

The Wicket Gate Magazine

A Continuing Witness



Internet Edition 95 issued March 2012

Index

1. The Pastor's Letter – "Paul's Domestic Exhortation"
2. Gleanings in the Psalms – Psalms 53 and 54
3. The Glory of the Sun
4. Quotes for "Thinking" Christians
5. The Sinner Humbled – The Saviour Exalted
6. Boys and Girls Page - A Mother's Love



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



Podcast Service available at www.wicketgate.co.uk

The Pastor's Letter (June 1973)

Paul's "Domestic Exhortation"

Dear Friends,

In the course of our present normal ministry here in Inverness (*June 1973*) we have been dealing with Paul's epistle to the Colossians, and, in recent weeks, have been considering together those "domestic exhortations" that the apostle Paul sets before the church at Colosse in the course of the third chapter of his letter: - "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husband, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." Now, every aspect of those relationships set before us is of paramount importance to us in the conduct and the running of our homes in the sight of the Lord, and we have endeavoured to deal with these things from week to week.

In this letter, I want to share one particular aspect of one particular relationship with you, in the course of this one letter, and the relationship that we have in mind is that which is to exist between the believing parent and his child within the context of the Christian home.

Throughout the pages of the Word of God this relationship that the parent is to have towards the child or children is immediately seen to be a very precious one, and yet, at the same time, a very demanding one. The believing parent in Christ is under a Divine obligation to teach, and instruct, and nurture, and admonish, and discipline, and chastise his children in the light of the Word of God and under that God-ordained parental authority vested in him – or her, as the case might be. However, we believe that the obligation has, to a very great extent, been set aside with a great many professing evangelical Christians today, and we believe that one of the *evidences* that it has

been largely set aside is contained in this: the great shift of emphasis from the home to the church in the realms of our children's spiritual well-being. Just let John or Mary go off the rails and begin manifesting their old natural rebellion towards the things of God and immediately the church comes under fire from the irate parents who demand that the church "does something" for the young folk to keep their interests up. And, of course, nine times out of ten, the church does just that, and all kinds of "baubles, bangles, and beads" are introduced into the service of the sanctuary to cater for the carnal hearts of the unregenerated children, and calm the conscience of the unrepentant parents who have abdicated their divinely-appointed task of rearing up their children in the fear and nurture of the Lord.

It is this very aspect of the parent / child relationship that we begin to see the devil at his very busiest today, and employing a "two-edged sword" of his own devising that has managed to slice away at one stroke the Bible's God-ordained institutions, and has also hacked great pieces out of the other. For, every blow against the right place and calling of the home has proved to be a double blow that has also struck at the place and the calling of the Church itself.

What do we mean by that? We mean simply this: the Church of God is the place where the glory of God is to be sought in the spiritual worship and praise of His name. It is the place in which "the true worshippers" are to gather to worship the Father "in spirit and in truth." The one great object of the gathering of the saints together is to have that spiritual experience of having met with their God, and the only way in which this can be accomplished is through endeavouring to fulfil the *conditions* of worship laid down by the Saviour Himself; that is, worshipping spiritually and in accordance with His Holy truth.

Now then, on the very admittance of much of modern-day evangelicalism, it is impossible to fulfil those terms. Why? Because of the "extras" that are introduced into the services, very often to appeal to "the young people," or, the unconverted, in general. And here is the crux of the matter: what will "appeal" to the unconverted will, of necessity, be carnal in its essence. And so, the very purpose of

the church – the worship of God and Christ in a spiritual manner – has been hewn asunder by the devil’s two-edged sword. And remember where the other side of that weapon first hits in so many cases: it is in that other God-ordained institution – the home – that has failed in its own God-appointed task. And so, in pressing the responsibility from the home on to the church, the church is undermined as the place where the Lord is to be worshipped and changed into a spiritual children’s playground, or a teenage talent contest. Woe to that place that has made itself palatable to the unregenerate heart by providing a Sunday evening menu suitable to the carnal taste! That has changed the glory of the church of the incorruptible God into an image like unto a four-stringed beast and squirming thing!

Parent! Lay hold on that God-given and glorious task that is yours. Your children will be hard to teach and admonish, for they are by nature carnal through and through. But, when their old natures begin to carnally rise more and more to the surface, as it will, whatever you do, don’t corrupt that God-given purpose of the Church, but apply yourself more and more diligently to that God-ordained purpose of your home, and by prayer, and patience, and perseverance, rear up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, until, in the grace of the Lord, they may one day take their place to the full in that Church in telling forth the praises of their parents’ God Who has become their God and their Saviour:

“O God, we with our ears have heard,
Our fathers have us told,
What works thou in their days hadst done,
E’en in the days of old.”

May we know that exhortation of God, given so long ago through His servant Moses: “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” Our children, says David, are “an heritage of the Lord;” “Care most for that part of your child,” says Bishop

Ryle, “that shall never die. Only the Lord can turn the water into wine but it is up to us to fill the water-jars.” May we know the privilege and be given the grace and strength to do so.

