

The Wicket Gate Magazine

A Continuing Witness



Internet Edition 73 issued July 2008

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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

COLOURFUL CORRESPONDENCES

The written acknowledgements or advice of many of the Lord's people of the past seem to have a peculiar down-to-earth quality about them that is, perhaps, missing from much of our present-day greetings and penmanship as the following few extracts show.

Writing to a friend who had intimated his intention to pass through the village of Everton, the old Vicar, John Berridge, informs him what he might expect by way of hospitality.

“I am glad to see you write of a visit to Everton, we have always plenty of horse provender at hand, but unless you send me notice beforehand of your coming, you will have a cold and scanty meal, for we roast only twice in the week. Let me have a line, and I will give you the same treatment that I always gave Mr Whitefield, an eighteen-penny barn-door fowl; this will neither burst you nor ruin me. Half you shall have at noon with a pudding, and the rest at night. Much grace and sweet peace with yourself and partner; and the blessings of a new heart be with your children. With many thanks, I remain your affectionate servant, J.B.”

Jacob Gruber was another who could express his intentions in a colourful and striking manner when offering advice. An aspiring young pulpit orator who had an unfortunate habit of prolonging his words in an effort to gain effect received the following direction regarding his preaching.

“Dear Ah! Brother Ah! – When-ah! you-ah go-ah to-ah preach-ah, take-ah care-ah you-ah don't-ah say-ah. Ah-ah yours-ah, Jacob-ah Gruber-ah.”

Few, we would imagine, have been introduced to their future life partner the way one young woman was introduced to hers by good Mathew Wilks, the worthy old preacher of the Evangelical Awakening. Believing that a young Minister friend was in need of matrimonial bliss he dispatched him to an eligible young lady with this brief covering note: -

“My dear madame, - Allow me to introduce my worthy friend, the Rev. Mr. A-.

If you're a cat,
You'll smell a rat:

Yours truly Matt Wilks.”



GLEANINGS IN THE PSALMS Psalm 34 (Concluded)

Verse 11. “Come ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.”

David in this latter part of the Psalm undertakes to teach children. Though a man of war and anointed to be king, he did not think such a task below him. Though

now he has had his head so full of cares, and his hands so full of business, yet he could find heart and time to give good counsel to young people from his own experience. **Observe** what he undertakes to teach them: “the fear of the Lord.” David was a famous musician, a statesman, and a soldier, but he does not say to his children: I will teach you to play upon the harp, or to handle the sword and spear and draw the bow, or I will teach you maxims of state policy, **but**, “I will teach you the fear of the Lord.”

Mathew Henry

Verse 11. “... the fear of the Lord.” Let this, therefore, good children, be your principal care and study – “the fear of the Lord.” What shall it avail you to be cunning in Tully, Virgil, Homer, and other profane writers, if you be unskilful in God’s Book? To have learned Greek and Latin, if you learn not with it the Language of Canaan? To have knowledge of the creature when you are ignorant of the Creator? To have learned how you might live a while here, but to have neglected to learn how you might live eternally hereafter?

“David’s Instructor” by Thomas Sataker.

Verse 13. “Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.” Guard with careful diligence that dangerous member, the tongue, lest it utter evil. Men cannot spit forth poison without some of the venom burning their own flesh. Deceit must be very earnestly avoided by the man who desires happiness. A crafty schemer lives like a spy in the enemy’s camp, in constant fear of exposure and execution. Clean and honest conversation – by keeping the conscience at ease – promotes happiness; but lying and wicked talk stuffs our pillow with thorns, and makes life a constant whirl of fear and shame.

C.H. Spurgeon.

Verse 14. “Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.” We are bid, not only to “depart from evil,” but also to “do good.” It will be a poor plea at last to offer to the Lord

“Lord, I kept myself from being spotted with gross sin: I did no hurt.” But, what **good** is there in thee? It is not enough for the servant of the vineyard that he does no harm there; he does not break the trees, or destroy the hedges: if he does not **work** in the vineyard he loses his pay. It is not enough for us to say at the last day, we have done no hurt, we have lived in no gross sin: but what **good** have we done in the vineyard? Where is the grace we have received? If we cannot show this, we shall lose our pay and miss our salvation.

J. Watson.

Verse 14. “Seek peace, and pursue it.” The most desirable things are not the easiest to obtain. What is more lovely to the imagination than the tranquillity of peace? But this great blessing does not voluntarily present itself; it must be **sought**. Even when sought it often eludes the grasp; it flies away, and must be **persued**.

