

# The Wicket Gate Magazine

## A Continuing Witness



Internet Edition 150 issued July 2021

### Index

1. A Blessed and Joyful Sound - The Pastor's Letter (March 1977)
2. Gleanings in the Psalms – Psalm 89 continued.
3. Mrs Seaton's Letter to the Boys and Girls.
4. Christ a Substitute – by Andrew Bonar
5. Ye Must Be Born Again
6. Just What Did Calvin Teach? By J.P. Wiles



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

# ***A Blessed and Joyful Sound***

## ***The Pastor's Letter***

Dear Friends,

Very often we come across a verse in our Gleanings in the Psalms that we would like to comment on further, but don't feel inclined to take up an undue proportion of the space allocated to that series. One such verse is the first verse of the section that we come to this month in the 89<sup>th</sup> Psalm (verse 15.) and it reads:- "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." It contains a precious truth that surely merits a few lines of our letter at this time.

Part of the dress of the High Priest of Israel consisted of a set of "bells" worn around the hem of the skirts of his priestly garments. When the High Priest went into the Holiest of Holies in the Tabernacle of Temple to offer the blood of the sacrifices on the behalf of the people's sins, they were assured of his presence there, and his activities in that service by the sound of the bells from within. It was, therefore, "a joyful sound" that they heard, and they were a people greatly "blessed" on account of having such an approach to the Lord Jehovah.

In His great "High Priestly Prayer" in the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of John's gospel, we find our Lord Jesus Christ almost *pausing* in the midst of that prayer – indeed, right at the half-way mark according to our English Bibles, in verse 13 – and saying to His Father in heaven, "and now come I to thee; and these thing I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." In other words, our Lord is now "speaking out" the words of this intercessory prayer to His Father on the behalf of His people. On this occasion in prayer He has not gone away into a "mountain," or into a "desert place alone" to pray, but He prays, as it were, in a "public" fashion, so that the ears of His disciples, and all succeeding ages of disciples might hear something of the "joyful sound"

that their Great High Priest will be engaged in as He will appear in heaven for them. “And now come I to thee; and these things I spake in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.” At this point in His prayer, our Saviour is telling us that we may put our ear to “that within the veil,” and hear something of the ministry that He is conducting on our behalf and something of the words that He is speaking concerning us. And what words they are:-

**Verse 6.** “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.”

**Verse 9.** “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”

**Verse 11.** “And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*.”

**Verse 15.** “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.”

**Verse 17.** “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

**Verse 20.** “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;”

**Verse 24.** “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory....”

**Verse 26.** “And I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

A “joyful sound,” indeed. To know and realise and remember that it is this kind of ministry that our Saviour carries out for us in the glories of heaven itself is to give heart and feeling to our song:-

“Before the throne of God above  
I have a strong, a perfect plea;  
A Great High Priest whose name is Love,  
Who ever lives and pleads for me”

As the metrical version of the Psalm has it:-

“O greatly bless’d the people are  
The joyful sound that know;  
In brightness of thy face, O Lord,  
They ever on shall go.”

Indeed we may “go on.” We know already that both our Great High Priest and the sacrifice of Himself that He made for our sins, have been accepted by Jehovah on high, and, therefore, all the works and words of His intercession for us are yea and amen. We only await the emergence of Him from “the excellent glory,” and then, shall be realised the great purpose of all His priestly work on our behalf:- “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; *that they may behold my glory ...*”

That is the “end” of all that perfect work of Christ. But in the meantime, He has not left us without a “token-sound” of the joyful sound that fills the presence of God where He now is: - “And these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.”

May we often incline our ears in the direction of heaven – press them up to the very “curtains” of the Holy Place itself – and “go on” to know Him more and serve Him better.

Yours sincerely,

W. J. Seaton. (March 1977)



## ***Gleanings in the Psalms***

### ***Psalm 89 (Continued)***

**Verse 15.** “**Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.**” There is the dreadful and there is the joyful sound. The dreadful was at Mount Sinai. The joyful sound is from Mount Sion. When the people heard the former, they were far from beholding the glory of God’s face. Moses only was permitted to see His “back parts;” the people were kept at a distance, and the light of God’s glory that they saw was so terrible to them, that they could not abide it. But they that know the “joyful sound,” they shall be admitted near, nearer than Moses, so as to see the glory of God’s face or brightness of His countenance; and that, not only transiently, as Moses saw God’s back parts but continually. The light of God’s glory shall not be terrible to them, but easy and sweet so that they may dwell in it and walk in it. And it shall be to them instead of the light of the sun; for the sun shall no more be their light by day nor the moon by night, but God shall be their everlasting light.

