

# The Wicket Gate Magazine

## A Continuing Witness



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# Revival in Ireland – 1859

The Pastor's Letter (April 1972)

My Dear Friends,

The year is 1858 and revival swept through America. The hand of God is upon the people of that land and souls are saved in large numbers through the work of the Holy Spirit. By 1859 the revival reaches over the Atlantic especially to the six northern counties of Ireland that compose the province of Ulster.

Who wouldn't long for the presence of His Holy Spirit that makes all our worship, and witness, and preaching so gloriously effective to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan and the establishing of the truth of the gospel upon the earth?

The following few extracts from the history of that great revival of religion that swept through the North of Ireland and the rest of the country in the year 1859 are simply set forth as an encouragement and exhortation to pray and labour for such a time in that place again, and wherever we may happen to live and work in the name of our God.

## **BELFAST:**

“On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 1859 a monster open-air union prayer meeting was held in the Botanic Gardens. Just a year before, on the same site, the Prince of Preachers, Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, had proclaimed the gospel to the largest audience which ever assembled up to that time, to hear the gospel in Ireland. Now a far vaster throng gathered, not to hear the voice of man, but to commune in prayer in order to hear the ‘still small voice’ of God. Somewhere about 25,000 had gathered ... .. While the addresses were being delivered, and the prayers offered, there were very many, who found it impossible to catch the sounds by reason of distance.

Hence it came to pass that other congregations were rapidly formed and collected in other parts of the Gardens, numbering from 500 to 1000 each. In these smaller meetings many were

struck down under deep conviction of sin, some weeping bitterly, but silently; some crying out piteously for mercy, and others unable to utter a word ... on the evening of that day, the glorious work may be said to have commenced with power in the congregation of Great George's Street. The Lord introduced it in a very unexpected way. The girl who had found peace on the previous Sabbath evening stood up, declared that she was happy in the Lord, and simply added the words, 'Come to Jesus.' The effect of her invitation was like the effect of an electrical shock, and many sinners came that evening, weary and heavy laden, to Jesus, and found rest for their souls. But this scene was soon to be eclipsed by another. The people gathered in such numbers on the following evening, June 30, that there was not accommodation for them; and there was one congregation in the church, and two in the street.

After the services in the church began, there were piercing cries for mercy in every part of the house. There is a garden behind the church ... and several persons under conviction of sin were removed there, while others were taken into my own dwelling-house. There were several groups of individuals. Some were exhorting those who were seeking salvation; some were weeping, and crying aloud for mercy; and some, with joyful lips, were praising God for having obtained salvation, and were singing the converts' psalm: -

'He took me from a fearful pit,  
And from the miry clay.'

The usual time for dismissal came, but they were heedless about the hour of the night. The day brightened in the heavens, the morning star was succeeded by the rising sun, but they still remained exhorting, praying, and praising the Lord."

### **LONDONDERRY:**

"The secondary agency employed by the Holy Spirit in commencing the work here was that of four young converts from Country Antrim, brought there by the Rev. Jackson Smyth of Armagh, all of whom addressed a united meeting in the First

Presbyterian Church. Three persons cried out for mercy during the meeting. A thrilling sensation passed through the great assemblage, as these mourning cries were uttered, and the thousands present felt each for himself and herself, 'I have a soul to be saved.' God had touched some mighty spring at His own Throne, and the vibrations were felt in our meeting that night. Hundreds went home with an arrow in their heart. The 'Revival' had begun in Derry. Perhaps never since Derry was a city – and it has seen stirring and awful days in its eventful history – did so many souls ache upon sleepless beds as on that mysterious night. They rose in the morning unrefreshed, with the hand of God heavy on them. Some have told me how they struggled during the silent watches; some wept for hours ... other, in wild frenzy, muttered blasphemy upon their beds.

