

The Wicket Gate Magazine

A Continuing Witness



Issue 100 of the Wicket Gate Magazine On-line January 2013

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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



Podcast Service available at www.wicketgate.co.uk

The Pastor's Letter (January 1967) Introducing the Wicket Gate Magazine

The Wicket Gate Magazine began life in 1967 as a magazine for members and adherents of the church to which Pastor Seaton had recently been inducted. Within a few short years the circulation expanded well beyond Inverness and the magazine found itself posted out across the world. During 1995 the magazine went on the Internet for the first time thus broadening the readership.

The Wicket Gate stopped production in 2002 when Pastor Seaton retired. However over the 35 years of the Wicket Gate Magazine's ministry, a large body of work was available. We felt the Lord would not have that material wasted and with God's help the Internet version of the magazine could continue to be of benefit to believers round the world. We gave the on-line magazine a slight change of name to "The Wicket Gate Magazine - A Continuing Witness" and it has expanded its ministry using audio files. There are 72 of the 100 issues still on-line.

Pastor Seaton's letter in this 100th on-line edition is the opening letter from the first printed magazine and introduces the church to the magazine.

Dear Brethren and Friends, (January 1967)

This is a very happy occasion for me personally as we launch out with our new Church Magazine. Perhaps you will be a bit puzzled over the cover and title. But, just let me explain the purpose of the magazine, and then, I think, you will agree that "The Wicket Gate" is an apt title for a Church Magazine in these days.

The Concern

"The Wicket Gate" was born out of a concern - a concern caused by the apparent lack of *reading* among Christians today. There is a tremendous dearth of knowledge among present-day believers when it comes to the things of our faith. Years ago, even the most average believer was well

versed in the writings of men like John Bunyan, Samuel Rutherford, Thomas Boston, John Owen, Richard Baxter, John Calvin, Martin Luther, to mention only a few.

They had a working knowledge of most of the principal doctrines of our faith, and a fair outline of the history of the Church of Christ. Nowadays - and I feel confident in saying this - most Christians don't even have a nodding acquaintance with these things. I know that many of the old works are tomes which make even the most ardent reader draw back, but some professedly evangelical Christians today haven't read even so much as the most basic and classic of the Christian books. The Pilgrim's Progress, Grace Abounding, The Remains of R.M. McCheyne, The Letters of John Newton, a Life of Spurgeon - and so "The Wicket Gate" is being produced in an effort to stimulate interest in some of the forgotten treasures of the faith. The articles will be drawn from the Scriptures, the lives of the saints, and the history of the church; small enough to read in a few minutes, and, we trust interesting enough to make you search deeper for yourself.

The Cover

The cover should be well known to most. It is one of the most famous scenes from Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, and shows the burdened sinner being pointed to "yonder wicket gate" by the evangelist. It was when the Pilgrim got through the Wicket Gate that he came to the cross and his burden fell off; and it was also through this Wicket Gate that "The House of Interpreter" lay - the man who was to teach him in the things of God. So, it is our desire that through this "Wicket Gate" there will be found salvation for sinners and establishment in the faith for believers.

And so, my brethren and friends, we lay this new venture before you. We pray you will avail yourself of it, and that it will lead you on to "Search out these things for yourself" and to "study to show yourself approved, a good workman ... rightly dividing the word of truth."

Yours sincerely,
W. J. Seaton
(January 1967)

The Story behind the Cover

"The Wicket Gate"

On the first of June, 1648, a bitter battle was fought in the town of Maidstone, in Kent, between the Parliamentary forces of the English Government and the Royalists. It took only one night for the Royalist insurrection to be stamped out, but it was a night of much bloodshed and cruelty. Among the prisoners that were taken was a Royalist Major named John Gifford. He was sentenced to be hanged, but on the night before his execution his sister engineered his escape. After some time in hiding in various places, John Gifford at last made his way to the town of Bedford.

Before he had joined the army he had studied medicine, and once he saw that things had eased off a little, he began to practise his old career. Gifford's life in Bedford soon became a public scandal. He hated and persecuted the Christians of that place, reducing himself, in the meantime, through begging, drink and gambling, to the point of suicide.

But let us leave John Gifford at this point; for here we see another man entering the town of Bedford – another “John”. This man's name is John Bunyan, the man who is destined to write the world's most famous book, next to the Bible – “The Pilgrim's Progress”. At this particular time, however, Bunyan is not much better than the dissolute John Gifford, although God does seem to be working in his heart.