*Jonathan Edwards*

**Verse 15** “... **they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.**” They are totally mistaken who suppose that “the light of God’s countenance,” and the privileges of the gospel, and the comforts of the Spirit, conduce to make us indolent and inactive in the way of duty. The text cuts up this surmise by the roots. For, it does not say, they shall *sit down* in the light of thy countenance; or they shall *lie down* in the light of thy countenance; *but* “they *shall walk* in the light of thy countenance.” What is walking? It is a progressive motion from one point of space to another. And what is that holy walking which God’s Spirit enables all His people to observe? It is a continued, progressive motion from sin to holiness; from all that is evil, to every

good word and work. And the self-same “light of God’s countenance” in which you, O believer, are enabled to walk, and which at first gave you spiritual feet where with to walk, will keep you in a walking and in a working state, to the end of your warfare.

*Augustus Toplady*

**Verse 19.** “... I have laid help upon one that is mighty: I have exalted one chosen out of the people.” The Lord had made David a mighty man of valour, and now he covenants to make him the helper and defender of the Jewish state. In a far fuller sense the Lord Jesus is essentially and Immeasurably mighty, and on him the salvation of his people rests by divine appointment, while his success is secured by divine strength engaged to be with him. *Let us lay our faith where God has laid our help.* “I have exalted one chosen out of the people.” David was God’s elect, elect out of the people, as one of themselves, and elect to the highest position in the state. In his extraction, election, and exaltation he was an eminent type of the Lord Jesus, who is the man of whom people, the chosen of God, and the king of the church. *Whom God exalts let us exalt.* Woe unto those who despise him; they are guilty of contempt of court before the Lord of Hosts, as well as of rejecting the Son of God.

*Charles Haddon Spurgeon*

**Verse 26.** “He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father ...” When did David call God his Father? It is striking that we do not find anywhere in the Old Testament that the patriarchs or prophets called God their Father. You do not find them addressing him as Father; they did not know Him as such. This verse is unintelligible in reference to David; but in regard to the True David it is exactly what He did say, - “My Father, and your Father; my God, and your God.” Never until Christ uttered these words, never until He appeared on earth in humanity as the Son of God, did any man or any child of humanity address God in this endearing character. It was after Christ said, “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father,” that believers were enabled to look up to God and say, “Abba, Father.” Here you see distinctly that this applies to Christ. He was the first to say this; David did not say it. If there were no other

proof in the whole psalm, that one clause would be a demonstration to me that no other man than the Lord Jesus Christ can here be spoken of.

*Capel Molyneux*

(To be continued.)

## **BOYS AND GIRLS PAGE**

### ***Mrs Seaton's Letter To the Boys and Girls.***

A little girl called Karen was having a wander down by the seashore. As she paddled in the pools among the rocks, she suddenly stopped and gasped, "Oh, what lovely stones!" How excited she was as she dipped her hand into the water and grasped a handful of the pebbles, and without even waiting to put her sandals back on again, she ran off to her house.

"Mummy, Mummy!" Karen called, "come and see my lovely stones." Her mummy, who was in the kitchen at the time, came out into the hall; "Well, Karen," she said, "what's this you have today?" (You see, Karen was always bringing her exciting "finds" into the house), So Karen opened her hand. But what a shock she got, boys and girls, for all that she saw there was a handful of dull, dry stones, just like those on the gravel path outside the house.

What a disappointment for Karen. However, her mother took her by the hand down to the seashore again, and as they looked into one of the pools, there, glinting up at them were dozens of lovely, bright, coloured pebbles – reds and blues, greens and mixtures of colours, too. Karen dived her hand into the pool and closed it round a lovely red one. When she had drawn her hand out of the water, her mother said, "Now, show me your red pebble." But when Karen opened her hand, her stone was no longer the bright glinting thing she had grasped, but it was dull and dry. "Put it back into the water," said her mummy; and as she did so, the stone began to sparkle and shine again.

