

The Wicket Gate Magazine

A Continuing Witness



Internet Edition 38 issued September 2002

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Pray one for Another

(The Pastor's Letter)

The prayers of the believers for one another is an agent with the grace of God in the delivery, or the sustaining of a Christian in a time of trouble, when the "rivers of grief" have flowed or where there is illness and worry and the loss of loved ones. So surely the circumstances of our fellowship for week to week should teach us the great obligation that we are under to "pray for one another". If we are sustained and comforted, and delivered through the prayers of our believing friends, then how great is our responsibility to remember one another's burdens before God.

And what should we pray for? "Obviously", someone may say, "we should pray that our friend should be delivered from his or her trouble". And, of course we should. But, we must never forget that there is every possibility that God is using this particular time in the life of that person to refine, or to teach some particular lesson, and so, we must be careful that we are not praying at cross purposes with God's plan for each of His children's lives. Underlying all our prayers for one another - as well as our prayers for our own personal Christian live - should be the earnest request that all of God's people learn to recognise that "all things work together for their good". If the truth of this great statement or belief became really alive to us, then how much more confidently could we face every trial.

Daniel Rowland was one of the great leaders of the Welsh revival of the 18th century, and it is not hard to see how his preaching brought a revival of true heart religion as he pointed the people of God to this great central truth of our faith ... that God is working in us and for us all things for our own good.

Listen here to him preaching on the text Romans 8-28 ... "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God".

It is not said that all things SHALL, but that all things DO work together. All the seeming accidents of life subserve to the same end, and centre in the same point. All tend to promote the glory of the Father and the salvation of the children. Every reproach you suffer, every loss you sustain, every scorn that makes you blush, and every grief that makes you sad; every pain that tears your hear, and every shame that bows your head - your days of joy and your days of sorrow - your plenty and your want - your health and sickness, your life and death - all combine to work together for your good. The text is a harvest of blessedness. The seed is sown. The Lord is at work. The whole creation is employed - men and angels, friends and foes, are all engaged promoting its growth, fencing its bounds, and ripening its produce. O God, how amazing is Thy love!

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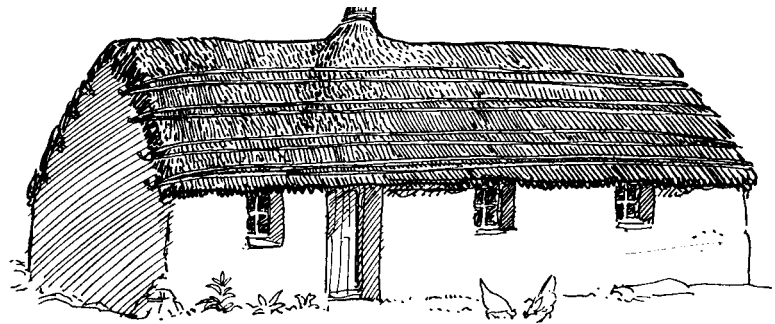
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It's not an easy thing to "trace the rainbow through the rain;" to know that all things are in the hands of God. But such knowledge is the greatest comforter in time of trial. Let us pray that it will belong to each of us as we have need.

Sincerely,
W.J. Seaton

"Yon Lovely Man"

How often God chooses "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise!" Many years ago they lived in a Highland village a young lad whom the folk in that neighbourhood knew as "Yeddie".



Yeddie was supported by the "Parish" as he was incapable of performing any real work, and he would spend his day in wandering from one croft to another to listen to the folks discuss the news of the day. He had little power of conversation, and would sometimes take to whispering to himself as he passed along the little tracks, or through the fields. One day he was overheard by one of his own age group who thought that he would poke some fun at the harmless lad. "What ghost or goblin are you begging favours of now, Yeddie?" he asked. "Neither the one nor the other, laddie", Yeddie replied, "but I was just having a few words with Him that neither yourself nor I can see, but who sees the both of us!"