Just listen to how he records this day in his “Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners” – the story of his life. “Upon a certain day”, he says, “the good providence of God did cast me to Bedford to work in my calling; and in one of the streets of that town I came where there were three or four poor women sitting at the door in the sun and talking about the things of God. But I may say I heard, but I understood not, for they were far above and out of my reach ... About this time I began to break my mind to those poor people in Bedford, and to tell them of my condition, which, when they had heard, they told *Mr. Gifford* of me.... At that time also I sat under the ministry of *Holy Mr. Gifford*, whose doctrine, by the grace of God, was much for my stability”.

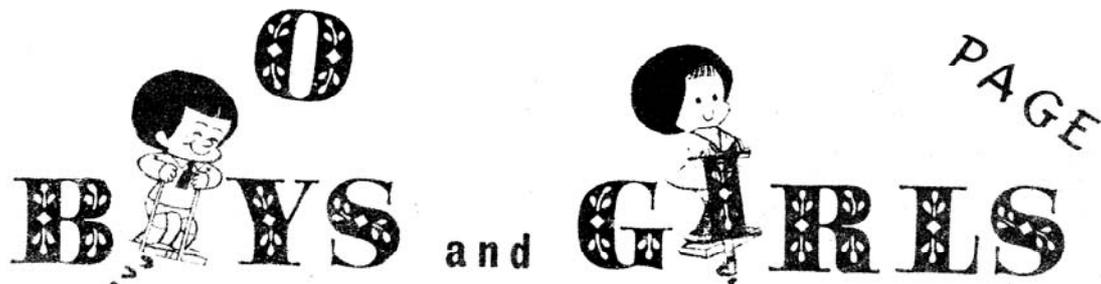
A different Mr Gifford from the dissolute Royalist Major? No, the same man, now saved by the grace of God, and a minister of the church at Bedford – the “Evangelist”, in fact, in Mr Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. Bunyan himself is the man in rags with the burden upon his back; John Gifford is the “Evangelist” who points him to “yonder wicket gate”.

“God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform:
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm”.

“He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him ...”



“Do you see yonder wicket gate?”



BOYS and GIRLS

PAGE

In the first Issue of the Wicket Gate Magazine
Mrs Seaton introduced herself to the Boys and Girls.

Hello Boys and Girls,

I am Mrs. Seaton, the Pastor's wife, and I have been given this page in the new magazine to tell you lots of stories, to teach you some choruses, and perhaps set you a quiz from time to time. I hope that from month to month the stories I tell will be interesting to you all – from the "tinies" right up to the bigger boys and girls.

Now children, what did you get at Christmas? Lots and lots of nice things, I hope. I wonder how many of those things have broken already. None! Oh, I'm sure some of you have some broken pieces lying in your toy cupboard. You see, nothing really lasts forever. Mary's new dress will wear out. John's football is a good one, but it won't last very long before there is a tear in it. Even mother's new pots and pans, and even daddy's new motor car - if he has been fortunate enough to get a smashing present like that for Christmas - will one day end up in the scrapyard.

It's lovely to receive all the wonderful gifts that we do receive at Christmas time, and it's nice to know that we have so many kind friends who love us enough to give us all these things. But, boys and girls, here is the first lesson I want to teach you as we begin this new year - that nothing lasts forever. All the toys and clothes, books and sweets are only material things, and they will soon get broken, or wear out, or be finished with. Nothing lasts forever.

And yet, there is something that does last forever; and that's why we must remember to be specially thankful to God for the most wonderful Gift of all. Now, what was that? Yet, it was Jesus of course. The bible says, "God so loved the world that He gave his only Begotten Son". There is God acting like a friend and giving us something. He is giving us Jesus to be our Saviour.

That's what Christmas means; it means that on that very first Christmas day when Jesus was born, God was giving us his *present*. Perhaps you felt very close to Jesus when the carols were being sung and when we were all thinking about the manger, and the wise men, and the shepherds keeping their flocks by night. But, we must go on feeling close to Him, and living close to Him, for, remember, He is not like the other gifts, to keep for a few days and then to forget about. But, He is the gift that lasts forever.

Have you received Jesus as a gift from God, boys and girls? If not, then you can ask God today, at the start of this New Year, to send Jesus into your heart forever.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only Begotten Son"

“The Ungodly” and “the Righteous”

There are two distinct groups of people on this earth - “the ungodly” and “the righteous”. We all by nature belong to that group called the ungodly, because in our natural outlook and behaviour we have no time for the things of God.

