

# The Wicket Gate Magazine

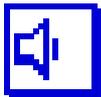
## A Continuing Witness



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At the Web Site of the Wicket Gate magazine [www.wicketgate.co.uk](http://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



# **Meditation and Young Master Think-well**

## **(The Pastor's Letter – July 1971)**

My dear friends,

When all is said and done, there are very few of our ills that cannot be traced up to our lack of drawing aside to our Lord to know His perfect will in all that we do. The Bible calls it “meditation”, and unless one is gravely mistaken, there is a great lack of meditation among the professing people of God today.

Time was when the believers seldom thought or acted on any particular matter without first of all committing it to the Lord. And, in fact, the act and practice of meditation had become such a “common” feature of the average Christian believer that most issues were faced in the light of these daily meditations. We have our substitutes today, of course, in our conferences and dialogues, seminars and discussions. But the inadequacy of these things is usually shown in the shallow conclusions so often arrived at.

Alexander Whyte\* believes that John Bunyan puts his finger firmly on the matter in the Holy War. There is one young fellow in that Book “Young Master Think-well, the Late and Only Son of Old Mister Meditation”, and, says our author, if you were to go into the museum in the City of Mansoul you would find there the pocket-book that once belonged to Old Mister Meditation; and here are the kind of things you would find written there: - “Monday, death; Tuesday, judgment, Wednesday, heaven; Thursday, hell; Friday, my past life; Saturday, the passion of my Saviour; Lord's Day, creation and salvation.” In other words, these were the subjects that occupied Old Mister Meditation's thoughts from one weekend to the next. From day to day he systematically brought before himself the whole counsel of God concerning his soul's salvation. And once he did that, then, all others things fell into their rightful places and he approached them in a right attitude of heart and mind.

\* Bunyan Characters, Volume III

Meditation has an “off-spring”, you see, and Bunyan has well named the off-spring of Old Mister Meditation, Young Master Think-well. David himself knew something of it in the 8<sup>th</sup> Psalm: “when I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained, **what is man**, that thou art mindful of him...?” It’s a good word that we have from the Lord – “Draw near to me, and I will draw near to you.”

May we learn to travail in the quiet place and bring forth a family of well-formed healthy thoughts.

Yours sincerely,  
W. J. Seaton.

.....  
● God’s Penitentiary ●  
● By ●  
● W. P. Nicholson ●  
.....

In these civilised lands of ours we have large prisons. What a shame it is to put men and women in such places of torment, robbing them of their liberties and privileges; separating men from their homes and families, and bringing pain and shame on their friends. Many a time men are in gaol because they have committed one crime, and some of them we hang. Thousands of people are kept there against their will. Isn’t it a shame to have such places, and to treat people like that.

Now you would look at me with pity if I talked like that, and wonder where I came from. You would say, “Don’t you know that these people are law-breakers? It is for their own good and the safety of the country that we put them there”.

Do you think we have more sense than God, then? Who are the people who go to hell? They are men and women who rebelled against God and refused to be saved by the blood of His Son. What else can God do with them but put them in prison? Surely a man is mad who damns his own soul by wilfully rejecting Jesus Christ as his Saviour. Men and women! Hell is God’s Penitentiary! If you continue to rebel against God, God has a gaol for you.

Let me give you some of the names used by God to describe the nature of this place: - A lake of fire – a bottomless pit – a devouring fire – a place of sorrows – where they wail – a place of weeping - a furnace – a place of torments – ever-lasting burnings – a place of filthiness – where they curse God – everlasting destruction – a place of outer darkness – where they have no rest – everlasting punishment – where they gnaw their tongues – a place prepared for the devil and his angels – where they cry for a drop of water – tormented with fire and brimstone – hell fire – hell – wrath to come.

If God had not been Love He might have made the way to hell easy and fast, but He has hedged the way there with thorns and barriers, and a man must work hard to get there. He has to stifle conscience again and again. He has to trample over the tears and prayers of God's people. He has to silence God's Word, quench the Holy Spirit, and trample underfoot the precious blood of Christ. All this before he succeeds in damning his soul forever.



## **Gleanings in the Psalms (Psalm 36)**

Verses 1 to 4 give an outline of the sinfulness of man.

Verses 5 to 9 set forth some of the Attributes of God.

Verses 10 to 12 are a prayer on behalf of the Lord's people.

**Verse 1. “The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.”** There was a voice within David's heart that told him in resounding terms what man was before God by nature, and that voice was man's behaviour. The

“transgression of the wicked” showed clearly that there was “no fear of God before his eyes.”

**Verse 2. “For he flattereth himself in his own eyes ...”** There was “no fear of God before his eyes,” in holy awe, therefore, he puts himself there in **Unholy** admiration. He who makes little of God makes much of himself. They who forget adoration fall into adulation. The eyes must see something, and if they admire not God they will flatter self.