Dr. Waterland.

Verse 18. “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart.” We are apt to **overlook** men in proportion as they are humbled beneath us; but God **regards** them in that proportion. Vessels of honour are made of that clay which is “broken” into the smallest parts.

George Horns.

Verse 19. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.” The lawyer can only deliver his client from strife. The physician can only deliver his patient from sickness. The master can only deliver his servant from bondage. But, the Lord delivereth us from ALL. As when Moses came to deliver the Israelites from Egypt, he would not leave a hoof behind him: so, when the Lord comes to deliver the righteous, he will not leave a trouble behind him, for “the Lord delivereth him out of them all.”

Henry Smith.

Verse 20. “He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.” The Passover Lamb prefigured Christ, because not one of its bones was broken, and so it was with Him, as He hung upon a cross. But, not only that; it also prefigured Christ’s Church – the spiritual body of Christ, because not one “bone” of that body will ever suffer loss either. This is our song of rejoicing “He carefully his bones doth keep, Whatever can befall; That not so much as one of them can broken be at all.”

Andrew Bonar.

Great Hymns



and their Writers

“From Whence This
Fear & Unbelief?”
by
Augustus Toplady.

In an earlier issue of the magazine we looked at that great hymn of Augustus Toplady’s, “Rock of Ages.” In the course of the article we referred to another of Toplady’s hymns, “From Whence this Fear and Unbelief?” and such has been the

response to that brief reference that we thought we would include the hymn with a few notes in this edition.

The hymn appears to have been written following a time of trial in Augustus Toplady’s life. Strong Calvinist and all as our author was he, nevertheless, like every true saint of God, experienced those times in his life when his knees grew feeble and his arms weak.

When Pilgrim had been shown around the House of Interpreter and had been asked what he thought of the wonders and mysteries of the Christian life that had been shown to him, his reply was that they both filled him “with hope and fear.” And the words of this great hymn reflect one such time in the life of its author, when he was filled with fear. But, and this is the glory of it all, the words also expound the source of “hope” that is eternally set forth to rescue the believer from all his times of “fear and unbelief”

“From whence this fear and unbelief,”
Since God my Father, put to grief
His spotless Son for me?
Can he, the righteous judge of men,
Condemn me for that debt of sin,
Which, Lord, was charged on Thee?”

Note how our author rides out to challenge that great two-headed dragon – “Fear and Unbelief” – that has come out and partly robbed him of his spiritual well-being. He lifts up the blood-stained cross of his Saviour before its glowing eyes so that it is forced to shrink back and retire into its lair

again. “Who is he that condemneth?” Toplady is shouting out this first verse, “it is Christ that dies.” And this is the source of victory over all our anxious thoughts and unbelieving hearts, that “God spared not his own son, but delivers him up for us all.” See how Toplady places himself within the Courts of God’s Justice.

The sentence has been written clearly above his head – “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” But a “surety” steps into that place of condemnation – even God’s own Son – and he takes the full brunt of that sentence for him. Why should he then fear or be unbelieving? The “Judge” who sits upon the seat of judgement in that Courtroom is “the Righteous Judge” and if He has accepted the payment of the “debt” by the surety on the condemned’s behalf, then the condemned will never be condemned for that “debt of sin, which, Lord, was charged on Thee.”

Not even a little? The old dragon of fear and unbelief may often suggest as a parting shot; will you not be condemned even a little? But Toplady lifts the Cross to its fullest height as he starts in upon his second verse to show, indeed, that “there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”

“**Complete** atonement Thou hast made,
And to the utmost farthing paid,
Whate’er Thy people owed;
How, then, can wrath on me take place,
If sheltered in Thy righteousness,
And sprinkled with Thy blood.”

Some would call this “**high**” doctrine, and, indeed it is – high as heaven itself – for it’s Christ’s atonement for the sins of His people that we are called to sing about here. One of the accusations that fell at the feet of the disciples after our Lord had expounded the nature of His sufferings and death to them was that “they understood none of these things.” And it is still an indictment writ large across the Church’s character today that she has still, to a great extent failed to appreciate and preach the true nature of Christ’s wondrous atonement. “Jesus who loved *the church*,” says Paul, “and gave himself for it.” “Thou shalt call his name Jesus,” says the evangelist, “for he shall save *his people* from their sins.” “The Son of Man is come to give his life a ransom *for many*,” it says in another place. The old Calvinist, Toplady, might have called this “Limited Atonement” – that Christ’s atonement was on behalf of His Church, His Bride, His People, His Sheep, His Elect, *and for none else*. And yet, here is the great and glorious paradox: that this so-

called *Limited* atonement is the only “*Complete* atonement” that there is. Jesus has *really* paid the debt of His people’s sins – “to the utmost farthing,” says our author. “Charge it to mine account,” says our blessed Saviour to His father in heaven who is seated upon His throne of judgement, “I will repay it.” And He did – *really* did!

