

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

Thanks to God for His Goodness

(Pastor's Letter November – December 1970)

Explanation – 37 years ago Pastor Seaton, Mrs Seaton and the children returned to Inverness when Pastor Seaton accepted the pastorate of the Reformed Baptist Church, Inverness. What follows below is a letter of thanks to God that appeared in the November-December 1970 edition of the Wicket Gate Magazine. Give thanks with us for the sustained goodness of God to the church and to the work of this “wee” magazine.

Dear friends,

I trust you will bear with us this month in the “Lateness” of this issue of the Wicket Gate. In fact, we have decided to forego the November issue as such and produce a slightly larger edition to cover both November and December. This way, we shall be able to resume production for the beginning of each month from the New Year onwards, and we would again commend the work of the wee magazine to your prayers.

The reason for the delay, of course, I think most of you will appreciate and understand. Our move back to Inverness and to the Church here has been a time of busy-ness for us. We are, however, beginning to see our way more clearly and, so far, have been greatly encouraged by the blessings that God has been pleased to show us. The actual “foundation” membership of the church stands at only twenty-four, but we have rejoiced in seeing this number mostly doubled and almost trebled at our times of worship. We look to the Lord to bring many more under the sound of His truth and to a knowledge of sins forgiven through Christ our Lord.

The premises that have been made obtainable to us for our services are, to say the least, luxurious; however, we have begun to seek out a “permanent” home where we can best work in a neighbourhood and expand the witness of the church. This, again, we would commend to your prayers and interest. The undertaking is, of course, very great, but we believe the Lord will be with us. At some later date in the Wicket Gate we

may feel inclined to give a review of the whole emerging pattern of individual “separated” churches that are beginning to come into existence in Scotland – we have heard of yet another within the past week. At this present time, however, we would simply seek your prayers and interest for them and us at this juncture in our lives.

And now, my dear friends, may we take this opportunity of extending to you the season’s greetings. May the Lord of heaven and earth be your portion, and may you be enabled, by His matchless grace, to ascribe that “Glory to God in the Highest” and find that “Peace” in your hearts that was promised through His Birth and Endless Life.

Yours sincerely,
W. J. Seaton

You will find the origins and background of the Reformed Baptist Church at the following web address

http://www.wicketgate.co.uk/p1_6/p3.html

Gleanings in the Psalms

(Psalm 32)

It is told of Luther that one day being asked which of all the Psalms were the best, he said, “Psalmi Paulini,” – the “Pauline Psalms.” When his friends asked for an explanation, he pointed them to the 32nd, and the 51st, the 130th, and the 143rd. For, he said, they all teach that the forgiveness of our sin comes from without the Law and without works to the man who believes, and, therefore, he said, I call them “Pauline Psalms,” for this was Paul’s whole teaching, “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”

From Luther’s Table Talk

Verse 1. “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” Get your sins hid! There is a covering for sin which proves a **curse**; Prov. 28:13: “he that covers his sins shall not prosper.” There is

also a “covering” of sin by not confessing it, (or, what is worse, by denying it); Gehazi covered his sin by a lie. And there is a covering of sin by endeavouring to justify ourselves in our sin. All these are evil coverings, and he that thus covers his sin “shall not prosper.” But there is a **blessed** covering of sin, for forgiveness of sin is the hiding of it out of sight, and that’s the blessedness.

Richard Alleine

Verse 2. “Blessed is that man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” When once pardon is realised the believer has courage to be truthful before God: he can afford to have done with “guile” in his spirit. Who would not declare all his debts when they are certain to be discharged by another? True faith knows not only that “guile” before God is impossible, but also that it is no longer necessary. The believer has nothing to conceal: he sees himself as before God, stripped, and laid open, and bare; and if he has learned to see himself as he is, so also has he learned to see God as he reveals himself. The truth of God shows him at once that in Christ he is perfectly righteous before God, and in himself he is the chief of sinners.

J. Reeve

Verse 4. “For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me ...” God’s finger can crush us – what must His hand be, and that pressing heavenly and continuously? God’s hand is very helpful when it uplifts, but it is awful when it presses down. Better a world on the shoulder, like Atlas, than God’s hand on the heart, like David.

C. H. Spurgeon

If God strikes those so sore who he favours, how sharply and sore will he strike those whom he favours not?