*Charles Haddon Spurgeon*

**Verse 2. “... he flattereth himself ...”** (1) Some flatter themselves that there is no such thing as another world. (2) Some flatter themselves that death is a long way off and that they will seek salvation later on. (3) Some flatter themselves that they lead moral and good lives, and therefore think they shall not be damned. (4) Some flatter themselves with their own intentions; they intend to give themselves liberty for a while longer and then, reform.

*Jonathan Edwards*

**Verse 5. “Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens...”** When men sin so impudently, as the first four verses remind us, who does not admire the divine longsuffering!

*Sebastian Munster*

**Verse 6. “... thy judgments are a great deep ...”** God’s judgments are: -

- (1) **Often unfathomable:** we cannot discover the foundation or cause and spring of them.
- (2) **Safe sailing:** for ships never strike on rocks out on the great deeps of the oceans.
- (3) **The place of treasure:** for as much treasure lies concealed in the depth of the sea, so much treasure abides in God’s judgments.
- (4) **A highway of communion with God,** linking us with the throne of heaven itself.

*Hints to the Village Preacher.*

**Verse 8. “They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house ...”** And saith one of the fathers, “Do you ask me what heaven is?” I answer, “When I meet you there I will tell you.”

*Thomas Brooks*

**Verse 9. “... In thy light shall we see light.”** If the “Day-star” be risen in your hearts, live in the pleasant and cheerful expectation of a perfect day.

*Timothy Cruso.*

The light of nature is like a spark; the light of the gospel a lamp; the light of grace a star; but the light of glory the sun itself.

*Thomas Adams*

**Verse 9. “... In thy light.”** Make a point of seeing all things in God’s light. Many content themselves with seeing things in the light in which great and good men have placed them; but, though angels, they are not the true light: they all view things but partially. If what they say be true, yet, if we receive it merely on their representation, our faith will stand in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God. That knowledge or faith which has not God’s word for its foundation will not stand.

*Andrew Fuller*

**Verse 10. “O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee.”** When God begins to show forth mercies to His children He does not stop after a time, but continues the work. When Rachel had her first son, she called his name Joseph, which signifies “adding”, or, “increase”; for she said, “The Lord shall add to me another son.” (Genesis 30 verse 24) So, when the Lord hath bestowed one mercy on you, you may name it “Joseph”, for God will bestow another upon you, for once God begins to open the door of mercy unto you He will not close it after a time.

*William Greenhill*

**Verse 10. “O continue ... thy righteousness to the upright in heart.”** Yet, learn from this verse, that although a continuance of mercy is guaranteed in the covenant, we are, nevertheless, to make it a matter of prayer. For this good thing will the Lord be enquired of.

*C. H. Spurgeon*

# *Great Hymns*



## *and their Writers*

**“A Safe Stronghold our  
God is Still”.**  
**By  
Martin Luther.**

We are not very inclined to think of Martin Luther as a hymn-writer, and yet, the great Reformer was both able and prolific in this gift and some 37 hymns have been attributed to him

including “Away in a manger,” the little carol that will be on so many children’s lips over the coming days. That the fiery hammer of the papacy should have written such a carol must surely teach us that many of those mighty men of the Reformation were men of warm and tender hearts, and that it was, in fact, their greatness of heart that could never permit them to allow God’s unchanging truth to be maligned or its message trampled upon. Luther is every bit as much at home in instructing the young that the Lord gave to his charge as he is combating the heresies and abuses of his day, for, to him, both are essential features of the gospel of God’s free unchanging grace to sinners. Not only would he “teach all nations,” but he would “earnestly contend for the faith,” as well.

In this final hymn of our short series, we see Martin Luther clad in the armour of God’s everlasting gospel and striving valiantly against that old enemy of men’s souls – the devil.

“A Safe stronghold our God is still,  
A trusty shield and weapon;  
He’ll keep us clear from all the ill  
That hath us now o’ertaken.  
The ancient prince of hell  
Hath risen with his purpose fell\*; \*(cruel)  
Strong mail of craft and power  
He weareth in this hour;  
On earth is not his fellow.”

Perhaps no one more than Martin Luther recognised the power and greatness of the Evil one in the conflict for men’s souls. He is “the ancient prince of hell,” he says, and on the whole of this earth, among the created beings of God there is not another creature like this “prince of darkness.” Luther was in no doubt as to the “weapons” that this “angel of light” and this “roaring lion” (for he is both in one) could employ and was employing at that particular time in the history of Christ’s Church. It was “Strong mail of craft and power.” “**However,**” we can hear the great Reformer proclaim, “In all these things we are more than conquerors.” And we are “more than conquerors” on account of the impregnable fortress in which the Lord has placed our souls.”