But, believer, do you *really* believe that Christ cancelled the debt of sin when He poured out His life an offering on the Cross? Whose debt, then? The debt of all the world, indiscriminately, say some. Ah then, my evangelical friend, if you believe that you are really a universalist after all, for you believe that all men have had their sins accounted for and the debt atoned for. But, it was “whate’er *Thy people* owed,” says Toplady aright. And it was because Jesus paid every “farthing” of His people’s debt when He made atonement for them on the Cross that that “limited” atonement is, indeed, and in truth the only “*Complete* atonement” that there is.

Let the glorious weight of our next verse anchor this mighty truth in your heart, believer.

“If Thou hast my discharge procured,
And freely in my place endured
The whole of wrath divine,
Payment God will not *twice* demand,
First at my bleeding Surety’s hand,
And then *again* at mine.”

“The wages of sin is death,” thunders the Word of God; “The wicked shall be turned into hell,” it says. Now, visualise this sight, my friend: here is a sinner in hell, *and yet*, some would tell us, Christ really paid the debt for his sin! “Aha,” says the devil, “what a prize I have here; Christ suffered hell for this sinner, but now this sinner must suffer hell all over again for himself.” “Aha,” he says again, “Christ paid the price of this one’s sin to ransom him from this dark abyss, but Christ hasn’t received what He purchased with His blood.” “Aha,” he cries a third time, “the Father – the Judge of all the earth who is always suppose to do right – laid this sinner’s iniquity upon His Son and his Son “bore his grief and carried his sorrow,” but now the sinner will have to bear it all over again – I have robbed heaven of its purchase!” Ah, my friends, if your gospel of redemption leaves such room for such a possibility – that the ransomed and redeemed for whom Jesus shed His blood might indeed be lost at the last, then you have much room for “Fear and unbelief.” But banish the thought with this blest truth...

“Payment God will not *twice* demand,
First at my bleeding Surety’s hand,
And then *again* at mine.”

Now may we sing the last verse with Augustus Toplady, and sing of “The merits of our great High Priest” really believing that those merits have purchased all needed grace to reconcile the banished from God back into His favour again. And what Christ has died for can never be lost, but, must be saved, and cannot run the hazard of ever suffering what He once and for all suffered for them:

“Turn, then, my soul, unto thy rest:
The merits of thy Great High Priest
Speak peace and liberty:
Trust in His efficacious blood,
Nor fear thy banishment from God,
Since Jesus died for thee.”

This is the gospel: “Jesus who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Amen.

BOYS AND GIRLS PAGE

Dear boys and girls,

It is some time since we have had a puzzle on our page, so I thought I would give you a “Bible Search” for this edition of the Magazine. Remember the rules? The first letter of each answer forms the word that we are searching for. The **CLUE** to this word is this: -

The disciples were first called this at Antioch

1. One of the two faithful spies.
2. This door had of gold
3. By faith she perished not.

4. Half of the name of a city.
5. Jesus said, I am the good... ..
6. On this day the dry land appeared.
7. Dagon was one of these.
8. The book where your **CLUE** is found.
9. Moses' mother became his... ..
10. He found one going to Tarshish.

And now, here is a puzzle for the younger boys and girls. If you are seven or under I want you to try and put the animals in Noah's Ark. Write opposite each letter the animal, or bird, or insect that you think should be there. You will find them in the books of the Bible mentioned.