Gregory

Verse 5. “I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid ...” The hypocrite doth veil and smother his sin; like a patient that has some loathsome disease in his body, he would rather die than confess his disease. But a Godly man’s sincerity is seen in this – he will confess his sin and shame himself for his sin. David doth, as it were, point with

his finger to the very sore – as in Psalm 51: “I have done **this** evil;” he does not say, “I have done evil,” but “I have done **this** evil ...”

Thomas Watson

Verse 7. “Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.”

Note how David ascends the ladder of confidence in His God. (1) God was his “hiding place;” (2) He would “preserve” him in trouble; (3) He would “compass” him about with the theme of deliverance in the midst of his enemies. As one has said, “We are on every side offended, but on every side “Defended.” The armies of King Benhadad might surround Elisha the prophet, but around the armies of Benhadad “the mountain is full of horses and chariots of fire,” and they sound forth the glorious “songs of deliverance” for the prophet and his servant: “Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.”

Verse 10. “... he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.” “Mark that text,” said Richard Adkins to his grandson Abel, who was reading the Thirty-second psalm to him. “Mark that Text, ‘He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.’ I read it in my youth and believed it; and now I read it in my old age, and, thank God, I know it to be true.”

The Christian Treasury

Great Hymns



and their Writers

**Amazing Grace!
(How sweet the Sound)
By
John Newton**

John Newton, Clerk,
Once an infidel and libertine,
A servant of slaves in Africa
Was by the rich mercy of our Lord and
Saviour Jesus Christ,
Preserved, restored, pardoned,
And appointed to preach the faith he
Had long laboured to destroy ...

It goes without saying, almost, that a man who could write such an epitaph for himself as the one which John Newton wrote above would be a man who would be more than persuaded that if he had been saved at all, then, he had been saved by the free, unmerited mercy and love of God; that he had been saved by *Grace*. And it's the theme of that saving grace that I want us to look briefly at this edition in the lines from John Newton's hymn as he tells of God's graciousness dealings with him that astounded his soul and fills his heart with the music of mercy.

“Amazing grace! (How sweet the sound!)
That saved a wretch like me.”

And surely one of the deficiencies of our present mode of thinking with regards to the grace that saves our soul is that it fails to “amaze” us. We have learnt to take salvation for granted and forgotten that the free gospel was the most costly thing ever purchased by God. John Newton, perhaps, was in no way mistaken about the wonder of his salvation because he viewed it in the light of his “wretchedness” before the Lord. As he says in his epitaph, he was an “infidel and libertine.” He could boast that none could swear as he could, and he did become “a servant of slaves in Africa,” because at one point in his life he had sunk so low as to become a slave's slave. The grace, then, that “saved a wretch” like him was “amazing grace” and the sound of it sweet.



But, it's the “inner” wretchedness that Newton is especially speaking about here, and this is something every redeemed sinner ought to know something about and so, magnify the grace that has redeemed their soul: -

“I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.”

But Newton was never “blind” as far as his physical eyesight goes, but he was inwardly blind until the Lord of Glory “anointed his eyes with eye salve” and “now I see,” he says.

And how did he come to realise that he was spiritually “blind” and spiritually “lost”? Well, says Newton, it, too, was “by grace,” for, as Paul says, “it’s all of grace.”

“Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved.”

“Thou hast wounded and thou must heal,” as the prophet humbly acknowledges before his God in heaven. Grace shows us our need of Christ and grace extends the hand of mercy to meet that need. No wonder Newton sings out in the last two lines of that verse –

“How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed.”

It’s only the believer in Christ who can see the preciousness of God’s unmerited Sovereign grace that has brought redemption to his soul, but who, then, like the believer should bow beneath the rod of God’s Omnipotence which is the sceptre of His grace.

This is the theme of John Newton’s testimony hymn. Grace has saved him, and grace will *keep* him: -

“Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
‘Tis grace has brought me safe this far,
And grace will lead me home.”

And so on to the end of the hymn. The great poet of Olney can write “How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds,” and here is why he can write it; it’s because grace has established its throne in his heart and he has learnt through God’s merciful dealings with him that “Christ is precious.”

This is what is meant by “Sovereign” grace. Once it was Sovereign “Sin,” – “as sin *reigned* unto death,” says the great apostle Paul. But now, it’s

Sovereign Grace – “Even so might grace *reign* through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Indeed, indeed, the grace of our redemption is “Amazing Grace.” May its sound be sweet to our ears if we have received this “grace of God” from “the God of grace.”