“Now then,” said Karen’s mummy, “sit down and I’ll teach you a little lesson you can learn from the pebbles.” And as they both sat by the seashore, Karen’s mummy said to her, “You know, Karen, without God we are like those pebbles when you took them out of the water; our lives are dull, and they are not worth living. But the Bible says that we are to “abide” in Him; that means that we are to live God’s way from day to day. And when we do that, then, we are like those pebbles while they are in the water; our lives are different as we love the Lord and know that He loves us.” Is this not true, boys and girls?

Love,  
Mrs Seaton.

## *Christ a Substitute*

It is not by Incarnation, but by blood-shedding, that we are saved. The Christ of God is no mere expounder of wisdom; no mere deliverer or gracious benefactor; and they who think that they have told the whole gospel when they have spoken of Jesus revealing the love of God, do greatly err.

If Christ be not the substitute, He is nothing to the sinner. If He did not die as the sin-bearer, He has died in vain. Let us not be deceived on this point, nor misled by those who when they announce Christ as the deliverer, think they have preached the gospel. If I throw a rope to a drowning man, and risk my life to save another, I am a deliverer. But is Christ no more than that? If I cast myself into the sea and risk my life to save another, I am a deliverer. But is Christ not more? Did He but risk His life? The very essence of Christ’s deliverance is the substitution of Himself for us; His life for ours. He did not come to risk His life: He came to die; He did not redeem us by a little loss, a little sacrifice, a little labour, a little suffering: “He redeemed us to God by His blood” – “the precious blood of Christ.” He gave all He had, even His life for us. This is the kind of deliverance that awakens, “To Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

*Andrew Bonar*





*“Ye  
Must  
Be  
Born  
Again”*

The importance of the preaching of the doctrine of regeneration in the mind of the great evangelist George Whitefield is most readily summed up in the famous answer which he gave when asked why he preached so much on the subject of men and women being “born again” by the Spirit of God. “Mr Whitefield,” the question ran, as it came from the lips of a woman who had been in his congregation many years, “Why do you preach so much on, ‘Ye must be born again?’ “Because madame,” was his reply, “Ye *must* be born again!”

The necessity of the “re-birth”, or, of “regeneration”, is a subject that must form the very fibre of the gospel that the Church of Christ is to preach in every age in which she finds herself. But even a casual examination of the bulk of preaching within the “evangelical” church today shows that this is far from the case. Although the words of the text are used – and have been used almost continuously throughout this present century – it is sadly apparent that the heart of the matter has been inadvertently lost, or, perhaps even, deliberately set aside in order to produce a form of salvation that is more acceptable to the natural man and, therefore, able to give the appearance of the Holy Spirit’s operations among us when such operations are really not in existence.

When our Lord Jesus Christ used those famous words with that Religious leader Nicodemus, He was pointing out to him what must

happen within him – not something that he must *cause* to happen. He was not speaking about Nicodemus “believing” on Him, but He was showing him the very source of that believing that would launch him into the course of eternal life as a follower of our Lord Jesus. The apostle John, earlier on in his gospel, sets forth the whole scheme of things in an unmistakable manner. “But as many as received him,” he says, “to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” This is another of the modern-day oft-quoted texts, but unfortunately it is very often quoted out of context and so, becomes a pretext. While it is absolutely true that Christ gives the “right” to become “the sons of God” to all them that “receive” Him and “believe on his name,” it is also *far from the truth* to imagine that this is something that they perform by themselves without the work of God’s Holy Spirit first of all being accomplished in their hearts and minds. The next verse makes that crystal clear: “But to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name;” and then, comes the explanation as to how and why they “received” and “believed”: “Who were born,” says John. (Every man, and woman, and young person, and child, who truly exercises faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for their soul’s salvation, in fact, manifests life – spiritual life. But there is no life – either physical, or spiritual – unless there is, first of all, a “birth”. This is absolutely basic. And, says John, these people who received and believed did so because they were “born”.) He tells us how they were born, they were “born of God”.

In order for us to fully grasp the content of that magnificent statement, he also throws it into contrast with the methods by which they were *not* born. “Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, *but of God.*” They were “born of God.” Not of “blood” he says. And this was the very thing that our Lord Himself was driving at with that man Nicodemus. No people boasted more in their “blood” than the children of Israel; “We be Abraham’s seed,” was their constant cry. But salvation is not “of blood.” And grace doesn’t run in the blood. Believers’ children don’t inherit any of the parents’ graces, but their nature – their old, fallen, corrupt, rebellious nature – so that they must be “born again” – “born of God.”

