

# The Wicket Gate Magazine

## A Continuing Witness



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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.

# ***"Lord, is it I?"***

## ***Necessity of Self-Examination***

Dear Brethren,

How often the Word of God can drive people either into honesty or dishonesty – into transparent examination of themselves under its searching truth, or into a form of brazen behaviour which if not checked and cured, ultimately exposes the true hypocrite that lurked in the Christian clothing of profession.

One of the most vivid examples of this is found in the Bible's account of our Lord's announcement that one of the number of those disciples is about to betray Him. Immediately, we are told, the twelve began to ask the Lord, "Lord, is it I?" And that identical response to the Lord's own words exhibits that ready potential of the human heart either to play the man or the hypocrite when the truth of God comes forcibly to it. It is easy of course, to write off that incident by remembering that it was Judas Iscariot who was to betray the Lord, and so acted they hypocrite.

But there is another side to the incident which speaks to the Lord's people in all generations, and that is the attitude of those eleven sincere disciples who also asked, "Lord, is it I?" Surely, if Judas played the dishonest hypocrite under that word of Christ, then the rest of the disciples "played the man" when that word of truth came so authoratively into their midst that night. What they showed was that healthy spirit of self-examination that belongs to the child of God under the infallible dictates of the word of truth. This is the principle involved in that night's proceedings. Most certainly they look to their own hearts first, and that, in itself is a good principle of conduct. Too often we look outwith our own heart and lives for the explanation to those things that hinder and threaten the church of Christ in our day. Remember the spirit of McCheyne? "Lord, does the church need reviving? Then, Lord, begin with me!" But, true and all as that principle is, there is an even more basic principle involved in those disciples' words. You see, it

was Jesus who said that one of them would betray Him, and they believed Jesus. It is as simple as that. If He said that one of them would betray Him, then that word was beyond disputing and the course of self-examination was inevitable.

One of those who asked (in John's Gospel) was the apostle John himself – "that apostle whom Jesus loved". Who can understand the full nature of that sentence? Did Jesus love one disciple above the rest? The scriptures certainly single out John along these lines. But, here is the point, surely, John knew of that unique position that he held in the heart of Christ, yet, he, too, took his place on the witness stand – "Lord, who is it? Lord, is it I?" Even the knowledge of the Saviour's love so strangely shed abroad on that apostle of love couldn't for one minute eliminate that incontrovertible statement of Christ, and John must place himself under the umbrella of that statement until events display who the real betrayer is, because John is "one" of them of whom the Lord has spoken when He has said, "*one of you* shall betray me."

The lesson is a humbling one, and yet, ever essential for our spiritual well-being. It becomes us ever to examine ourselves, remembering the potential of our human hearts for the hypocritical garb. But, above all things, we are duty-bound to examine ourselves in the light of God's infallible word which we claim to believe and be guided by. Does the Word of God not say, "Take heed ... lest ye fall"? Does it not say this, in essence, in numerous places on its pages? Yes it does; and it says it to the Lord's own people – indeed, "Loved" by Him from before the foundation of the world. And the personal application is beyond dispute: "Take heed lest *Ye* fall ..." *Who?* Believers. And, if I am a believer, then I am under obligation to "take heed", and not to imagine that I could never be found wanting in the things of salvation, and witness, and testimony. We show our respect for, and our belief in, this Holy Word of God by giving serious attention to all that it has to say to us on this subject of our soul's salvation. To brush off the irksome challenges is not to be of that admirable spirit of those eleven saints of old at that particular point in their Christian calling, and to give only a lip-assent is, surely, to have too much of the Iscariot spirit lurking within us.

It will always be to our spiritual advantage to read those "warnings" of the word of God well, and to adopt that humble self-examining spirit – "Who could be capable of these things? Lord, is it I?" This we should be more than enabled to do if we know anything at all about these old deceitful and wayward hearts of ours.

But, again, far and beyond our human experience – valid and all as it may be in its own limitations – stands that impregnable rock of Holy Scripture, and when it speaks, let us listen well and do show our real and full acceptance of all its precepts and *all* its words of life.



## ***The True Foundation***

***From  
Works of Andrew  
Fuller.***

"Make a point of seeing all things in God's light. Many content themselves in seeing things in the light in which great and good men have placed them; but even though they were angels, they are not the true lights: they all view things but partially. Even though what they say be true yet if we receive it, *merely on their representation*, our faith will stand in the wisdom of men and not in the power of God.