“A safe stronghold our God is still,  
A trusty shield and weapon.”

This is the only hope of the child of God saved by grace, and it is no wonder that Luther’s hymn became “The Battle-song of the Reformation.” “The Reformers’ Marseillaise,” it has been called by one, and “God Almighty’s Grenadier March” by another. And no wonder, we say again, for here was the very warp and woof of that great religious revolution and what it stood for and what it meant. There was a God in heaven and on the earth – a Sovereign God who justified the ungodly and then held them in the hollow of His hand to the fulfilment of His perfect will and purpose. “Why don’t you build more fortresses?” the Elector Frederick was asked; “A mighty fortress is our God,” was his reply. And once let a man be assured of that, and

not only will men fail to affright him, but the very prince of hell himself will make heavy weather of it in trying to turn him away from the work that he believes this God has put into his hand. “Come,” Luther would often say to his friends, “let us defy the devil and sing a hymn.” And whether or not we would fully agree with the church of Rome’s assessment that “Luther has done us more harm with his hymns than with his sermons,” stillwithall, we can appreciate what drove them to such a remark. Once let the people of God begin to sing out of full hearts to the God of their salvation, and the powers of hell shall scatter before them, for the song of praise is a thing unknown in the regions of the lost.

**Trust in God!** That’s what Luther is proclaiming in this first verse of his hymn, and in the second, he couples this trust in God with distrust in ourselves.

“With force of arms we nothing can,  
Full soon were we down-ridden;  
But for us fights the proper Man,  
Whom God Himself hath bidden.  
Ask ye: Who is this same?  
Christ Jesus is His Name,  
The Lord Sabaoth’s Son;  
He, and no other one,  
Shall conquer in the battle.”

And in the next verse, it’s the **absolute all-sufficiency** of that overcoming power of our great Redeemer that is the burden of our author’s heart.

“And were this world all devils o’er,  
And watching to devour us,  
We lay it not to heart so sore;  
Not they can overpower us.  
And let the price of ill  
Look grim as e’er he will,  
He harms us not a whit;

For why? His doom is writ;  
A word shall quickly slay him.”

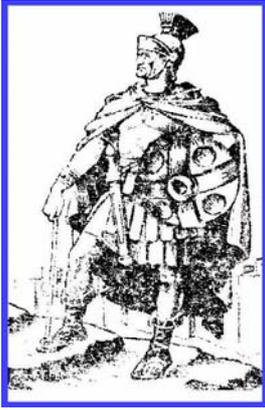
It has been said that the first line of this verse is a paraphrase of Luther’s triumphant utterance as he and his fellow-reformers entered into the town of Worms, out of which it was feared, they would never return alive. “Though there were as many devils at Worms as tiles on the roof,” said Luther, “nevertheless I will go.” – “And were this world all devils o’er.” And into that town they went, we are told, singing this song until “the old Cathedral trembled at these new notes, and the ravens were startled in their nests in the towers.” And why did they venture forth “none daring to make them afraid?” Luther tells us in the last two lines of this verse. Let the devil look upon them “as grim as e’er he will;” “**His doom is writ,**” says Luther, and the Word of God “shall quickly slay him.”

**God’s Word** – that’s the concern of the final verse; and, Luther is reminding us in the words of the apostle Paul, “The word of God is not bound,” – not even by the devil and his host.

“God’s word – for all their craft and force –  
One moment will not linger:  
But, in spite of hell, shall have its course,  
‘Tis written by His finger.  
And though they take our life,  
Goods, honour, children, wife,  
Yet is their profit small:  
These things shall vanish all;  
The city of God remaineth.”

“God’s everlasting Word will stand forever,” Luther is saying; “let me live by that and labour for that. And though men may rob me of my ‘goods’ and my ‘honour’ and my very children and wife, still withall, my **eternal** lot remains secure in my ‘Safe Stronghold’ – ‘The city of God remaineth.’”

***AMEN.***



## The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Christian Soldier

*Over the past editions of the magazine we included a series of articles on William Gurnall's "Christian in Complete Armour". With tongue in cheek we give a 20<sup>th</sup> century parody.*

**“And having done all to stand, stand therefore ...”** Which is, by interpretation, “Get one foot firmly planted in each camp, so that you will be able to ‘Keep the balance’ between right and wrong.

**“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.”** But, be careful that your “Girdle of Truth” isn’t too tight! Remember, it must be *wide* enough to embrace every ecclesiastical notion in Christendom, and *flexible* enough to allow for the addition of “new” truth, or the subtraction of “old” while still giving the appearance of a well-clad warrior.