Most “evangelicals” would heartily concur with that. But what of the next negative means of salvation that John sets before us? “Who were born, not of blood, *nor of the will of the flesh* ...” You see, this doesn’t mean salvation by *works* – the works of the flesh; that’s not what it says; it says, “the *will* of the flesh.” That is, anything that the will of man in his flesh can do apart from the operations of the Spirit of God upon him. If a person claims to have “believed” in order to be “born again,” then, they have placed their life before their birth. Those who did believe, says John, were those who were “born of God.” Not of themselves – not of some “act of free will,” for the will belongs to the “flesh” of fallen man (“Ye *will not* come unto me that ye might have life.”) And knowing this to be the case, then, our Lord “regenerates” those wayward souls so that they can believe and receive Him unto “life” eternal. If a man persists in saying that he believed in order to be born again, and not that he was born again in order that he might believe, then he has exercised that belief in the flesh, and “that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” The awful indictment that rests upon such theology is vividly portrayed in that lamentation of our Lord’s over the nation of Israel; “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib, but Israel doeth not know ...” What an indictment on the people of God today if they fail to know and acknowledge from whence, they have their spiritual beings – Who was their Father, and by whom they are born in spiritual things. “Who were born, not of ... the will of the flesh ...”

“Nor of the will of man,” is the third false source of spiritual life. Not by my own works and efforts; not by the works of any other mortal upon the face of this earth. Not the persuasion of the preacher, or the methods employed. Oh, these things can do a work! Is that not the tragedy of our day? There is such a thing as a psychological conversion; practically every politician and able salesman can accomplish such a “change” in a person’s outlook, or, indeed, way of life. But this is not the work of regeneration. Oh, God uses men; of course, He does – “It pleased God through the foolishness of preaching ...” But it’s especially, “through the foolishness of *the thing preached* ...” that is, the gospel – the gospel of grace – the gospel which says to man, “Ye must be born again,” – which lays him in the

dust of earth just as surely as Adam lay there until God breathed into him the breath of life and he became a living soul. He didn't get up and walk about and then became a living soul. And says John, those who "received" Christ and "believed on his name" did so, because they were "born of God." "Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Modern-day evangelicalism has confused things that differ. There is a vast difference between "conversion" and "regeneration". In conversion we actually "see" the converted, as it were, showing forth the change in their life – turning from idols to serve the living and true God. But this they do because they have, first of all, been "born of God." Just as surely as the child who takes his first struggling kicks into this massive world has been "born" into the world. The child didn't become its own father! No more than any spiritual child of God has become his own father. The "conversion" – the "receiving" – the "believing" – these are the evidences of the life, but the *source* of the life is from "above", not "within". "Ye are born from above" – "Who were born ... of God."

Then, they take up their position as "the sons of God." Says John, "As many as received him, to them gave he power (or right) to become the sons of God ... ." They weren't the sons of God before; by nature we were all "the children of wrath, even as others," and we were "of our father the devil," says our Lord. We were "born" of the devil, and the works of our father, as it says in another place, we willingly performed. But when we "believed" on Christ we certainly were not doing "the works of our father" the devil; we were doing the "work of God." For, says our Saviour, "This is the work of God, that ye *believe* on him whom He has sent." And those who believe on Christ are then doing the work of God", because they have been "born of God", just as they did the "work" of their father the devil, being born, by nature, of their father the devil.

When they do this work of God – when they "believe on him whom he has sent" – then they are "formally" and "legally" *adopted* into the family of God – they receive "the right to be called the sons of God."