N _____ Leviticus chapter 11 verse 16
 O _____ Luke chapter 13 verse 15
 A _____ John chapter 12 verse 14
 H _____ Amos chapter 2 verse 15
 S _____ Acts chapter 8 verse 32

A _____ Proverbs chapter 30 verse 25
 R _____ Genesis chapter 8 verse 7
 K _____ Leviticus chapter 11 verse 14

Mrs Seaton

WILLIAM COWPER AND ROMANISM

“And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.” (2 Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 11)

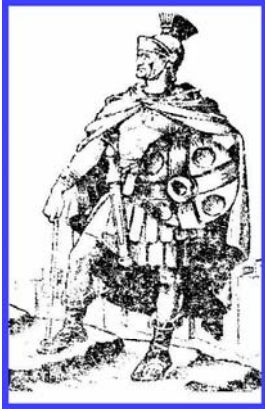
William Cowper, like all the leaders of the great Evangelical awakening, believed that this “lie” was the Roman gospel. The following lines from his poem set those who are affiliated to Rome through their denominational and therefore, ecumenical ties, in a searching light.



Hast thou admitted with a blind, fond trust
The Lie that burned thy fathers' bones to dust;
That first adjudged them heretics, then sent
Their souls to heaven, and cursed them as they went;
The Lie that Scripture strips of its disguise,
And execrates above all other Lies;
The Lie that claps a lock on Mercy's plan,
And gives the key to yon infirm old man,
Who, once ensconced in Apostolic chair,
Is deified, and sits omniscient there;
The Lie that knows no kindred, owns no friend
But him that makes its progress his chief end,
That having spilt much blood, makes that a boast,
And canonises him that sheds the most?

Away with charity that soothes a Lie,
And thrusts the truth with scorn and anger by!
Shame on the candour, and the gracious smile,
Bestowed on them that light the martyr's pile,
While insolent disdain, in frowns expressed,
Attends the tenets that endured the test!
Grant them the rights of men, and while they cease
To vex the peace of others, grant them peace;
But trusting bigots whose false zeal has made
Treachery their duty, thou art self-betrayed!

Quoted in E.J. Pool-Connor's book "Evangelism in England."



The Christian In Complete Armour

(5) The Christian's Helmet

Though we have not here the *grace* expressed yet we need not be long at a loss for it. The place is, 1st Thessalonians 5 verse 8, “And for an helmet, the *hope* of salvation:” so that, without any further scruple, we shall fasten upon the grace of *hope*, as intended by the Holy Ghost in this place.

We are instructed to take “the helmet of salvation” – and this, not for some particular occasion – but we must take it so as to never leave it aside till God shall take it off to put on a crown of glory in the room of it. “Be sober, and hope to the end,” is the apostle Peter’s counsel. 1st Peter 1 verse: 13

There are some engines of war that were of use but now and then, as ladders for the scaling of a town or fort; which done, are laid aside for a long time and not missed. But the helmet is of continual use. We shall need it as long as our war with sin and Satan lasts.

The Christian is not beneath hope so long as he is above ground, nor above hope so long as he is beneath heaven. Indeed, when once he enters the gates of that glorious city, then “farewell hope and welcome love forever.” He may say with the holy martyr, “Armour becomes earth, but robes heaven.” Hope goes into the field and waits on the Christian till the last battle be fought and the field cleared, and then faith and hope carry him in the chariot of the promise to heaven’s door, where they deliver up his soul into the hands of love and joy, which stand ready to conduct him into the presence of the bliss of God. Hope of salvation puts the Christian upon high and noble exploits. It is a grace born for great actions. Faith and hope are the two poles upon which all the Christians noble enterprises turn.

As carnal hope excites carnal men to their achievements, so is this heavenly hope influential unto the saint's undertakings. What makes the merchant sell house and land, and ship his whole estate away to the other end almost of the world, but hopes to get a greater by this bold adventure? What makes the daring soldier rush into the furious battle, upon the very mouth of death itself, but hopes to snatch honour and spoil out of its jaws? Now, if these peddling hopes can prevail with men to such fixed resolutions for the obtaining of these sorry things, how much more effectual must the Christian's hope of eternal life be to provoke him to the achievement of more noble exploits! Put on the helmet of salvation.

Gurnall.

NATURAL CORRUPTION

“Natural Corruption” is a doctrine that no believer should care to deny, especially since the Bible teaches it so clearly. And yet, like many doctrines of the Word of God, we must be careful that it lives in our hearts as well as dwells on our tongues. The story of the old highlander has as much truth as wit about it.

The young minister had just come to take up his charge on the little island in the north and he was greeted on the shore by the “elder” brother.

“Aye,” began the old-timer, as he lifted the younger man's bags from the boat, “Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. Woe is me,” he went on, “I'm just a bundle of corruption – in me there dwells no good thing.”

“Aye,” replied the young man, “I heard tell you were a bit of an old rascal.”

I'm as good as you,” shot back the insulted saint, “I'm as good as you.”