One day just prior to the Communion season, Yeddie called on the minister of the Church. "Please, minister", he said, screwing his coarse cap in his hands, "let poor Yeddie eat supper on the coming day with the Lord Jesus". The minister was busy preparing for the coming Communion, and tried to put Yeddie off in as gentle a way as possible; but Yeddie pleaded with him ... "Oh minister, if ye but kenned how I love Him, ye wud let me go where He is to sit at the table". This touched the minister so much that Yeddie was told to come and take his place on the following Lord's Day.

During the first part of the service, tears flowed freely down poor Yeddie's face, and he was heard to repeat, "But I dinna see Him, I dinna see Him". Soon the bread and the wine were

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passed round, and, as Yeddie partook of the "elements" in remembrance of the death of the Saviour, the tears fell away from his face, and he nodded his head and smiled.

As Yeddie made his way from the "Feast", one after another spoke to him and greeted him, but Yeddie had no word for any of them.

Presently, some of the boys from the village cornered him and forced him to say something. "Ah lads", he said, "dinna bid Yeddie talk today! He's seen the face o' the Lord Jesus among His ain ones. He got a smile from His eyes and a word frae His tongue; and he's afeard to speak lest he lose the memory of it, for it's but a bad memory that he has at the best. Ah lads, I hae seen Him this day that I never see'd before. I hae seen Him with these dull eyes, YON LOVELY MAN. Dinna speak, but just leave poor Yeddie to his company."

Soon Yeddie reached the humble croft that he shared with his aged grandmother. "No meat for me today, granny", he told the old lady. "I hae had a feast that I will feel within me for as long as I live". He climbed the ladder into the loft which was the only bedroom that he had ever known, and throughout the night, until she fell asleep, the old woman heard Yeddie speak with "yon lovely man". "Lord, it's poor me that has been sae long seeking Ye; and now we'll bide thegither and never part more! Oh, but this is a bonny loft, all gold and precious stones. The hall o' the castle is a poor place to my loft this bonny night!"

Next morning, the old lady was up and about her chores. She set her humble table and made the porridge that was to be Yeddie's breakfast. She remembered that he had no meal going to bed, so she went to the foot of the ladder and called him to come and eat. The loft was still; she called again but there was no answer. Venturing up the steps to the loft that she had not been in for years, she pushed her head and shoulders through the trap door. There, in one corner of the room, before a rough stool, she saw Yeddie. He was half kneeling, half-crouching with his head resting on his folded arms. "He must have fallen asleep at his prayers", the old woman thought; but, as she went over and touched the still form, she recoiled in horror. Yeddie would never need to seek the face of Jesus among his fellows any more. As he had supped at the table, so he has slept - with "yon lovely man".

A deep impression was made on the neighbourhood by the death of Yeddie. Jesus had, of a truth, visited that place and was made known to "the foolish", although missed the "wise" and "rich" and "great". From the day of his funeral many laid aside their vain attempts to "know Christ" through worldly wisdom and learning, and were taught to rest in the faith of the poor lad who had seen "yon lovely man".

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Preaching from the Past

"Yea, they turned back, and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel"
Psalm 78 verse 41

Thou art place in the midst of a trying world; limit Him not. Infinite wisdom hath placed thee there, and infinite power is sufficient for thee. Thou tellest me thy body is weak; limit Him not. Thou tellest me thy spirits are weak; limit him not. Thou tellest me thy faith is weak; limit Him not. Thou tellest me providential dealings seem against thee; limit Him not, He can make the "rough place plain"; He can make the "crooked place straight". He can make the bitter waters sweet; He can cause thee to sing the louder song for these very trials; He can cause thee to tune thy harp the more to His praise because thou shalt sing of "the brother born for adversity".