Again, we are not to confuse things that differ. Just as conversion and regeneration are two different things, so *adoption* and regeneration are two different things. In adoption God gives us the *standing* of the children of God; makes us joint-heirs with Christ. Who is “the firstborn among many brethren.” But in regeneration, God gives us the *nature* of the children of God. He can never, ever, have us in His family – joint-heirs with His only Begotten Who was “full of grace and truth” – as we stand in our old nature full of wrath and enmity against our God in heaven. So – and, Oh, my friends, this is the glory of the grace of our God in the gospel – He changes our nature! He “regenerates” us! He causes us to be “born again” of His Holy Spirit! He gives us “life” in place of our “death” – “you hath he quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins.” And when he imparts this life, then we exercise that life by “receiving” His only begotten Son to our soul’s salvation. And then, we receive the “adoption papers”, as it were – signed, sealed, and delivered to us, so that none can take away this “right” to be a son of God. “But to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. *Who were born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Mr Whitefield! Why do you preach so much on, ‘Ye must be born again’?” “Because madame, Ye *must* be born again.” Amen!

“The only gospel we can own,  
Sets Jesus Christ upon His throne;  
Proclaims salvation full and free,  
Obtained on Calvary’s rugged tree.”

## ***Just What Did Calvin Teach?***

*A summary of Calvin’s Institutes of the  
Christian Religion.*

*By  
J. P. Wiles.*

Calvin's "Great Book" contains a spiritual and impartial survey of the whole revelation which God has given to mankind in the Holy Scriptures. It is a temple of truth, a temple built, indeed, by uninspired hands, but built by a workman who was abundantly and wonderfully helped by the Holy Spirit of God. It is divided into four parts.

**Book I** – treats of the knowledge of God as the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things. It affirms that every man by nature has some knowledge of God, but that man's depravity is so great that he ignorantly and wickedly stifles this knowledge, although it is enforced by the testimony of God's works in creation. Hence God, when He designs to make Himself known to men in a way of grace, gives them His written Word. This leads to a discussion of the authority and excellence of Holy Scripture, and of the revelation which God has therein given of Himself as God the Father, God the son, and God the Holy Ghost; not three Gods but one God. And at this point, lest any man should charge his own ignorance to the account of the Creator, Calvin treats of man's original as created in the image of God, of the original freedom of man's will, and the primitive perfection of human nature. Finally, to show that the Creator preserves and governs all He has created, he deals at great length with the subject of Divine providence.

**Book II** – treats of the knowledge of God the Redeemer, God in Christ. Man is fallen, involved in all the guilt and defilement of original sin, and has no power in himself to escape from sin or from the curse that is due to it. In fact, until man is reconciled to God and renewed in heart, nothing can proceed from him but what deserves condemnation. Hence man, being entirely lost, and incapable of helping himself or pleasing God by one good thought, must seek redemption outside of himself in Christ. Here Calvin shows that even under the Law in olden times Christ was known to the Jews as the Author of Salvation but was more fully revealed under the gospel. This leads to a discussion of the points of resemblance and difference between the Old and New Testaments. Next comes the necessity of the Incarnation: to save man the Son of God must become man. He did so: and the Divine and human natures are united in one person in Christ. He is our Prophet, Priest, and King.

He accomplished the work of redemption, died, rose again, and ascended into heaven.

**Book III** - speaks of the Holy Spirit and his work. He unites us, through faith, to Christ, from whom we receive regeneration, repentance, and free justification. A faith which is unaccompanied with repentance is useless: in a true believer's heart Christ produces continuous repentance. Prayer is the hand by which we receive the blessings treasured up in Christ. But not all men are thus united: hence Calvin goes on to speak of God's eternal election, by which God, seeing nothing good in us but what He designed to bestow, gave us to Christ, and in due season united us to Him through the effectual call of the gospel. The full effects of regeneration will appear in the resurrection.

**Book IV** – speaks of the Church, and of the means which the Holy Spirit employs to call and preserve it; the preaching of the Word, baptism, and the Lord's Supper, by which things, as by a sceptre, Christ rules His spiritual Kingdom. And inasmuch as civil governments, though distinct from the spiritual kingdom of Christ, are in some sense homes and shelters for the Church in this world, our author tells us that such governments are a blessing from God which the Church should thankfully acknowledge until called to its eternal home, where God will be All in all.

Such is the sum of the Institutes of the Christian religion. In short, man, originally created upright, but afterwards completely ruined, finds his whole salvation outside of himself in Christ: to whom united by the Holy Ghost, given to us freely without regard to works to be performed by us, we receive by imputation a perfect righteousness, and also a sanctification which is begun in this life and perfected at the resurrection, that praise for so great mercy may be given to God by the heirs of the heavenly inheritance.