Monday passed, and another united meeting was held in the First Presbyterian Church that evening. The building was crowded to excess. Several Ministers addressed the meeting in calm and unimpassioned solemnity. The meeting felt still as a grave; the stillness was fearful; those who were present will never forget it. At length, the silence was broken by unearthly cries, uttered simultaneously by several in different parts of the Church, and in the course of a few minutes the vestry of the church was filled with individuals who lay in mental agony and absolute bodily prostration. Socialists may talk of 'hysteria'; but I can testify that, so far as I know, not one of those who were stricken that night, and who professed to find peace in Jesus, has gone back to the world. If hysteria produce such results as these, then I pray that every man, woman and child in Ireland may become 'hysterical' before the end of the year."

### **ARMAGH:**

"One evening, as we assembled for prayer in the church as usual, the pews were almost empty. I made a few remarks in reference to our wonderful position. Like Gideon's fleece, we were dry, whilst all around the earth was watered. But I concluded thus: - 'God has already blessed us in a silent way, and He will further bless us. If there are ten praying people in the city, God will revive His work, and I know there are more than ten.' A brother

minister arose, read a chapter of Isaiah, commented very briefly on it, and gave out a psalm. As he sat down, I whispered to him, 'I see a young man under deep conviction of sin in one of the pews; he will cry out very soon.' When the singing ceased, the wail rose up to heaven – 'O Jesus, have mercy on my soul.' A new thing this in the city of Armagh! Another voice was heard in the gallery, crying loudly for pardon and acceptance with an offended God. The revival had come!"

**DROMARA:**

"On the 25<sup>th</sup> July about a thousand persons assembled in Mr. Craig's church for prayer. A deep solemnity pervaded the meeting. Many sobs were heard, many tears were shed, and many were the 'groanings that could not be uttered.' The meeting closed and all separated for their homes. Shortly afterwards intelligence arrived that some persons had been 'stricken' on their way home. We started off, and the scene which met our gaze will not soon be forgotten. There, on the roadside, with their backs against the ditch and their faces towards heaven, lay seven persons supplicating mercy ... On the 29<sup>th</sup> July a prayer meeting was held on the green beside the church, that building being unable to contain the two thousand or more who were present and at the same place, on the succeeding Sabbath evening, there was another meeting, larger still, attended by not fewer than three thousand. Those were two evenings long to be remembered. ... During the fortnight that followed many were affected in their own homes, and in the prayer-meetings, which were held in private houses all hours of the day and night. For the time being business was very much suspended. The whole parish was a place of weeping, and praying, and singing, and reading. There cannot be a doubt that there were more Bible readings, more believing prayers, more loving thoughts of Jesus, in our parish in the month of August than had been in the five years previous."

Such accounts multiply themselves by the hundreds. There is but one explanation: "And the hand of the Lord was upon them, and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." (Acts 11:21) And whatever our position today, the same presence of the Lord is greatly needed amongst us. Would that the Lord

would be pleased to pour out His blessing as in old upon His dear Church in Ulster and extend that blessing to us all who “languish for His sight” in these days. That we might hear but “a sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees,” and learn to “bestir ourselves” and look with trust in our hearts unto Him:

“Thou shalt arise and mercy yet,  
Thou to mount Zion shall extend;  
Her time of favour which was set.  
Behold, is now come to an end.”

Yours Sincerely,  
W. J. Seaton



## **The Promises of God Matthew Henry**

It is the unspeakable privilege of all believers to have, as a certain possession, the precious promises of God. We have them as manifest tokens of God’s favour towards us; and every one of them is yea and amen, in Christ Jesus our Lord. We have them as fruits of Christ’s purchase. The Lord having purchased us with His own blood we have these promises produced by that, inestimable grace. They are plain and ample declarations of the goodwill of God towards man, and are therefore as God’s part of the covenant of grace. They are a foundation of our faith, and we have them as such; and also of our hope.

On these we are to build all our expectations from God; and in all temptations and trials we have them to rest our souls upon. We have them as the directions and encouragements of our desires in prayer. Seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. They are the guide of our desires and the ground of our

hope in prayer. Therefore, let us review some of these blessed promises of God.