That knowledge or faith that has not God's Word for its foundation will not stand."

## ***Four Questions.***

***"What is this that thou hast done,  
Eve, the mother of all living?"***  
Down to me the curse has run,  
Death from thy one act receiving.  
Only God could comprehend  
All the horrors now before thee,  
And in love He did intend,  
By His dying to restore thee.

***"Whence at thou, and whither bound?"***  
Hagar heard the kindly query,  
As she gazed the desert round,  
Lost and hopeless, lone and weary.  
Lord, I am a wandering sheep,  
Lost my home through disobeying;  
Call me, guide me, feed and keep,  
Or I'll into hell be straying.

***"Who is this" the prophet cried,***  
***"coming from the fields of Edom?"***  
He who for His people died,  
Paid the ransom for their freedom.  
All the curse He bore away,  
Death by His own defeated,  
And the resurrection day  
Proved salvation's work completed.

***"What are these arrayed in white?"***  
Whence came they to this fair heaven?"  
Out of sore affliction's fight,  
Washed, and all their sins forgiven.  
John beheld them with their God,  
Paul was given a glimpse before him,  
"God with us" marked out the road  
To that place where all adore him.

(Author Unknown)



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

### ***Psalm 94***

Subject: - The writer sees evil-doers in power, and smarts under their oppressions. His sense of the divine sovereignty, of which he had been singing in the previous psalm, leads him to appeal to God as the great judge of the earth ... The psalm is another pathetic form of the old enigma – "Wherefore do the wicked prosper?" It is another instance of a good man, perplexed by the prosperity of the ungodly, cheering his heart by remembering that there is, after all, a King in heaven, by whom all things are overruled for good.

*C. H. Spurgeon*

**Verse 1. "O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself."** A very natural prayer where innocence is trampled down, and wickedness exalted on high. If the execution of justice be a right thing – and who can deny the fact? - Then it must be a very proper thing to desire it; not out of private revenge, in which case a man would hardly dare to appeal to God, but out of sympathy with right, and pity for those who are made wrongfully to suffer. Who can see a nation enslaved, or even an individual down-trodden, without crying to the lord to arise and vindicate the righteous cause? In this present psalm, the "toleration" of injustice is attributed to the Lord's being **hidden**, and it is implied that the bare sight of him will suffice to alarm the tyrants into ceasing their oppressions. God has but to "show" himself – "O God ... show thyself" – and the good cause wins the day. He comes, he sees, he conquers! Truly in these evil days we need a manifest display of his power ....

*C. H. Spurgeon*

**Verse 3. "Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?"** What answer shall we give with regards to putting a date on this "how long?" The answer is given (as far as man's desire is concerned) in verse 23: "And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness ..." It's as though the psalmist was saying, Until the Lord cuts them off in their wickedness, they will never leave off doing wickedly. A godly man says, "If God kills me, yet will I trust in him;" but some wicked men say, "Until God kills us we will go on sinning against him."

*Joseph Caryl*

**Verse 9. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?"** The true idolater desires a blind god. The great first cause in all idolatry is the desire of the fallen nature to escape from the look of the living God, and only a dead image (even of the living God) can serve this purpose and desire.

*From William Arnot*

**Verse 9. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?"**

*It was no Limited power that could make this eye to see, this ear to hear; this heart to understand.* And if this eye which he has given you can see all things within its view; and that ear that he planted in you can hear all sounds within its compass; and that heart can know all matters within its comprehension - *How much more* shall the *sight*, and *hearing*, and *knowledge* of that infinite God who knows no bounds, observe and know all the actions and events of his creatures that lie open and obvious before him who made them!

*From Joseph Hall*

**Verse 10. "he that chastiseth the heather, shall he not correct? He that teacheth knowledge, (shall not he know?)"** The words in brackets – in italics in our Authorised Version of the Bible – were simply inserted by the translators in an effort to fill out the sense of the verse. This was the practice of the translators of the Authorised Version and speaks much for their integrity. Whereas, they always endeavoured

to "help" the reader with some additions to the actual words of scripture in difficult places, they, nevertheless, also wanted to make it clear that such words were only their own and not the Lord's - and so, they inserted these words and phrases in italics. The sense of the psalmist's words are well-captured by the added words, but to simply place an "exclamation" at the end of the word "knowledge" gives great force to the whole argument from verse nine. "Enough argument!" says the psalmist; "the application must be obvious to you all."