But is this all I would counsel thee, dear reader, in. Far from it. Oh! be not contented with not limiting"; pray for that faith that expecteth great things. "Open thy mouth wide". God has opened His heart wide; His covenant is opened wide - "Yet there is room", - all fulness in Christ; "open thy mouth wide". But is thy heart "opened wide"? Reader, it is easier to open the mouth about spiritual blessings than it is to have the heart opened for spiritual blessings - truly to covet them, truly to long after them. Oh! for more spirituality; my soul thirsteth for God "as the hart panteth after the water brooks". Expect much of God who gave His Son. What can He withhold! Look into thy circumstances, look into thy situation; look for the holy wisdom that can make thee to turn thy very hindrances into encouragements, and thy very trials into blessings.

The Lord fill us with His own self, His own love, under the unction of His own Spirit; and make us happy in the consciousness that notwithstanding all, we do stand before God "in Christ" - His beloved Son - and our beloved Lord.

J.H. Evans

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Gleanings in the Psalms

(Psalm 3)

Verse 1 — "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! Many there are that rise up against me".

Absalom's faction, like a snowball, strangely gathered in its motion. David speaks of it as one amazed; and well he might, that a people he had in so many ways obliged, should almost generally revolt from him, and rebel against him, and choose for their head such a silly, giddy young fellow as Absalom was. How slippery and deceitful are the MANY. Christ, the son of David, had many enemies. When a great multitude came to seize Him, when the crowd cried "Crucify Him, crucify Him", how were they then increased that troubled Him! Even good people must not think it strange if the stream be against them, and the powers that threaten them grow more and more formidable.

Matthew Henry

Verse 2 — "..... there is no help for him in God".

Temptation to despair of relief doth accompany unexpected and sad troubles; and this is more grievous than the trouble itself: therefore, David presenteth this temptation before God.

David Dickson

Verse 3 — "But thou, O Lord, are ... the lifter up of my head".

There is a lifting up of the head by elevation to office ... There is a lifting up in honour after shame, in health after sickness, in gladness after sorrow, in restoration after a fall, in victory after a temporary defeat; in all these respects the Lord is the lifter up of our head.

C.H. Spurgeon

Verse 4 — "I cried... He heard..."

When prayer leads the van, in due time deliverance brings up the rear.

Thomas Watson

Verse 5 — "I laid me down and slept".

Would you be secure in evil times? Get grace and fortify this garrison; a good conscience is a Christian's fort-royal. David's enemies lay round about him; yet, saith he: "I LAID ME DOWN AND SLEPT". A good conscience can sleep in the mouth of a cannon; GRACE is a Christian's coat of mail, which fears not the arrow or bullet. True grace can be shot at, but can never be shot through.

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Thomas Watson

Verse 6 — "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me".

The Psalmist will trust DESPITE APPEARANCES. Let us here limit our thoughts to this one idea, DESPITE APPRARANCES. What could look worse to human sight than this array of "ten thousands of people"? Ruin seemed to stare him in the face; wherever he looked an enemy was to be seen. What was one against ten thousand? It often happens that God's people come into circumstances like this; they say: "All these things are against me"; they seem scarce able to count their troubles; they cannot see a loophole through which to escape; things look very black indeed. It is great faith and trust that says under these circumstance: "I WILL NOT BE AFRAID".

Philip Pennett Power

Verse 7 — "...thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly".

The book of Proverbs tells us ... "There is a generation whose teeth are as swords..." It was by these that Christ was devoured when, before Pilate, He was condemned to the cross by the voices and accusations of His enemies.

Martin Luther

Verse 8 — "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord".

This verse contains the sum and substance of Calvinistic doctrine. Search Scripture through and you must, if you read it with candid mind, be persuaded that the doctrine of salvation by grace alone is the great doctrine of the Word of God: "SALVATION BELONGETH UNTO THE LORD". This is a point concerning which we are daily fighting. Our opponents say: "Salvation belongeth to the free will of man; if not to man's merit, yet at least to man's will;" but we hold that salvation from first to last, in every iota of it, belongs to the most High God. It is God that chooses His people. HE calls them by His grace; HE quickens them by His spirit, and keeps them by His power. It is not of man, neither by man: "Not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy". May we all learn this truth experimentally, for our proud flesh and blood will never permit us to learn it in any other way.