1. ***He has promised that we shall be His people.*** “Therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine.” (Exodus 19:5.)
2. ***That all our sins shall be pardoned.*** “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” (Isaiah 43:25.)
3. ***That our corruptions shall be subdued.*** “For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law but under grace.” (Romans 6:14.)
4. ***That the Spirit of grace shall be given us, to enable us for our duty in everything.*** “I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.” (Ezekiel 36:27.)
5. ***That He will give us the knowledge of His truth, and the comfort and benefit of it.*** “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32.)
6. ***That He will be tender to those that are weak.*** “He shall feed his flock like a Shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.” (Isaiah 40: 11.)
7. ***That He will direct us in the way of our duty.*** “Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach in his way.” (Psalm 25:8-9.)
8. ***That He will protect us from everything that is really evil.*** “The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and even for evermore.” (Psalm 121: 7-8.)
9. ***That He will supply us with all good.*** “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” (Psalm 34:10.)
10. ***That He will answer our prayers.*** “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” (John 14:13.)

- 11. *That He will silence our fears.*** I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee.” (Isaiah 41:13.)
- 12. *That He will bear us up under our burdens.*** “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” (Deuteronomy 33:27.)
- 13. *That He will give us a sure and lasting peace.*** “The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.” (Isaiah 32:17.)
- 14. *That He will deliver us in and under our troubles.*** “Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honour him.” (Psalm 91:14-15.)
- 15. *That He will proportion our trials to our strength.*** “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13.)
- 16. *That He will put true honour upon us.*** “Them that honour me I will honour.” (1 Samuel 2:30.)
- 17. *That He will comfort and relieve us in sickness.*** “The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishings: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.” (Psalm 41:3.)
- 18. *That He will prevent our apostasy from Him.*** “I will make an everlasting covenant with them, and I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.” (Jeremiah 32:40.)
- 19. *That He will make all events conduce to our real welfare.*** “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28.)
- 20. *That He will perfect the work of grace in us.*** Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6.)

- 21. That He will be with us when we are old, to bear us up under all our infirmities.** “Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoary hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and I will deliver you.” (Isaiah 46:4.)
- 22. That He will never desert us in any emergency whatsoever.** “For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” (Hebrews 13:5.)
- 23. That He will make up all our losses for His name’s sake.** “Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.” (Matthew 19:29.)
- 24. That He will be with us when we come to die.** “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” (Psalm 23:25.)
- 25. That He will raise our bodies to life again.** “This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:40.)
- 26. That He will put us into possession of everlasting bliss.** “And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.” (1 John 2:25.)

And now what shall we say to these things? Let us be thankful to God for all these great and precious promises, that God should not only do us good, but engage Himself by promises to do so. Let us be ashamed of ourselves that we have not lived more upon these promises. Let us encourage ourselves with these promises to go on cheerfully and resolutely in the way of our duty.

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# Gleanings In the Psalms (Psalm 43)

*The theme of this psalm is similar to the one that has just gone before. David is still cut-off from the open worship of God and longs again for “the altar.”*

**Verse 1 “Judge me, O God, and plead my cause ...”** When the flail of affliction, O Lord, is upon me, let me not be as the chaff that flies in Thy face, but as the corn that lies at Thy feet.

*Philip Henry*

**Verse 2 “... why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?”** “Think it not strange,” says the Word of God, “When men shall revile you.” “I have chosen you out of the world,” says Jesus, “*therefore*, the world hateth you.” Because I love you, Jesus is saying here, the world hates you. What strange reasoning is this! What God chooses, the world hates.

*William Romaine*

**Verse 3 “O send out thy light and thy truth...”** The words of this verse 3, especially in the metrical version, might well serve as a timely prayer for the Church of Christ as she stands on the brink of this New Year.

“O send Thy light forth and Thy truth,  
Let them be guides to me.”

Let us pray that God would send forth His truth by the light of His Spirit. We might tell men about the truth, or show them the truth, but it is only the blessed Third Person of the Trinity Who can lighten their way right into the truth. “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall lead you *into* all truth.” Let us not be

satisfied if men are prepared and satisfied to give an ear to our renderings of the truth. This may tickle their ears but it will never save their souls. He must lead them *into* all truth, so let us pray that God will send forth light and truth together.

