

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
- Podcasts on Various Subjects
- Audio Archive of Sermons from 1970 to 2002. (A Work in Progress)

"The Gifts"

A Few Practical Considerations.

Dear Friends,

It is perhaps symptomatic of these days of spiritual poverty that we find many within the ranks of the evangelical churches (and others) turning to new forms of worship and experience.

What became known as The Charismatic Movement continues to gain followers in most of the Non-Pentecostal churches, and the "gifts" of "tongues", and "healings", and other "manifestations" of the Holy Spirit now have exponents among Anglicans and Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians, and even within Roman Catholicism.

A few *practical* considerations with regards to this movement may not perhaps be out of place for, very often, what a theological and Biblical argument fails to do, a practical consideration accomplishes, if only we are honest enough to face the naked facts. "The proof of the pudding's in the eating" is an old maxim, but one that has good scriptural backing; for, if the tree is planted in the best of doctrine, it will bear the best of fruits.

(1) First of all, then: ***What manner of life does the claimant of those gifts manifest?*** In other words, What kind of life does the average Charismatic person lead? And this is not a frontal attack on the members of this movement, but more a general reflection on the manner of living of the majority of professing believers today and the lack of any uniqueness on the part of any one body. The sad things that characterise evangelicalism at this present time are absence of Holiness and devotion to Christ, failure to bow to the whole Word of God and exercise the power of God in our churches; determination not to know anything among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and a failure to take up our own cross and follow after Him. But this is a ***general***

condition, and those who claim to have been "baptized" with the Spirit, or "filled" with the Spirit in this modern sense, and have spoken with tongues and prophesied are no less a part of this general condition and declension, nor are they any more marked by spiritual living. Surely, the one demand that we might make from a man, or a woman, or a young person who claims to have "received the Holy Spirit" in this unique sense is a unique life – far and above the average run of professing souls.

(2) Now, this leads to a rather disturbing feature of this new avenue of Christian experience, and that is: ***What frame of mind does this doctrine leave the believer in?*** Although it appears quite open and obvious to those outside of the movement that there is really nothing unique in the lives of its devotees, nevertheless, there does seem to be the impression created that those who have "manifested the gifts" are further up the spiritual ladder than others. We recollect hearing of one woman member of this movement who believed that the godly Murray McCheyne was a great man; "but", she was quick to add, "just think how much greater he would have been if only he had had the baptism of the Holy Spirit". The most outstanding feature of a spirit-filled life, one would have thought, should be a spirit of humility, kept low by that most searching of all words of scripture, "Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" A far cry from our penny-in-the-slot automated spirituality and instant sanctification, and a vastly different spirit from the spirit of condescension on the part of the "Spirit-filled" towards those who have not yet "attained!"

(3) A further practical consideration of the new movement is this: ***What spiritual knowledge do these gifts convey?*** Among the "hotbeds" of this new experience are the Bible Colleges and Missionary Training Institutes of our country today, and some of these establishments have witnessed a virtual breakdown in their normal curriculum on account of so-called "winds of revival" rushing through their corridors. Now, let us be assured of this: generally speaking, students are notoriously lazy and will do almost anything but study. But, of course, with the "fulness of the Holy Spirit" as part of one's equipment, study becomes almost

obsolete. Again, however, "The proof of the pudding's in the eating", and whereas, we might expect those who possess, in all fullness, the Spirit of light and truth to shine like stars in the heavens, we find, as always, that it is the diligent slogger who holds his head high at the end of the day and who, on account of his studious labours, is able to show himself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth".

(4) On the question of "spiritual knowledge", perhaps we should mention a pertinent question as it relates to those who have received these gifts but who are still in mixed denominational attachments; How tender a conscience to wrong do these gifts impart? When I hear of "Spirit-baptized" brethren or sisters who, through their denominational ties, are in ecumenical situations that have now accepted Romanism and Modernism as aspects of "the gospel", I immediately want to know how the Blessed Holy Spirit, whose glorious office it is to lead us into all truth, can, at the same time, permit us to remain in all error! How can the one and same Spirit of God who pronounces as "accursed" that "other gospel" (of which Rome and Modernism are the custodians) also, at the same time, uniquely bless those who are bound up with it? Strange fruit, indeed, for a doctrine that has such high-sounding terminology. The one thing that we might rightly demand from anyone – and especially Ministers and preachers of the gospel who have testified to receiving this remarkable degree of growth in the knowledge of Christ is a spirit of obedience with regards to the associating their "temples of the Holy Spirit" with that which defiles. But, again, is the movement not symptomatic of an age of disobedience among the Lord's professing people? When we fail to obey explicit truth, then it is often tactful to redirect any criticism of our disobedience by laying claim to a more enlightened or advanced degree of spiritual growth. The argument then quite easily runs that a man so filled with the Spirit would never be part of a wrong association, therefore, the association that he is in cannot be that wrong. However, the true statement is this, that a man in such wrong association cannot be as filled with the Holy Spirit of Light and Truth as he would have us believe, for, "When he the Spirit of Truth is come he shall lead you into all truth", and, it goes without saying, our of all untruth.