Yours Sincerely,
W.J. Seaton



Gleanings In the Psalms

Psalms 53 and 54

Psalm 53

The evil nature of man is here brought before our view a second time in almost the same inspired words (for this psalm is near enough identical with the fourteenth Psalm.) But, all repetitions are not vain repetitions. We are slow to learn, and need line upon line. David after a long life found men no better than they were in his youth. Holy Writ never repeats itself needlessly, there is good cause for the second copy of this Psalm; let us read it with more profound attention than before. If our years have advanced from fourteen to fifty-three, then we shall find the doctrine of this Psalm more evident than in our youth.

C. H. Spurgeon

God in this Psalm “speaketh twice,” for this is the same almost verbatim with the fourteenth Psalm. The scope of it is to convince us of our sins, and to set us a-blushing, and to set us a-trembling because of them. God, by the Psalmist, here shows: -

1. The *fact* of sin. God is witness to it. He looks down from heaven, in verse 3, and sees all the sinfulness of men's hearts and lives. All this is open and naked before Him.
2. The *fault* of sin. It is "iniquity" in verses 1 and 4; it is that which there is "no good" in verses 1 and 3; it is "going back" from God in verse 3.
3. The *fountain* of sin. How does it come about that men are so bad? Surely, it is because there is no fear of God before their eyes; for, they say in their hearts, in verse 1, "There is no God." No God at all to call us into account; none that we need to stand in awe of.
4. The *folly* of sin. He is "a fool" (in the judgment of God, whose judgment we are sure is right) who harbours such corrupt thoughts. They may truly be said to know nothing, in verse 4, who know not God.
5. The *filthiness* of sin. Sinners are "corrupt" according to verse 1; their iniquity is abominable, it says there; it is odious to an Holy God, and renders them so, as well.
6. The *fruit* of sin. See to what degree of barbarity it brings men at last! See their cruelty to their brethren! They "eat them up as they eat bread," verse 4.
7. The *fear* that attends sin. Verse 5: "Their they were in great fear" who made God their enemy. Their own guilty consciences filled them with horror and frightened them.

Matthew Henry

Psalm 54

Verses 2 and 3. "Hear my prayer, O God ... oppressors seek after my soul." Sandy Peden was a Covenanter of great common-sense as

well as great prophetic foresight and on one occasion, being pursued by a company of dragoons, he paused on the hills with his little company and said to them, “Let us pray here, for if the Lord hear not our prayer, and save us, we are all dead men.” He then lifted up a prayer to suit the hour. “O Lord,” he said, “this is the hour and power of Thine enemies, they may not be idle, but hast Thou no other work for them than to send them after us? Send them after them, O Lord, to whom Thou wilt gi’e strength to flee, for our strength is gone. Twine them about the hill, O Lord, and cast the lap of Thy cloak over poor auld Sandy and these poor things with him; save us this time, and we will keep it in remembrance, and tell it to the commendation of Thy guidness, Thy pity and compassion, what Thou didst for us at such a time.” Soon a mist clouded the hills and their pursuers were withdrawn to go in search of James Renwick and the great company that was with him.

Verse 4. “Behold, God is mine helper ...” Enemies swarmed all about him on every side, but “greater is He that is in him” than all the hosts of this world. Few enemies or many are little to him that has the Lord on his side or rather, who knows that he is on the side of the Lord. When Joshua enquired of “the man who stood over against him with his sword drawn” just prior to the battle for Jericho, “Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?” The answer that he received was a very telling one. “Nay; but as Captain of the Host of the Lord I am come.” We should first of all enquire whether or not we are on Christ’s side, rather than whether or not He is on our side.

Verse 6. “I will freely sacrifice unto thee ...” By this he does not mean that rendering sacrifices to God was an option of those who would worship God; but now, with cheerfulness, he would praise and worship the Lord for His deliverance.

John Calvin



The Glory Of The Sun



There is a safe and secret place
Beneath the wings Divine,
Reserved for all the heirs of grace,
Oh, be that refuge mine.

The least and feeblest there may 'bide
Uninjured and unawed;
While thousands fall on every side,
He rests secure in God.

The angels watch him on his way,
And aid with friendly arm;
And Satan, roaring for his prey,
May hate, but cannot harm.

He feeds in pastures large and fair
Of love and truth Divine;
O child of God, O glory's heir,
How rich a lot is thine!

A hand almighty to defend,
An ear for every call,
An honoured life, a peaceful end,
And heaven to crown it all!

The apostle Paul reminds us in that great chapter 15 of 1st Corinthians that the objects of God's creating have each their own particular "glory" – "there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars" etc. Human nature, being what is, very often tends to neglect the glory of one particular thing, because it happens to be "outshone" by the more-accepted glory of some other.