Let us pray, too, that having sent forth the light of His Spirit with His truth to lead men into that truth, that the Lord will also “ground” and establish them in that truth. These are the days when so many appear to be what the young Charles Haddon Spurgeon would have called, “Anythingarians.” They are planted in one doctrine this week and in some other the next. No wonder there is so little growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, for there is so little value given to getting our roots well sunk in the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. “O send thy light forth and thy truth.”

And then, once we have received that truth and set our feet firmly in that truth, then, let us pray that God will send forth His power to enable us to defend that truth. The days are dark. If this wasn't so, then, we wouldn't need to pray for the light and the truth. But truth is a plant from heaven – it doesn't spring from the natural soil of human nature. So, when God in His mercy grants it to us, let us be set for the defence of it. The way through the coming year may be dark with many pitfalls. The prayer, then, is appropriate if we are to be led to God's “holy hill” and to the place of praise spoken about in the next verse.

**Verse 3. “... thy light ...”** There are three kinds of light: the light of nature, the light of grace, the light of glory. And as the light of grace clears up difficulties which the light of nature *could not*, so the light of glory will clear up those things which the light of grace *cannot*.

**Verse 5 “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?”** Oh Christian!  
Thy heavenly Father has gracious reasons which hold His hands  
back from blessing thee at this present time; if not, you would  
have heard from Him before now.

*William Gurnall*

**Verse 5 “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou  
disquieted within me *hope in God*: for I shall yet praise him  
...”** Though you get strokes and frowns from your Lord, yet  
believe His love more than your own feelings. It is not your rock  
that ebbs and flows, but your sea.

*Samuel Rutherford*

Still trust in God; for him to praise  
good cause I yet shall have:  
He of my count'nance is the health,  
my God that doth me save.

*Metrical Version*



**BOYS AND GIRLS PAGE**

“The  
Exchange”

I'm sure, boys and girls, that you all know what it is to  
"swap" something. It's one of the most popular things that boys  
and girls do. Perhaps, for example, you have a pal who has a  
good book that you have been wanting to read for a long time,  
and you know that your pal would dearly like to have your box of  
paints; you might make a bargain with your pal and say, "Let's

swap; I'll give you my box of paints for your book." You would **exchange** the one thing for the other; isn't that right?

Now, the Bible tells us of a marvellous exchange that God was willing to make with the children of Israel. He said, "For brass, I will bring gold; and for iron, I will bring silver; for wood, brass, and for stones, iron." In other words, whatever the people of Israel would give to God's service, he would give them greater things in return, even though some of the things that they would give wouldn't be of much value, in some people's eyes.

Some boys and girls think that there isn't anything that they can really offer to God or do for God's glory. But, if those things are really done with a desire to please God and bring honour to His name, God will be pleased with whatever you do and will give you greater things in exchange for them.

But, how will I begin to please God? You may be saying. Well, it's by believing in **the greatest exchange of all** that the Bible tells us about. Here's what it says: "For he (the Lord Jesus Christ) became sin for us ... that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." It means that Jesus took our sin - all our evil thoughts and actions - and He suffered on the cross for them. And because he did that, we are able to take His "Righteousness" - all His goodness and holiness - and be forgiven for our sin. You see the exchange, don't you? Jesus took our sin so that we could have His righteousness and be forgiven.

That's the first thing you must do to please God - you must believe in the Lord Jesus with all your heart. Once you believe in Christ with all your heart, then you can go on pleasing God from day to day by obeying His Word - the Bible - and doing what it says. When you do that, then, God will bless you in exchange for that.

Love  
Mrs Seaton.

