared to a rapier thrust of the lightning of God's inspired truth?

What was finally said of John Bunyan's great character? "Thou has worthily behaved thyself," said Greatheart to him. I wonder, brethren, will future generations in Scotland – who will have to take their part in the protection of Christ's Bride in this world – have the same to say about us? "Thou has worthily behaved thyself." "Behold the bed which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel; they all hold swords, being expert in war; every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night."

BOYS AND GIRLS PAGE

By
Mrs Seaton

Dear Boys and Girls,

One day, a little girl called Sally was walking down the road with a basket. Her mother had put something special in it and carefully covered it with a white cloth and asked Sally to take it to her aunt Nell's house. "Don't tip the basket," she had said, as Sally left the house. And so, here she was, carefully carrying the basket.

On the way, she met a friend, who said, "What's in your basket?" "I don't know," said Sally. "Well, why don't you look?" asked her friend. Sally thought for just a moment. Then she said, "If mummy had wanted me to know, she would not have covered it and she would have told me."

I think that was a good answer, boys and girls, don't you? Sometimes God does this to us. He hides things from our eyes and our understanding. We do not need to know what will happen. That is up to God. We must learn to trust Him. This is called, "Living by Faith".

Christians should always live "by faith". Some people, even boys and girls, always seem to be asking, "What is this for Lord? Why did you let this happen?" But, we must learn to trust the Lord, because we know that whatever the Lord does He has a definite purpose in His mind.

This is what our short story about Sally teaches us. Sally trusted her mummy, and knew that she had a reason for not saying what was in the basket. And God sometimes has a reason for not telling us certain things, but we must always trust Him.