**“And having on the breastplate of righteousness ...”** Not necessarily the type that strange old Christian, Mr. Valiant-for-truth wore. He was under the impression that his “breastplate” was made only and solely from the righteousness that he had through *faith* by Jesus Christ his Lord, and that the papish breastplate of righteousness by *works* was an abomination in the eyes of the Lord. However, in our own more enlightened day the “evangelical” warrior may adopt the new “comprehensive” lightweight model, which, although it has taken the “proofing” out of the Mr. Valiant-for-truth style, has, on the other hand, incorporated some features from the Vatican and can now be worn, either on the front, or on the back!

**“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel ...”** The “ballet shoe” variety is much to be preferred to the old-fashioned fundamentalist “tackety-boot.” Having your feet shod with the ballet shoe gospel it is then possible to spin so fast on your theological axis that you can almost face in every direction at the one time, while apparently remaining in the one fixed position!

**“Above all, taking the shield of faith ...”** And as there is no “definite article” in the Greek here, then we need not understand it as “the shield of *the* faith” that was “once for all delivered to the saints,” but simply “the shield of faith” in a general sense. Tom’s faith, Dick’s faith, Harry’s faith – it doesn’t really matter so long as you’re holding something and so long as it gives the right illusion.

**“And take the helmet of salvation.”** A *plastic* type is now available on the evangelical market and is highly recommended on account of the fact that it can be easily “moulded” into the shape of your theological allies at any given point. It is also highly camouflaged and bears no markings except where opportune, (these included in a plain brown envelope.)

**“And the sword of the spirit.”** Perhaps the “scabbard” is less dangerous and few can tell the difference.

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The text "BOYS AND GIRLS PAGE" is written in a bold, 3D, yellow-to-orange gradient font, slanted upwards from left to right.

“Who would true valour see,  
Let him come hither;  
One here will constant be,  
Come wind, come weather;  
There’s no discouragement,  
Shall make him once relent;  
His first avowed intent  
To be a pilgrim.”

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Dear Boys and Girls,

The words above from John Bunyan’s hymn, make me think often of the actions and courage, and bravery of many great missionaries who have gone off to far-off lands to preach about Jesus. One of these brave missionaries is Mary Slessor, who could certainly be called “very courageous.”

She was born into a poor home in Aberdeen, but, although poor in such things as money and clothes and food, she was rich in that she had a mother who loved the Lord Jesus and His gospel, and saw to it that Mary and her brothers and sisters heard much about Jesus. Their

mother's stories set their hearts alight as often she told them of what she had heard in Church about the black people of Africa, and especially of the African king in Calabar, who had offered land and a welcome to any missionary who would go out and help them and tell them about Jesus.

One evening, when their mother had gone off to church, the children were playing at holding a service. Mary turned the armchair round, while Robert, her big brother, climbed into it for a pulpit. Then they all started their service – praying, singing hymns, and then, Robert tried to preach like the minister. “The heathen must not worship idols of wood or stone,” called out Robert. At the end of their service, Mary said, very earnestly, “I am going to be a missionary.” “You canna,” said Robert, “girls canna be missionaries, but you shall go with me, and when I preach to the black people you shall hide in the pulpit.” However, this was a vow that Mary had made from her heart, and years later, when Jesus really was her Saviour, and she was fully trusting in Him, God called her to be a missionary.

Mary and her family moved from Aberdeen to Dundee, and there she started work as a weaver in a mill. She always carried her Bible with her, and she would lay it on her loom, and read it any spare moment she had. One day as she was reading, Jesus seemed very close, and these words from the Bible reminded her of her vow: “Go ye and make disciples of all nations.”

It was still a number of years before Mary went to Africa, but, you see, boys and girls, (and we can learn a lesson from this) Mary Slessor became, first of all a “missionary” where she was – at home – and a very courageous one, too. She tried her best whenever she could to tell other boys and girls about Jesus and His love. One day she and some friends decided to have an open-air meeting, but tough boys came along and tried to wreck the meeting. The leader carried a lead weight at the end of a piece of cord, and swung it round and round his head. Nearer and nearer, swung the lead, until it shaved Mary's brow. But she stood firmly where she was, and the boy suddenly let the lead weapon fall limp from his hand. “She's game,

boys,” he called, and then he and the rest of the gang followed her into the meeting. At that meeting, the gang leader’s life was changed and he became a true Christian.

Many many times Mary showed courage and determination like this, for, you see, boys and girls, she loved the Lord Jesus and had truly vowed to follow Him and serve Him. First of all at home, and then, later on, when she went to Africa.

In coming magazines, perhaps, I’ll tell you of some of her courageous exploits in Africa, for she did many, many brave things there, too.

Cheerio for now,  
Mrs Seaton