Amen

SPURGEON’S TABLE TALK



With some to whom we preach, the Word doth indeed have “free course,” for it goes in one ear and out the other.

You cannot measure fire by the bushel, nor prayers by their length.

Don’t preach too long. I should say, if you are earnest and interesting, that, whatever you are preaching about, you should preach about forty minutes. Some sermons remind me of the sailor who was told to pull a rope on board; he pulled, and

pulled until he was tired, and then declared that he believed “the end of this ‘ere rope is cut off.”

Stick to your preaching, and let nothing take you from it. If you have not finished your sermon, and should hear the sound of the archangel’s trumpet, go on with it.

There are dungeons underneath the Castle of Despair as dreary as the abodes of the lost, and some of us have been in them.

To learn to say “No” will be of greater service than to know Latin.

Some people seem to have three hands: a right hand, a left hand, and a little behind hand.

The Plymouth Brethren reject our idea of the ministry. Yet many of them have been like the Irishman who went to school and said of it, “None of us knowed nothin’, and we each larn’s one another.”

We must make the Church a school to educate the conscience. Many a man has enough conscience to scare him in sin, but not enough to save him from sin.

“Lead me not into temptation” means, to me, bring me not into a committee.

If you preach so as to convert souls, the Lord will not disappoint you.

Avoid carelessness in every part of your work. A clergyman in conducting the Burial Service over a person came to “this our beloved ...” But he did not know if he was burying a man or a woman, and turned to one of the mourners with the question, “Brother or sister?” “Neither, sir, only a friend,” was the bewildering reply.

I observed the other day a marine store notice, “Fifty tons of bone wanted.” Yes, I thought, and mostly backbones.

Don’t be squeamish in the pulpit, like one who read, “Jonah was three days and three nights in – ahem – the society of the fish.”

A member once said to his minister who wanted a little more salary as his family increased, “I did not know you preached for money.” “No, I don’t,” said the minister. “I thought you preached for souls.” “So I do; but my family cannot live on souls, and if they could it would take a good many of the size of yours to make a meal.”

(From the Banner of Truth Magazine October 1969)

Whitefield by Spurgeon

If I turn to the pages of history to find out the best men who ever lived, do you know where I find them? Not among those who were called “respectable” in their time ... I see great names, Erasmus and others, mighty and learned men, but on a dirty, thumbed page I see the name of Luther associated with such epithets as these – “dog, adulterer, beast,” and everything else that the malice of Rome could suggest. And I say, “Ah, this is the man whom God chose, for he went without the camp.” That list

of great divines and of schoolmen and of theologians, you may wipe them all out without much regret! But this man “without the camp,” he is somebody ... Turn to another list of archbishops, bishops, deans, rural deans, rectors and curates ... There is nothing special about any of them. At last I find a picture of Hogarth – a caricature of a man preaching with devils coming out of his mouth, and underneath it is written, “Fire and brimstone.” I look at the portrait and I say, “See, it is Mr Whitefield.” Ah! There is the man of the age, depend upon it; that man all black, charged with crimes that Sodom never knew ... this man here that is abused, that is laughed at, that is mocked; this is the man who is somebody.

(From the Banner of Truth Magazine June 1970)



The Christian In Complete Armour

(2) Breastplate of Righteousness

Here we are presented with a second piece of armour, commended to, and charged upon, all Christ’s soldiers – a “breastplate”, and the metal it is to be made of – “righteousness”. “And having on the breastplate of righteousness ...” And the righteousness which is here compared to the breastplate is the righteousness of our sanctification, which I call “a righteousness *imparted*” or a righteousness wrought by Christ in the believer.

It is a supernatural principle of a new life planted in the heart of every child of God by the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit, whereby they endeavour to approve themselves to God and to man, in performing what the Word of God requires to be performed to both.

It is a principle of new life, I say; the Spirit's work was not to *recover what was swooning*, but to work a life *anew* in a soul quite *dead*: "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and in sins." Ephesians 2:1. And no sooner is this principle planted in the heart, but the man rises up to wait on God and to act for God with all his might and main. The seed which the sanctifying Spirit cast into the soul, is not lost in the soil, but quickly shows it is alive by the fruit it bears.