(5) Just one last practical consideration: What kind of views of the Holy Spirit do these doctrines leave the believer with anyway? Who would deny that the church on earth today needs a great outpouring of that blessed Third Person of the Trinity? But is it really the Spirit of the Word of God that is thought of in these circles today? At the drop of a hat the "gifts" may be turned on, or turned off by the adept exponent of the craft. No notion of a Sovereign, Almighty Spirit here; One, whom Jesus said – was "like the wind" that blew where it listeth. No thought of "manipulation" there!

Yes, my friends, we need the fulness of the Holy Spirit today, but it is that same Spirit who came at Pentecost "as a rushing mighty wind", and filled the believers with the powers of glory itself so that the world was turned upside down. Until we have such "fruits" again, then we can only conclude that the "roots" are planted in a different soil after all. May we have enough of the Spirit of God to honestly face our wretchedness today and lay ourselves before the Throne of God.

Yours sincerely,

W. J. Seaton (February 1982)

When? When? When?

Perhaps one day you mean to seek God. Perhaps one day you even hope to be a really serious Christian. But when is this to be? Again I say – When?

Are you waiting till you are sick? Surely you will not tell me that this is a convenient season. When your body is wracked with pain, when your mind is distracted with all kinds of anxious thoughts, when calm reflection is almost impossible - is this a time for beginning the mighty work of acquaintance with God?

Are you waiting till you have time? And when do you expect to have more time than you do now? Every year you live seems shorter than the last: you find more to think of, or to do, and less power and opportunity to do it. And after all, you do not know whether you may live to see another year. Do not boast of tomorrow – now is the time!

Are you waiting till you are old? Surely you have not considered what you say. You will seek God or serve Christ when your body is worn out and decayed? And your hands unfit to work? You will go to Him when your mind is weak and your memory failing? You will give up the world when you cannot even keep it? Is this your plan? Beware, lest you trifle with God.

Are you waiting till your soul is perfectly fit and ready? That will never be. It will always be corrupt and sinful. You will never make it like a pure white sheet of paper that you can take to Jesus and say, "Here I am, Lord, ready to have Thy law written on my heart." Do not delay, but begin as you are.

Take the advice I give you. Resolve this day to wait no longer. Begin at once to seek God. Repent of your sins. Believe in Christ and be saved. "Behold, ***now*** is the accepted time; behold, ***now*** is the day of salvation."

(Adapted from J. C. Ryle)

Have those words of good Bishop Ryle touched on your excuses? The mind of man is full of ingenuity and brings out excuse after excuse; however, as Ryle shows, the most common excuse is "***I am waiting until***" My friend, it is the devil who teaches that you have plenty of time to repent of your sins, and that you can carry on waiting for you have plenty of time to repent sin.

When as a child I laughed and wept — ***time crept***
When as a youth I dreamed and talked — ***time walked***.
When I became a full-grown man — ***time ran***.
And later as I older grew — ***time flew***.
Soon I shall find while travelling on — ***time gone***.



Mrs Seaton's Letter To The Boys and Girls

Dear Boys and Girls,

There was once a king called Solomon, and he was king of Israel. He was very famous throughout all the land for his great wisdom. Visitors came from every land to hear him speak words of wisdom, and to listen to the beautiful songs he wrote. Many of his proverbs and songs are found in the Bible – in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon.

One day the Queen of Sheba heard that Solomon had received great wisdom from the Lord. She wanted to find out if he was as wise as people said. She travelled many miles over sandy, hot deserts by camel to meet him. In her baggage she brought rich gifts for this great king of Israel.

As the long line of camels came near to Jerusalem she saw the great Temple that Solomon had built. "What a splendid city Jerusalem is," she thought. When she eventually got to talk with Solomon, she asked him many hard questions, but Solomon answered them all. There was nothing he could not explain to her. When the queen heard all his answers she was glad she had come. She said, "I did not believe all the things I heard about you, but now I know only *half* of your greatness and wisdom has been told me. Your people must be very glad they can hear your wisdom. Blessed be the Lord your God, who loves you and has made you king of Israel."

Wasn't that wonderful, that the queen, when she met Solomon was not disappointed in him, and more especially, that she was able to see and hear from Solomon that his greatness was given to him by God.

It is very important that people in authority can be trusted.