# Covenant Comforts

By  
**Joseph Alleine**

Probably the most famous book that Joseph Alleine ever wrote was his “Alarm to the Unconverted.” It was that book, together with Richard Baxter’s “Call to the Unconverted” that Charles Hadden Spurgeon resorted to in his time of conviction of sin: “Oh those books, those books!” he later wrote, “I read and devoured them.” And no wonder, for scarcely is there another book like Baxter’s “Call”, unless it be Alleine’s “Alarm” when it comes to the convicted soul seeking out the true path of repentance and faith in Christ. And what Alleine’s “Alarm” is to the seeking soul, his “Covenant Comforts” is to the man or the woman who has found Christ, or rather been found of Christ, and is looking to Him for all needed grace on the path that leads to everlasting bliss. This is what “Covenanting with God” is all about. It’s the believer paraphrasing to his own heart all that God has promised to be to him and do for him as he walks this pilgrim road that leadeth unto life, and this is the theme that old Joseph Alleine took up to give his people at Taunton as a light on a dark road when he was separated from them.

The Act of Uniformity of 1662 had seen the majority of the Puritans ejected from their pulpits and severed from their congregations, and Joseph Alleine was no exception. Cast into Ilchester jail, he decided to minister some comfort to his separated flock and took in hand to write God’s covenant promises to His people that their souls might be established. The book, of course, required to be licensed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and as this was not obtained, it was seized and ordered to be burnt in the King’s kitchen. One of the palace officials, however, discovering that there was a ready market for this little volume, rescued the unburnt copies and sold them for his own profit. His treachery was discovered and the copies that he had not managed to sell

were again condemned, this time to have their pages blackened with ink and then confined to the flames. Undaunted by the fate of his work - which could easily become his own fate – Joseph Alleine produced a second edition and at least one copy of this was used in a remarkable way to the saving of a sinner’s soul. The copy was stolen from a bookstall in Yorkshire, but was later returned by the thief with the humble confession that its pages had been the means of his conversion.

And so, the history of the little volume itself is a vindication of the message of its pages, that God is working His covenant purposes out for the good of His people, and from the promise of that everlasting covenant they may draw all comfort for “each perplexing path of life.” Here are a few extracts from Alleine’s work; may they bless your soul, dear reader.

“Hear, O ye ends of the earth, the mighty God, the Lord hath spoken: gather my saints unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. Behold, I establish my covenant between Me and you. By my holiness have I sworn that I will be your covenant friend. I lift up my hand to heaven, I swear I live for ever; because I live, you shall live also. I will be yours: yours to all intents and purposes; your Refuge and your Rest; your Patron and your Portion; your Heritage and your Hope; your God and your Guide. While I have, you shall never want; and what I am to Myself, I will be to you ...”

“Here I seal you your pardon. Though your sins be as many as the sands, and as mighty as the mountains, I will drown them in the deeps of my bottomless mercies. I will be merciful to your unrighteousness; I will multiply to pardon; where your sins have abounded, my grace shall superabound; though they be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Behold, I declare myself satisfied, and pronounce you absolved: the ransom is paid, your debts are cleared, your bonds are cancelled. Whatever the law, or conscience, or the accuser hath to charge upon you, here I exonerate you, I discharge you. I, even I, am He that blotteth out your transgressions, for my name’s sake. Who shall lay anything to your charge, when I quit

you? What though your enemies are many? More are they that are with you than they that are against you; *for I am with you.* What though they are *mighty?* They are not *Almighty;* your Father is greater than all, and none shall pluck you out of my hands. Who can hinder my power, or obstruct my salvation? My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.”

AMEN

## *The Gospel Market*

*By  
John Berridge*

*“Ho, every one that  
thirsteth, come ye to  
the water, and he that  
hath no money; come ye,  
buy, and eat; yea, come,  
buy wine and milk without  
money and without price.”*

*Isaiah 55 verse 1*

*Gold or spices have I none,  
For a present to my King,  
All my livelihood is gone,  
Only rags and wounds I bring.  
But I'll traffic, Lord, with Thee,  
For Thy market suits me well;  
All my blessings must be free,  
And I know Thou wilt not sell.  
Yet my Jesus bids me buy,  
Some things sure He would receive;  
Well, to please Him I will try,  
And my something I will give.  
Take my burdens for Thy rest,  
Take my death for Thy life given,  
Take my rags for Thy rich vest,  
Take my hell for thy sweet heaven.  
Now the sale I understand,  
Know what Jesus' market is;  
Much He asketh of my hand,  
All my woe to buy His bliss.*