

6<sup>th</sup> February 2024

## Talent

**"Of science and logic he chatters,  
As fine and as fast as he can;  
Though I am no judge of such matters,  
I'm sure he's a talented man."**

Winthrop Mackworth Praed, *The Talented Man* (1860)

I was working with a class of seven-year-olds when I was a school chaplain. They were responsive and well-behaved, and the lesson was based around the Parable of the Talents. I told them Jesus' story and wrote "Tallents" on the blackboard. I was about to go on to explore what gifts or talents the children felt they had which we could help them make use of, when a child in the front row raised her hand. Somewhat irritated I said, "Yes? What is it now?" To which she replied, "Please, Mr Gordon, you've spelled it wrong." "What?" I responded. "Talents," she said. "It's only got one 'l', and you've given it two." As I rubbed out the word and spelled it correctly, I wondered who in the class needed to do better with his talent!

The poet Winthrop Mackworth Praed knew talent when he saw it. In his case, it was someone who was knowledgeable about his subject and could hold his own in conversation. But talents come in many forms (including the ability of a seven-year-old to spell properly ...)

*You ask about your talents. Well, just look at Sarah Jane.*

*She comes on Friday nights and stays for tea.*

*She knows I can't get out because I'm still in too much pain.*

*So she's promised now that she will come to me.*

*She's always bright and cheery when she gives me all her news,*

*She makes me feel I matter while she's there.*

*She listens to my stories, and she never yawns or frowns;*

*She doesn't rush; she takes the time to care.*

*Let's talk about these talents, for we need them every day –*

*A kindness shown; the caring things we do.*

*If Sarah Jane has talents, and she uses them so well,*

*I wonder if you'll use your talents too?*

Adapted from "Heroes" from *With an Open Eye*, by Tom Gordon, [www.ionabooks.com](http://www.ionabooks.com)

### A prayer for today

*Whatever talents I have, I pray that I will use them to the best of my ability. Amen*

*An original reflection © Tom Gordon*

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