You know boys and girls, we can learn a good lesson from this story, and that is – when we say we trust in Jesus and are followers of Jesus, that the things we do and say do not in any way make people disappointed in Jesus. We have to be good examples, just like Solomon. The Queen of Sheba was not disappointed in him and so she recognised the power and glory of God. Let us all try to be good examples for Jesus.

Love and Best Wishes,
Mrs Seaton.



Gleanings in the Psalms

Psalm 93

This brief Psalm is without title or name of author, but its subject is obvious enough, being stated in the very first line. It is the Psalm of Omnipotent Sovereignty: Jehovah, despite all opposition reigns supreme. Possibly at the time this sacred ode was written, the nation was in danger from its enemies, and the hopes of all the people of God were encouraged by remembering that the Lord was still King. What sweeter and surer consolation could they desire?

Verse 1. "The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is established that it cannot be moved." "The Lord reigneth," or Jehovah reigns. Whatever opposition may arise, his throne is unmoved; he has reigned, does reign and will reign for ever and ever. Whatever turmoil and rebellion there may be beneath the clouds, the eternal king

sits above all in supreme serenity, and everywhere he is really master, let his foes rage as they may. All things are ordered according to his eternal purposes, and his will be done. In the verse before us, it would appear that the Lord for a while seemed to vacate the throne, but suddenly he puts on his royal apparel and ascends his lofty seat, while his happy people proclaim him with new joy, shouting, "The Lord reigneth." What can give greater joy to a loyal subject than a sight of the king in his beauty? Let us repeat the proclamation, "The Lord reigneth" – whispering it in the ears of the desponding, and publishing it in the face of the foe; "The Lord reigneth."

C. H. Spurgeon

Verse 2. "Thy throne is established of old; thou art from everlasting." The perpetual nature of the Lord's kingdom is celebrated in these words. In earthly monarchies and kingdoms and nations "thrones" are not infrequently shaken by the death of a king or some principal man, or by the unfaithfulness of the people or the ministers of state, or because of the attacks or the schemes of the enemies; but none of these things can disturb the divine rule.

From Martin Geier

Verse 4. "The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, then the mighty waves of the sea." That is, "The *breaking* waves of the sea." Let us ever remember that the "noise" that we hear is that of the *breaking* wave. Our greatest dangers are only breaking waves – waves which break at *His* feet. And what a picture this is, then, of our safety; what an epitome of the history of God's government of His church! Thus the calming of the storm on the lake of Galilee was not only a parable representing the history of the kingdom of God, but also typical of the consummation of all things. A summary of the past, a prophecy of the future, a type of the end. And what applies to the church as a whole, holds equally true to the individual believer in Jesus Christ.

Alfred Edersheim

Verse 5. "Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thy house." In "Hints to the Village Preacher," in the Treasury of David,

this whole 93rd Psalm is outlined under the heading – "Revivals of Religion Described." It is an excellent description, of the "marks" of the true refreshing time from the hand of the Lord to His church stand out clearly:

1. ***God reigns:*** "The Lord reigns" etc. – verse 1.
2. ***His power is felt:*** "He hath girded himself." Etc. – verse 1.
3. ***His kingdom is established:*** "Thy throne" etc. – verse 2.
4. ***Opposition is overcome:*** "The Lord is mightier" etc. – verse 4.
5. ***Thy Word is valued:*** "Thy testimonies" etc. – verse 5.
6. ***Holiness is cultivated:*** "Holiness becometh thy house."

Between verse 1 and verse 5 we may see the process of "Cause and Effect." Mr Spurgeon says, "'Jehovah reigns', is the first word and the main doctrine of the psalm, and holiness therefore is the final result; a due esteem for the great King will lead us to adopt a behaviour becoming His royal presence." The one thing that becomes the house of God is "Holiness to the Lord." This was true of the typical" house, the Temple; it is true of the greater spiritual house, the Church; it is also true of the "personal" house, the believer; and will fill the eternal house, heaven, for ever and ever.

Quotes for "Thinking" Christians

On Compromise:

"It is an inexpressible grief to me to see the church spending its energies in a vain attempt to lower its testimony to suit the ever-changing sentiment of the world about it" (Warfield)

"It may sometimes seem difficult to take our stand frankly by the side of Christ and His apostles. It will always be found safe." (Warfield)

"Taking the line of least resistance makes rivers and men crooked."
(Anonymous)

On Free and Sovereign Grace:

"There is an impassable gulf fixed between those who hand the efficacy of Christ's work upon the 'free action of man's will,' and those who ascribe it all to God's free grace. They are of different religions."
(Warfield)

"The grace of God does not find men fit for salvation, but makes them so." (Augustine)

"Who need fear men who is in league with God?" (John Trapp)