## ***Things That Accompany Salvation.*** ***(C.H. Spurgeon)***

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We read stories of eastern monarchs in the olden times, when they marched with thousands of flying banners, and with all kinds of riches borne with them. Now you are to take that as the basis of my allegory, and suppose salvation to be the sacred treasure which is being carried through the world, with guards before and guards behind, to accompany it on its journey.

***I. First, then, In the marches of troops ;and armies there are some that are outriders and go far ahead of the other troops.*** So in the march of salvation. I will tell you the names of these stupendous Titans who have gone before. The first is Election; the second is Predestination; third is Redemption.

Before Salvation came into this world, Election marched in the very forefront, and it had for its work the billeting of Salvation. Election went through the world and marked the houses to which salvation should come and the hearts in which the treasure should be deposited. Election looked through all the race of man, from Adam down to the last, and marked with sacred stamp those for whom salvation was designated. "He must needs go through Samaria", said Election; and salvation must go there. Then came Predestination. Predestination did not merely mark the house, but it mapped the road in which salvation should travel to that house. Predestination ordained every step of the great army of



salvation. It ordained the time when the sinner should be brought to Christ, the manner how he should be saved, the means that should be employed. It marked the exact hour and moment when God the Spirit should quicken the dead in sin, and when peace and pardon should be spoken through the blood of Christ. Predestination marked the road so completely that salvation doth never overstep the bounds, and it is never at a loss for the road. It was not meet that salvation should be left to chance, and therefore, God has mapped the place where it should pitch its tent, the manner of its footsteps to that tent, and the time when it should arrive there.

Then came Redemption. The way was rough; and though Election had marked the house, and Predestination had mapped the road, the way was so impeded that salvation could not travel it until it had been cleared. Fourth came Redemption. It had but one weapon, and that was the all-victorious Cross of Christ. There stood the mountains of our sins; Redemption smote them, and they split in halves and left a valley for the Lord's redeemed to march through. There was the gulph of God's offended wrath; Redemption bridged it with the Cross, and so left an everlasting passage by which the armies of the Lord may pass. Redemption has tunnelled every mountain, it has dried up every sea, cut down every forest. It has levelled every high hill, and filled up the valleys, so that the road of salvation is now plain and simple. God can be Just, and yet the Justifier of the ungodly.

**II.** But mark we are about to review *the army that immediately precedes salvation*. And first in the forefront of these, there marches One whose name we must pronounce with sacred awe. It is God, the Holy Spirit. Before anything can be done in our salvation, there must come that Third Person of the sacred Trinity. Without Him, faith, repentance, humility, love, are things quite impossible. Even the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ cannot save until it be applied to the heart by God the Holy Spirit.

Before we notice the grand army, then, that immediately precedes salvation, let us be cautious that we do not forget Him who is the leader of them all. It is He that quickens the soul, or else it would lie dead

forever; it is He that makes it tender, or else it would never feel; it is He that imparts efficacy to the Word preached, or else it could never reach further than the ear; it is He that breaks the heart, it is He who makes it whole; He, from first to last, is the great worker of salvation in us, just as Jesus Christ was the author of salvation for us. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

And now, close in the rear of the adorable Spirit follow the ***Thundering Legion***. This thundering Legion are clad in mail; their helmets wave with horror; their speech is rough like men that come from a far country. Some of the men in this Thundering Legion bear with them swords; with these swords they are to slay the sinner. For, before the sinner can be made whole, he must be spiritually killed. The first work of the Spirit in the soul is a terrible work, and this Thundering Legion is a terrible thing. God be praised, when once this Legion goes out of the heart there is some joy; but whilst they are billeted in the conscience of man, I defy him to eat or drink with any mirth or joy. The poor town of Mansoul is hung with black all the time these rough soldiers are there.

But, we have not yet come to a full conviction salvation. Now come those that are the actual attendants upon salvation – or rather, that march in the rank immediately before it. And just before the full assurance of salvation there marches ***Humility***. She is of a downcast look; she is not sad, but she hath no high looks; she scarcely dares to lift her eyes to the place where God's honour dwelleth. Side by side with her, is her sister called ***Repentance***, watering the ground with tears to lay the dust before the King. Then side by side with Repentance is one called ***Prayer***, and with Prayer, the fourth on of that company immediately attending salvation, a ***Tender Conscience***. Poor Tender Conscience; some despise him, but he is dear to the King's heart. I would to God, my brethren, you and I knew more about him. I used to know a conscience so tender that I would wish to feel it again.