C.H. Spurgeon

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Boys and Girls

Hello Boys and Girls,

This month I have decided to tell you a story from the Bible. I expect some of you think the Bible is very dry and stodgy, and not as exciting as some of your other story books. Perhaps this is because you haven't really tried to like it. You know the Bible is God's Holy Word to us, and we should really try and read it as often as we can, for in its pages God tells us many things. Most important of all God tells us about Jesus Christ and how He can become our own Saviour.

The Bible story this month, then, is about a young king and what he thought about God's Word. The king's name was Josiah, and he was king of Judah. Since he was only 8 years old and not old enough to rule the land, the High Priest, Hilkiah governed until Josiah was sixteen years old.

During this time the king began to seek to know more about God. He sought the Lord and did what was right. He discovered that God's house, the temple of the Lord, was being misused. One king had even set up an altar to his idol Baal. Josiah decreed that the temple must be repaired and cleaned out. So the heathen idols were taken out and burned, and the temple put in order so that the people could worship God there.

While all this was going on, the High Priest cleaned the rooms of the temple. There, hidden away, perhaps in a cupboard or drawer, he found a strange scroll. It did not take Hilkiah long to recognise this scroll as the Book of the Law of God - the commandments that God had given to Moses - and which the people were to observe in order to please God. This was their Bible.

How excited Hilkiah was. He called to Shaphan the scribe: "I have found the Book of the Law of God in the House of the Lord". The High Priest gave the precious book to Shaphan, who took it to Josiah the king. Josiah too became excited. He, of course, had never read from the book. "Read to me from the book", he told Shaphan. Shaphan read about God's promises to bless the people if they served him faithfully; then he read God's promises to punish the people if they disobeyed and worshipped idols.

How worried Josiah became. His people had disobeyed God. The king tore his clothes and wept bitterly. Josiah told the High Priest: "Go and ask of the Lord about the words in the book, for I am sure our punishment will be great because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord.

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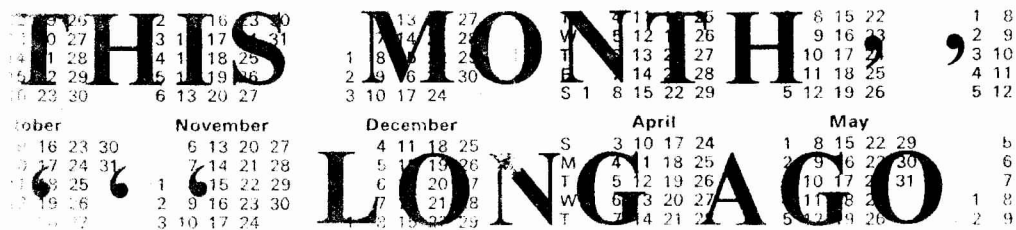
Hilkiah went to Huldah the prophetess, who said: "God will indeed punish those who break His laws, but because Josiah has humbled his heart and wept before God for the sins of his people, God will not let the people be punished while Josiah lives".

Josiah did not forget the words of God's Law. Soon, messengers were sent throughout the whole land, calling the people to come to Jerusalem, and their Josiah read to them from the wonderful Book that had been found in the temple. That day, the king promised to keep the Law of God and to serve Him with all his heart. He commanded the people to make the same promise, and they obeyed him and prayed to God for forgiveness.

Wasn't Josiah a good king, boys and girls? And remember he was just young - the same age as some of you - when he first began to trust God and learn more about Him and His commandments.

You will find this story in 11 Chronicles chapter 34. I trust that you will read it again from the Bible, and find courage and strength from God to promise, as Josiah did, to serve the Lord with all your heart.

Mrs Seaton.



This month we come to consider, in a very incomplete way, the life of one of the greatest, if not the greatest Evangelist that the Church has ever known. I refer, of course, to George Whitefield, who died on the 30th of this month (September) long ago, in the year 1770.