How very true this is of the hymns that we sing in the course of our public or private worship, and the glory of one particular piece that has fallen from some of our hymn writers' pens has paled into insignificance "another glory" that has every bit as much

lustre about it, and could bless us just as much with its own particular glow and radiance. Probably one of the most outstanding examples of this is Henry Lyte's "Abide with me, fast falls the even tide." Who

would deny the glory of such a hymn as that? And yet, the pen of Henry Lyte was that of a ready writer, and there are other hymns, glorious in their own sphere, which also fell from his heart. “Praise, my soul, the King of heaven,” and so forth.

We reproduce here what we feel to be one of Lyte’s greatest hymns – “there is a safe and secret place.” For some reason or other the hymn is excluded from the majority of our hymn-books – outshone, perhaps! But, we feel that its sentiments should be better-known. It is Common Metre and particularly well-suited to the tune “Evan”.

Quotes for “Thinking” Christians

Matthew Henry - “You may as soon find a living man without breath as a living saint without prayer.”

Samuel Rutherford – “Oh, thrice fools we are, who, like new-born princes weeping in the cradle, know not that there is a kingdom before them.”

B.B. Warfield – “Men nowadays cheerfully give up the substance of Christianity, but never the name.”

William Gurnall – “Many choose their opinions, as Samson did his wife, just because they please them.”

Thomas Watson – “As God hath two dwelling places – heaven and a contrite heart; so hath the devil – hell and a proud heart.”

Walt Chantry – “In various ways Christians reveal their suspicion that only extra-ordinary men can be used for great works of God. Some place a great emphasis on academic skill ... Others advertise football players, theatre stars, and politicians, expecting that the world will run to their meetings. Unfortunately, though the crowds come they are not changed. Why should they not remain worldly after this appeal to human greatness?”

The Sinner Humbled – The Saviour Exalted

The sinner humbled. Two great truths are necessary to be pressed upon the sinner in order to humble him and to bring him to the foot of the Cross, and these are the deep corruption of human nature and the sins he has been guilty of either privately in the sight of God, or publically in the sight of the world. The depravity and deceitfulness of the heart are to be laid open, and all the dark and lurking holes where sin lies hid – the false reasonings, apologies and excuses by which he deceives himself are to be examined and tried by the light of Scripture. So that, when the abominations of his heart and the guilt of his life are proven against him, this will be the means, by the influences of the blessed Spirit, of bringing down his proud heart. And when the Spirit of God says, “Thou art the man,” the sinner will fall down and yield to the Great Conqueror in the day of His power.

The Saviour Exalted. The law is our schoolmaster to bring us *to Christ*. He is the end of the Law. The law shows us our sin, and when searching doctrines and truths that are terrifying to sinners are preached, the carnal heart will rise in enmity against them. Upon this, the devil strikes in and denies the truth; or, if the doctrine brings conviction, he tells the sinner there is no salvation for such a wretch. It is now the Minister’s business to exalt the Saviour by telling the truth about Him, and nothing but the truth. He is the brightness of His Father’s glory and the expressed image of His Person. He is that glorious Person in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and therefore able to save to the very uttermost. He is able and willing to save, and this is clear from His eternal existance, the glory of his works, and the extent of his power. By showing Christ to the sinner, the sinner knows His Name and will, therefore, trust in Him. The apostles and apostolic men preached Christ, and if we preach anything else we lose our time, for He is the Head Corner-stone.

Lachlan MacKenzie.

BOYS AND GIRLS PAGE

A Letter From Mrs Seaton

There is a story told about a poor woman who stood looking wistfully into the vineyards of a certain king. How she wished she could have a bunch of those lovely grapes for her little boy who was very sick.

She went home to her spinning wheel, and spun some wool, sold it, and earned about 10p in our money. She hurried along to the king's gardens, saw a gardener and offered him the money for a little cluster of grapes. But the gardener just ordered her away.

She went off back home, and taking a blanket off her bed, she went and sold it, and once more returned to the gardener this time offering him 25p. He spoke very roughly to her and was just about to turn her out of the gardens when the king's daughter, the princess, came into the garden. She heard the man's rough words and saw the woman's tears and asked what it was all about. When she heard what had taken place she turned to the poor woman and said, "My dear woman, you have made a great mistake; my father is not a merchant who sells things; he is a great king; people don't come to him to *buy* things from him, but to receive the things that he will give them." Without saying another word, the princess plucked a cluster of fine grapes from one of the vines and gave it to the woman. How delighted the woman was.



Now, boys and girls, I'm sure we can learn a lesson from that little story. Most of us – boys and girls, and older people, too – make great plans about what we would do if we had a lot of money. We would do this, and we would do that, and we would do the other. But,

you know, boys and girls, there are some things that we can never buy, no matter how much money we have, and, in fact, we are unable to buy the greatest thing of all, which is the salvation of our souls which makes us into true Christians. The Bible tells us that salvation is God's *gift* to us. Now, you know that you don't *buy* a gift! A gift is something that someone *gives* to you – just as the woman was *given* the grapes from the great king's vine. And Christ says that if we *ask* then salvation will be *given* to us.

Remember that story, and remember that verse from the Bible, "Ask, and it shall be given unto you."

Love,
Mrs Seaton