We may attend worship occasionally, or even regularly, but our outlook can be as ungodly as ever. There is only one way that we can truly serve God with a righteous heart and mind, and that is when we have been accepted as righteous by Him.

How can this come to pass? Only by the acceptance of God's way of salvation, by accepting Christ's merits as a robe of righteousness to cover our sins.

Read the first Psalm for yourself, and, as you read, ask yourself - “To which of these two groups do I belong?” If you are honest, you will find the answer, and realise that you can only find acceptance with God under His conditions.

Repent and believe the Gospel

[Psalm 1](#)

(1) Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

- (2) But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.
- (3) And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
- (4) The ungodly *are* not so: but *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
- (5) Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
- (6) **For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.**



Gleanings in the Psalms (Psalm 59)

Verse 1. “Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me.” Strange that the painful events in David’s life should end up enriching the repertoire of the national minstrelsy. Out of a sour, ungenerous soil sprung up the honey-bearing flowers of psalmody. Had he never been cruelly hunted by Saul, Israel, and the church of God in after ages would have missed this song. The music of the sanctuary is in no small degree indebted to the trials of the saints. Affliction is the tuner of the harps of sanctified songsters.

P. H. Spurgeon

Verses 3,4. “For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, not for my sin, O Lord. They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold.” Though our innocency will not secure us from troubles, yet it will greatly support and comfort us under our troubles. The testimony of our conscience, that we have behaved ourselves well towards them that have behaved themselves ill towards us, will be very much our rejoicing in the day

of evil. If we are conscious of our innocency, we may with humble confidence appeal to God, and beg Him to plead our injured cause which He will in due time.

Matthew Henry

Verse 4. “... awake to help me, and behold.” Literally, “Awake to *meet* me ...” In time of temptation the Lord seems to be absent from us, and not to observe our distress. To be, as it were, as Jesus was in the midst of the storm, “asleep in the hinder part of the ship.” But it is only an appearance; the Lord neither slumbers nor sleeps. He is always ready to come to our help when we call upon Him.

Prescott Miller

Verse 5. “Thou therefore, O Lord God of hosts ... awake to visit all the heathen; be not merciful to any wicked transgressors, *Selah*.” “Selah” means, “pause” and consider, and with such a subject before us we may well pause. Who would not sit still and consider, when vengeance is being meted out to all the enemies of God? How wrong is that state of mind which hates to hear of the punishment of the wicked! We shall at last say “Amen,” to the condemnation of the wicked, and feel no disposition to question the ways of God with the impenitent. Remember how John, the loving disciple puts it. “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God ... for he hath judged the great whore...”

C. H. Spurgeon

Verse 9. “Because of his strength will I wait upon thee...” Those seem to come nearest the meaning of the psalmist, who construe the words as one continuous sentence – “I will put in trust his strength with thee,” – meaning that however intemperately Saul might boast of his strength, David would rest satisfied in the assurance that there was a secret Divine providence restraining his actions. We must learn to view all men as subordinated in this manner, and to conceive of their strength and their enterprises as depending upon the sovereign will of God. In my opinion, the following version is the best – “His strength is with thee, I will wait.”

John Calvin

Verse 11. “Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power...” David wishes that they should stand as an everlasting memorial to

the judgments of God, but most Christian expositors see the fulfilment in the Jews for the church. They have been “scattered” into all lands, and must go and stand before the eyes of all Christians as a living witness that they have crucified the true Messiah and Saviour of the world. So that if you see a Jew, think of this word.

From Hengstenberg

Verse 16. “But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou has been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.”

Sermon title – “The Heavenly Chorister.”

1. His song is sweet in contrast with the revilings of others – “***But*** I will sing...”
2. It deals with subjects which terrify others – “But I will sing of ***thy power...***”
3. It grows louder on tender themes – “But I will sing of thy power, ***yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy...***”
4. It has its choice seasons – “***But the morning***”
5. It is tuned by experience – “for ***Thou hast.***”
6. It is all to God’s glory – “***Thy power ... thy mercy ... thou hast ...***”

Hints to the Village Preacher

The Adventures of the Wicket Gate

In the First Year of its Life (1967)

No doubt, most of you will remember those compositions that we were made to write in school, called “The Adventures of a Penny” or something similar. Remember how we were to imagine the copper coin standing upright on the desk before us telling us how it had come into being, and of its many travels throughout the world?