Some Christians find little benefit in looking into the lives of those whom God has chosen in past days to do His exploits; but, as Bishop Ryle so truly said on one occasion, "I pity the man who takes no interest in such enquiries. The instruments that God employs to do His work in the world deserve a close inspection. The man who did not care to look at the ram's horn that blew down Jericho, the hammer and nail that slew Sisera, the lamps and trumpets of Gideon, the sling and stone of David, might fairly be set down as a cold and heartless person". And the person who would be content with the few tib-bits that this page can afford when there is a

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vast feast to be had in looking further into the lives of God's great servants, I would imagine to be a person with a very small appetite for the things of his faith.

George Whitefield was born in Gloucester in the year 1714. As a young boy he began to serve beer to the customers of the Bell Inn which was run by his mother. At an early age, Whitefield expressed a desire to enter the Christian ministry, even although, up to this point, he knew nothing of the saving power of the blood of Christ.

He entered Oxford, and a deep sense of the awareness of sin began to settle on him. "I have lain whole nights awake groaning under the weight of sorrow that I felt for sin," he can tell us; "I have spent whole days and weeks lying upon the ground begging for deliverance from the evil thoughts that crowded upon me". This more or less summarises Whitefield's state during the best part of his preparation for the ministry. He read all that he could lay his hands on, and when it came to Lent he would fast on black bread and sugarless tea, and stand in the cold inadequately dressed until his hands and feet were blue and numb with the frost. Often he would wander through Christ Church meadows after dark in the hope that he would be tempted of Satan and, therefore, be like our Lord Himself who had been in the wilderness with wild beasts and tempted of the devil. But, the devil needed to tempt George Whitefield but a little; he was still outside of the redeeming grace of Christ, and, therefore, quite within easy grasp of the devil's hand. In the whole of Oxford University there seemed to be none in the same state as the man who was destined to be the world's greatest soulwinner.

And then, Whitefield came into contact with the Wesley brothers, and, on exchange of views and aspirations, they discovered that they were all passing through similar spiritual upheavals. The "Holy Club" came into existence, but still the method of supposed justification before God was whatever good works and zeal the members could display, and as yet, salvation was an unknown word in the heart of George Whitefield.

As has happened with so many others, God in His providence saw fit to lay George Whitefield aside with a terrible illness, during which Whitefield completely abandoned any notions of redemption outside of the free grace of God in Christ; and when he left University to take on the work of Christ's gospel, he left a different man than when he had entered, and received ordination as one who knew whom he had believed. From that day, he threw himself into the work of Christ. "Whether I myself shall ever have the honour of styling myself 'a prisoner of Jesus Christ'", he wrote, "I know not; but indeed, my dear friend, I call heaven and earth to witness that when the Bishop laid his hand upon me, I gave myself up to be a martyr for Him who hung upon the cross for me".

A "living martyr" George Whitefield became. Together with the Wesleys - now also converted through the grace of God - he soon burst the bounds of the Established Church of his day, and took to the fields and fairgrounds to declare unto all the gospel of redeeming love to sinners far and wide. He preached the length and breadth of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and travelled America - a long treacherous journey in those days - 13 times. He preached unreservedly the gospel of Free and Sovereign Grace, but with a zeal and

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determination for the souls of sinners that lit up every word that he spoke. On one occasion he was painting a picture of the blinded sinner by comparing him with a blind man whose guide dog had run off from him, and who was now approaching a cliff's edge. As he pictured the man leaning forward to seize the runaway dog, Lord Chesterfield, who in the congregation jumped from his seat and shouted: "Good God! He is gone!"

George Whitefield virtually died as he had lived - preaching. As he retired for bed on the night of his death, he turned on the staircase to those seated below, and, with candle in hand, he delivered one of his finest words before retiring for the night to sleep into eternity's arms in Christ. He was buried in a vault underneath the pulpit of the Church in which he had last preached, there to lie until the last trump.

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