

UPLOOK

OCTOBER 1997



The Up Side of Down

More Info on Little Rock

The Up Side of Down

J. B. NICHOLSON, JR.

I was witnessed to last week, the first time I can remember. Sherry was a kindly looking lady sitting by the airplane window, probably in her mid-sixties.

She made a frontal attack. Point blank, she told me she was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. That was the last time she mentioned Jesus Christ until I brought Him back into the conversation.

She recounted her own "conversion." A confused college student, with a Catholic father and a Protestant mother, she declared she had found answers in the Mormon church. It made sense, she said, that if they had prophets in the Bible days, we ought to have prophets in our day, too!

She told of her delight with the family orientation (although she was divorced); about the social closeness—church-sponsored dances and all. Then came the clincher: "Even if it isn't true," she said with a smile, "it's been a great life."

I tried to point out to her that this is only the *anteroom* to life, a little blip on the screen of eternity. It mattered very much whether her belief system was right or wrong. What she believed now would determine her destiny forever.

Had I studied the Book of Mormon, she queried. She would be more than happy to arrange to have one sent to me.

Well, yes, I had studied the Book of Mormon, I replied. In college, as she had. But my conclusion had been very different. I had found the Book and its message fatally flawed.

If she winced inside, she didn't show it. But she did want to know why I thought that.

"Surely you believe God is perfect?"

"Yes," she said.

"And you believe that your good works are necessary for your salvation?"

"Yes-s-s," she answered more cautiously.

"Are your works perfect?"

"No, of course not."

"Don't you see that this was the reason for the death of the Lord Jesus at Calvary! He would not have died if we could save ourselves."

"But His death makes up the difference for our imperfect works," she countered.

I know it's hard to believe, but anybody can walk on water (if it's cold enough). The problem starts when we get into hot water.



"The Lord Jesus was crucified two millennia ago, and when He died He shouted, 'It is finished!' To add to His finished work is an affront to God of the worst kind."

"Well, my belief satisfies me," she finished, turning to look out at the growing cloud banks.

Then it happened. The big 747 slewed sideways. Then it dropped into a hole. And fish-tailed. And jumped. The seatbelt light buzzed. Beverage service was suspended. And my neighbor was gripped with terror.

We continued to twist, jerk, and drop at irregular intervals. My companion, unreasoning fear etched on her face, leaned over and asked hoarsely: "I don't mean to be forward, but can I hold your arm?"

She clung for most of an hour. The pilot tried every altitude available, but it was no use. Eventually we broke out into smooth, clear air. My friend dared to relax, leaning back in her seat with a sigh like she had just had a tooth crowned.

I couldn't help but make the observation.

"I think the Lord gave us an opportunity just now to experiment with our beliefs. You see the difference? Your religion, like most, is DO, and it can't give you peace. When life goes smoothly, we look pretty much the same, but when the big bumps come, your peace disappears. If this plane were to go down, I would go up! For me it would be 'far better,' as the Bible says. I have that peace because I know that it's all DONE regarding my eternal destiny."

As Sherry sat silently, I explained the way of salvation simply to her. She thanked me as we gathered our bags to leave. I pray she will find peace in the Lord's finished work.

Here is the beauty of the Christian hope. Nothing is ever out of our God's control. Nothing is ever lost, even our failures. Peter learned that, when the Lord took his *misery* and turned it into a *ministry*! "When (not if) thou art restored," said the Lord, "strengthen thy brethren."

If the Lord took the worst thing that ever happened—the Cross—and turned it into the best thing that ever happened, there is nothing in your life that He can't restore if you'll let Him. **U**

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UPLOOK magazine is intended to encourage the people of God in fidelity to His Word, fervency in intercessory prayer, labors more abundant and love to the Lord. Believing in the practical Headship of Christ and the local autonomy of each assembly, this is not intended to be an official organ of any group or federation of local churches. The editor and the authors take responsibility for materials published. For any blessing which accrues from this publication, to God be the glory.

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Group Travel Information



RISE UP
AND BUILD 97

DECEMBER 30/97-JANUARY 2/98
DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

THERE'S STILL TIME

We are delighted to see the space filling up so quickly for *Rise Up and Build*. If you are planning to attend the conference, but still haven't registered, please avoid disappointment by making your reservations as soon as possible. Additional information and registration forms may be obtained by calling the conference hotline: (616) 456-5123 or via e-mail: riseup@uplook.org.

HOW ARE YOU GETTING THERE?

If you have sent in your conference reservations, and would like to get in on group travel provisions, we advise you to make the necessary arrangements with your area coordinator. The September issue of *Uplook* included a list of people who may be contacted. Here is the updated information:

Peter Aceti	(705) 942-6967	Northern Region, Ontario
Sid Bhatt	(302) 425 0324	Delaware/Pennsylvania
Dave Dunlap	(813) 996-1053	Orlando/Tampa, FL
Rajan Eapen	(301) 299-7787	Maryland
John Gordon	(919) 954-9493	Greensboro/Raleigh, NC
Ron Hampton	(204) 669-1694	Manitoba, Saskatchewan
Mark Hogan	(416) 498-1782	Toronto, ON
Russell Horn	(316) 838-5762	Wichita/Kansas City, KS
Jamie Hull	(719) 634-2507	Colorado Springs, CO
Doug Kazen	(206) 823-9017	Seattle, WA
Gerry Keller	(314) 843-1310	St. Louis, MO
Mark Kolchin	(609) 693-9252	New Jersey/New York
Jim Lindamood	(918) 663-1121	Tulsa, OK
Dave Miller	(612) 641-5041	Minnesota, MN
John Reimer	(706) 863-6006	Augusta, GA
Craig Shakarji	(301) 417-6744	Washington, DC/Virginia
Bill Sloetjes	(905) 563-5571	Niagara Region, ON
Harold Summers	(604) 738-8943	Vancouver, BC