As the "breastplate" preserves the principal part of the body of the soldier – the breast, where the very vitals of man are closely couched together, and where a shot or stab is more deadly than in other parts that are remote from the fountain of life, therefore, we are exhorted to have on the "breastplate of righteousness." A man may outlive many wounds received in the arms or legs, but a stab in the heart is the certain messenger of death approaching. Thus righteousness and holiness preserve the principal part of a Christian – his soul and conscience.

Satan's designs are as much against the saint's holiness, as God's designs are for it. He hath ever a "nay" to God's "yea". If God be for holiness, he must needs be against it. And what should be our chief care to defend, then, but that which Satan's thoughts and plots are most laid to assault and storm? No gain comes to the devil's purse, except he can make the Christian lose his holiness; so, let us stand, "... having on the breastplate of righteousness."

WM Gurnall.



"The Glory of His Grace." (Ephesians 1 Verse 6)

By William Gadsby

The word grace is in almost everybody's mouth who makes a profession of religion. "Salvation is all of grace," "We must be saved by grace," are words frequently spoken. But if you will allow the bulk of professing Christians to tell their own tale you will find that they either do not understand the meaning of grace, or else they do not mean what they say.

There is a large body of professing Christians who say that salvation is all of grace, and then roundly assert that if God does not give all men a chance of being saved, He is an unjust God. What a horrible idea! God unjust if He does not give all men a chance of being saved! I that be true, then instead of salvation being all of grace it is a debt that God owes to rebel man. And if He does not pay that debt *then* He is an unjust God, and there can be no real thanks due to Him, for He only does that which to leave undone would impeach His justice. How then can salvation be all of grace as they say?

Grace is free, unmerited, undeserved favour; and if God would be unjust if He did not give guilty man a chance of being saved, then salvation cannot be of grace, it is a debt. Salvation is either entirely of grace, entirely of works, or of works and grace together.

Now let us hear what God the Holy Ghost, by the apostle, says on this subject. “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.” Romans 11:5 - 6.

Thus, beloved, you see that salvation is entirely of God’s free grace and not a debt that He owes to rebel man. Nor does it in any way proceed from the works of man, but is the rich, free, undeserved favour of God to poor, worthless, guilty sinners, who have awfully merited His righteous indignation. And this rich bestowment of grace is without the least idea of grace is without the least idea of worth or worthiness in them upon whom it is bestowed, for “He hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his won purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” 2nd Timothy chapter 1 verse 9. It is all “To the praise of the glory of His grace.” Ephesians 1 verse 6.

BOYS AND GIRLS PAGE

By
Mrs Seaton

Dear Boys and Girls,

Christmas has come and gone for another year and I am sure you had lots of wonderful presents. I am sure to that as Christmas drew near you began to prepare for it. Lots of presents to buy for your mummies and daddies and maybe for some of your friends. Cards that you were to send and for some of the girls anyway, dresses that you were to wear at your Sunday School parties. Perhaps, even, some of you will be preparing to “Welcome home” a brother or sister who has been away from home working or studying in some other town or city, or country even. What you did when you got ready for Christmas was to prepare for it. **Prepare** means to get ready, and that is the word that I want you to think about for a few minutes in this letter: **Prepare**.

Many, many years ago, around the time that we now call Christmas, some men and women had begun to **prepare** for a special event, as well. In fact, that event was to be the very first Christmas of all – the day when our Lord Jesus Christ was born into this world as a baby in Bethlehem’s manger to become the Saviour of men and women, boys and girls.

These people – the shepherds, the Wise Men, Joseph, Mary, Simeon, and many others – had begun to **prepare** because they had read their Bibles and they knew that Jesus was, indeed going to be born at the time when God had said. How happy they were when Jesus came and they were **prepared** to welcome Him. Many others, of course, were not **prepared** to welcome Jesus. Oh, they may have heard that He was to come and be born the King of Kings, but they just didn’t believe it. And so, of course, they didn’t **prepare** themselves for His coming.

Now, the Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ is **coming again**. What does that mean? you say. Well it means that just as Jesus came once to this world, so He is going to come again to this world. He won’t come as a babe this time, but He will come as the ruler of all the earth. And,

says the Bible, when He does come again, there will be some who will be *prepared* to meet Him, but there will be others who will not be *prepared*.

Remember how important it is to *prepare* for that day when Jesus will come again.

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