III. and now, comes ***Salvation in all its fulness***. The "things that accompany salvation" make a glorious march – from Election down to those precious opening bud of virtue in the sinner's heart. But then, comes the precious casket set with gems and jewels. And who are those

that are close around it? There are three sweet sisters that always have the custody of the treasure – you know them; their names are common in Scripture – Faith, Hope, and Love – the three divine sisters. ***Faith***, who layeth hold of Christ, and trusteth all in Him; that ventureth everything upon the blood and sacrifice of Jesus, and hath no other trust beside. ***Hope***, that with beaming eye looks up to Jesus Christ in glory, and expects Him soon to come; looks downward, and when she sees grim death in her way, expects that she shall pass through with victory. And, thou sweet ***Love***, the sweetest of the three. Love looks to Christ and is enamoured of Him; loves Him in all His Offices, adores His presence, reverences His words, and is prepared to bind her body to the stake and die for Him, who bound His body to the Cross to die for her.

Have you these three graces? If so, you have salvation. Cast your eye forward; remember Election is yours, Predestination and Sovereign Decree are both yours. Remember, the terrors of the law are past; the broken heart is mourning; the comforts of religion you have already received; the spiritual graces are already in the bud. You are an heir of immortality, and for you there is a glorious future. These are the things that accompany salvation".

## ***Snippets***

✂ "Aye", said an old lady to a famous preacher once, "if God hadn't loved me before I came into the world, He would have found nothing in me to love since I have been here."

✂ One of the martyrs, when being led to the stake, was urged to recant, and as a motive to induce him to do so it was said to him – "Life is sweet and death is bitter." "That is true," said the man, "Life *is* sweet and death *is* bitter, but eternal life is sweeter and eternal death more bitter."

✂ A passenger, who had been looking with great interest at "the man at the wheel" as he was directing the course of a steamboat through the windings of an intricate channel, said to him – "I suppose, sir, you have

been the pilot of this boat for many years now." "Yes, for many years," said the pilot. "And I suppose by this time, then," the enquirer continued, "you must know every rock and sandbar and shoal on the whole route." "No, I don't," said the pilot, "not by a long way." "You don't!" said the man, "then what do you know.?" "I know where the deep water is," said the pilot, "and there I steer."

Our safety does not depend on knowing the nature of things unknowable, but in knowing Christ.

✂ Be peaceable to all, and helpful; but peace must not be bought with the sale of truth. We trust God with our souls; He trusts us with His truth.

Remember – he who renounces the truth of God renounces the God of truth!

Go not one step out of God's true way, even though a lion be in that way. Keep to God's highway and avoid crooked paths. A man may as well expect to find heaven in hell itself than expect to find heaven in a sinful way.

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**BOYS AND GIRLS PAGE**

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

Dear Boys and Girls,

I want, in this letter to tell you about a man named Nicodemus, who came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews – a Pharisee. Most of the Pharisees were very proud, and they did not believe that Jesus was the

One sent from God. Nicodemus was not like the other Pharisees. He heard Jesus teach the people who had come to worship at the Passover, and he thought to himself, "Surely, this Jesus is very great." While other Pharisees were finding fault with Jesus, Nicodemus wanted to hear more of His teachings.

One night he went to the place where Jesus stayed, to talk to Him. Nicodemus said to Jesus, "Master, we know that you are a teacher from God: for no man could do the miracles you do, unless God was with him." But Jesus wanted Nicodemus to know about the Kingdom of God, and so, He said to him, "Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

Nicodemus was puzzled. He asked, "How can a man be born after he has grown up? Can he become a tiny baby again?" Jesus did not mean, of course, that a man must be born again in his body, but in his heart. He said, "Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Do not be surprised when I say this to you, that you must be born again," said Jesus; "the wind blows; you hear it, and you see what it does. Yet you do not see the wind itself. You cannot tell where the wind comes from, or where it goes. That is the way it is with those who are born again by the Spirit of God."

Nicodemus thought about Jesus' words. No man could see the Spirit of God. Yet, a person whose heart was changed – who had been "born again" – would act as if the Spirit of God was in his life.

And this is how we become real Christians, boys and girls. It is when God's Holy Spirit lives in our lives, so that we learn to love God and serve Him. Later on in the Bible we read of how Nicodemus lived to glorify Christ.

Sincerely,  
Mrs Seaton.