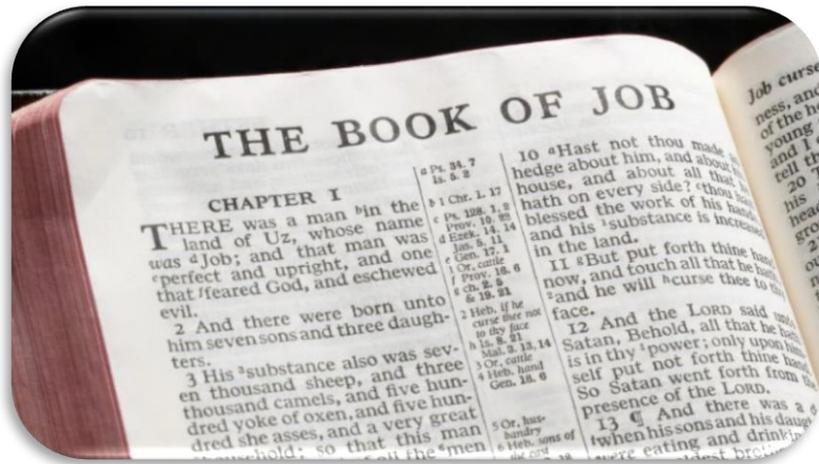
The Church's Stock-in-Trade:

"... The only true and worthy attraction that the Church has for the world is Christ's cross. We may gather people together, if we please, by fine sermons and gorgeous dresses. We may charm their ears with sweet music; but when we have done so, what have we accomplished more than might be done in the theatre or music-hall? And even if we delight their nostrils with the smell of incense, and their eyes with an abundance of flowers, what have we done more than could have been accomplished by the chemist or the florist. (Spurgeon)

Prayer:

"Let us ask ourselves whether we know anything of real prayer? Do we pray at all? Do we pray in the Name of Jesus, and as needy sinners? Do we know what it is to 'ask' and 'seek,' and 'knock' and wrestle in prayer, like men who feel it is a matter of life and death, and that they must have an answer? Or are we content with saying over some old form of words, while our thoughts are wandering, and our hearts are far away? Truly we have learned a great lesson when we have learned that 'saying prayers' is not praying." (Ryle)

Job – A Most Remarkable Book.



The Book of Job is the most remarkable Book in the whole Bible. It is perfectly distinct from all the other books – having no thread of connection with any of them, either historical or political. It is not a Hebrew book, in the

sense that there is nothing in it bearing on Hebrew history or manners; there is no reference in it to any of the patriarchs or leaders of the race; there is no allusion to any of the rites of Hebrew worship, or to any of the recognised landmarks in the national history.

And yet, from the references made to Job both in the Old Testament and in the New, and the profuse quotations made from it, more particularly in the Psalms and in the Book of Proverbs, the people seem to have been well-acquainted with his history, and to have adopted him as one of their ancient examples.

Who was the author of the Book of Job, and what is its object are questions which have been matters of dispute both amongst the Jews and in the Christian church, as well as fruitful subjects of critical investigation among the learned. By many expositors it has been held as a true history, by others as a parable, and by others again as a mixture of both. Yet all agree in esteeming it as the most wonderful production of human genius, lofty in its conception, far reaching in its grasp of the eternal truths and sublime in its teachings of faith and trust in the wisdom and goodness of God.

The atmosphere of the Book breathes of a primitive state of society such as we read of in the early chapters of Genesis, and points to an antique origin – as early as the times of Moses, and probably still earlier. The supposition that the great Hebrew Lawgiver met with it when gathering materials for his history or during his residence in Midian, and

preserved it, may possibly be the correct one. But at any rate we may assume, from the entire absence of any allusion to the striking events of early Jewish history, that it was written at a period prior to the Exodus.

The subject of the book may be thus briefly sketched. Job, who is described as the greatest of the men of the East, a man of vast wealth and large possessions, and happy in the midst of a numerous family, who feared God and eschewed evil, is delivered into the power of Satan for the trial of his faith. By a succession of apparently natural misfortunes he is stripped first of his wealth, and then of his family, and is afterwards stricken with a loathsome disease, the most terrible known in the East – so that he dreads life and longs for death, and yet, is resigned to the will of God. "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" His three friends, hearing of his misfortunes, arrive to comfort him, and manifest their sympathy and grief by sitting down with him for seven days and nights in utter silence, which is at length broken by Job bewailing his wretched condition. Thence follow discussions or arguments as to the causes which have brought him into his ruined and helpless state – they asserting that it must be as punishment for sins which he has committed, whilst he asserts his innocence and integrity. In the end the word of God is heard out of the storm, putting all arguments and debatings into a right perspective.

The Book, as has been said, is frequently quoted in the Book of Proverbs; both Ezekiel in the Old Testament and James in the New refer to Job – the one for his uprightness the other for his patience.

Author Anonymous.