Now, as most of you know, “The Wicket Gate” has just completed its first year as our Church Magazine, and I wonder, if Pilgrim and Evangelist -our two friends on the front page of our magazine - could step out of the cover and begin to write “The Adventures of the Wicket Gate” what would they have written on behalf of our magazine!

“I was born about three years ago” The Wicket Gate would, no doubt begin its story through Pilgrim and Evangelist, but, although I had a name at that time, I still didn't have an address. However, in July 1966, I moved to Inverness, and I knew that I was to be called - The Wicket Gate.

At that time I was still very young and didn't look anything like I look now; but about October 1966, I began to take on something of my present appearance, and I was shown to the Deacons' Court of the Church. The deacons all agreed that I was quite a healthy looking fellow and thought that I would develop as the months went on, and that the congregation should meet me and get to know me. They decided that the best time to meet would be at the New Year (when everybody - especially in Scotland - is in an amiable mood!) And so, on Sunday, 1st January 1967, the Church and I came together.

Lots of the Church members have remarked to me how helpful I have been to them over the past year, and I have received letters from many parts of the world saying how they looked forward to reading my pages. This pleases me, because, you see, what I really am is a servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I want to be as faithful a servant to Him as possible.

Of course, the people always see me at my best when I am all neatly pressed and stapled together; but, before this happens, I am kept “on the go” for days on end. You see, I don't like to be late in meeting the congregation on the first Sunday of every month, and sometimes, it's a bit of a rush to meet the deadline.

The past year has been a busy time for me, for, although my home is here in Inverness, I have had to travel to a great many places each month. I travel all over Scotland and England, and even across the sea to Ireland. I have an International Passport because I go to Switzerland, Denmark, America, Australia, Canada, Brazil and India. I find myself in many different places; in ministers' manses, in missionaries' homes, in Bible Colleges, and, of course, in homes where Christ is not yet the head and where the Name of Jesus is not yet precious. It's my prayer that Christ might become precious to these homes through reading the message that I take there.

I also find myself in some strange places for a person like me to be found. There is a man who lives down in England, and this man loves the Lord Jesus Christ very much and longs to see others brought to the knowledge of

salvation through Christ. Every week, this man delivers groceries to a Roman Catholic Convent in the town where he lives, and, after he has read me through he folds me up very neatly and he tucks me in among the groceries that go to this Convent. I trust that the nuns in that place read what I have to say every month, and again, it's my prayer that one day God will use me to show these women that Christ has died so that we might be saved by Grace and not by works.

As I am sent on my journeys each month, I am wrapped up in a brown paper "overcoat" but, from what I have heard recently, I am to have a new "overcoat" for the next year, and this one will have a verse of the Bible written on it, so that the postmen who convey me on my travels will be able to see that I have a message from our Lord for the salvation of souls. I will be a wee bit older, of course, next year, and some of my features will have changed a little; but, for all that, I pray that we all -you and I -might serve our Lord and Saviour faithfully in all that we try to say and do.

Your sincere friend,
THE WICKET GATE

PS. 1995 arrived and my work continued both in print and on a new medium called the World Wide Web (www for short) and with this new medium I was able to enter many more homes across the world. Not only that, but sound was added to the magazine and many more children and young people were able to hear the "Stories from the Bible" series that Mr Seaton gave in the Church worship each week. Lots of teachers and Sunday School teachers also enjoyed them and even today (17 years later) many still enjoy the stories.

During 2002 when Pastor Seaton retired, I also gave up going out "wrapped up in my paper overcoat" and so I was no longer in print - but the World Wide Web continued and since then four or five of my articles were reproduced and "uploaded" every two months. I was given more audio files -sermons, lectures and podcasts - in the last few days I was able to enter

Welcome to the "Wicket Gate" Magazine
A Continuing Witness.

On line with the kind permission of W.J. Seaton, the Elders, Deacons
and members of the Reformed Baptist Church, Inverness, Scotland



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The Wicket Gate Magazine "A Continuing Witness".
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Magazine web address - www.wicketgate.co.uk



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many places where I could not have gone in past years and visited 118 countries. Often my articles are reproduced in other magazines and some articles were put together into booklet form while others appeared in e-book format which can be “downloaded” from my Internet address at no charge.

Remember to pray for my ministry. Remember, in God's providence, Caxton invented the printing press just in time for the spread of the Reformation truths; and Luther once said: “The devil hates quills”. No matter how feeble the effort, if God's truth is being written and distributed, the devil will be busy; so, remember to pray for my work.