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

TEXAS/OKLAHOMA

FARE	\$100 per person (round trip)	
DEPART:	Garland Bible Chapel, Dallas, TX	
	December 29, 1997	12:00 NOON
CONTACT:	Bryan Hughes	(903) 938-9414

FRONT LINES

▷ **WHERE IS YOUR TREASURE?**

The theme for the 1997 Women's Missionary Conference on Saturday, Nov. 1 in Painesville, OH, is *Where Your Treasure Is, There Your Heart Will Be Also* (Mt. 6:21). Come to hear reports of what God is doing. The expected speakers are: Lois Turello (Italy); Jane Wolcott (CMML, France, Zaire); Joyce Finch (Zambia—report and devotional speaker). Believers' Bible Chapel is located at 12791 Painesville-Warren Rd., Painesville, OH. For information, contact:

Sandy Tobias
Phone: (440) 428-4163 or
Debbie Auld
E-mail: adauld@suite224224.net

▷ **FALL CONFERENCE IN BRANDYWINE**

The Annual Conference at the Brandywine Bible Chapel in Wilmington, DE, is scheduled for October 31 through November 2. Doug Kazen, Joe Reese, Alan Parks, and Neil Dougal have been invited to share in the ministry of God's Word.

▷ **METROPOLITAN MISSIONARY CONFERENCE**

The saints at Good Tidings Gospel Hall (345 Malcolm X Blvd., Brooklyn, NY) would like to announce the Metropolitan Missionary Conference that is planned for Saturday, Nov. 1 from 10:30 AM to 4:30 PM. The invited speakers are David Corbin (MN) and Earl Campbell (FL). For further details, contact:

James McCall
(718) 994-1318

▷ **7TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

The Christians at the Three Oaks Bible Chapel in Macon, GA, plan, in

the will of the Lord, to host their 7th Annual Fall Conference on November 8 from 10 AM until 4 PM. The invited speaker is J. B. Nicholson, Jr.

For further information, call
John Moore
(912) 956-4328

▷ **TAVISTOCK & AREA**

The assemblies in Tavistock and surrounding areas are planning to hold a Bible Conference on November 15, 1997, DV. The meetings will be held at East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock, ON. The speakers that are expected are Randy Amos (NY) and Dr. Arthur Garnes (MD). Call Mike Bastiansen at (519) 475-4528 for details.

▷ **FATHER/SON RETREAT**

The annual Father/Son Retreat will be held at Camp Iroquoia on November 7, 8, and 9. The speaker will be Keith Trevolt from Northside Bible Chapel in Wichita, KS, Lord willing. He is the father of three children, a conference speaker, elder, teacher, and cardiology nurse practitioner. His planned topic is "Essential Principles for Living in the Last Days." Call Jim Weisbecker at (717) 967-2577 for details or to register.

▷ **MISSIONS CONFERENCE**

The Bible Chapel in Tucson, AZ, announces their 13th Annual Missions Conference, Nov. 7-9. Speakers expected: Henry Sardinia (MO) and Fernand Saint-Louis (PQ). The theme of the conference is *The Role of the Holy Spirit in Missions*. For overnight accommodations, contact:

Mrs. Virginia Prater
458 E. Glenn
Tucson, AZ 86705
(520) 622-3787

▷ **HORTON HAVEN LADIES**

Horton Haven Christian Camp in Chapel Hill, TN, will host a Ladies Conference November 7-8, in the will of the Lord. Nancy Trogdon (NC) has been invited to speak on the theme, *Come Away My Beloved*. Please call Wendy Phelan at (615) 352-6761 for information.

▷ **BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM**

The Bible Study Program in Oakville, ON, will meet on November 15 and December 13, the Lord willing. Classes will be held at Hopedale Bible Chapel (Oakville, ON) from 9 AM until 12 noon.

For more information, contact:
Willie Burnett
(905) 634-6345
e-mail: wh.burnett@hwcen.org

▷ **SINGLES' RETREAT AND CONFERENCE**

In a day that promotes a social gospel and a world that is encroaching on the lives of many professing Christians, what is required to see a greater devotion to God? Lord willing, at the Singles' Retreat and Conference on November 21-24 in Seabrook, (Charleston) SC, speakers Greg Drake, Skip Elliot, and Dan Gustafson will address the topic: *Devotion to God*. Summerville Bible Fellowship (Summerville, SC) are the sponsors of the conference. The registration fee of \$80 covers all necessities for the weekend.

If you have questions or wish to register, contact:
Skip or Cathy Elliot
(803) 873-7083

▷ **HOLIDAY GATHERING**

The Tampa Bay area Thanksgiving conference will be held, DV, on

Front Lines

November 21-22 at the Holiday Gospel Chapel, 1842 Grand Blvd., New Port Ritchie, FL. The speakers expected are Donald Norbie (CO) and Alan Parks (SC). Contact:

John Bromfield
(813) 960-1302

▷ FULLERTON, CALIFORNIA

Lord willing, a Missions Conference will be held at Grace Bible Chapel (1119 S. Lambert, Fullerton, CA) on Friday, November 21 through Sunday, November 23. The times of the meetings will be Friday 7:00 PM; Saturday 9:00 AM-4:00 PM; Sunday 8:30 AM-2:00 PM.

Lunch will be served on Saturday and there will be an International Potluck on Sunday.

The Lord's servants scheduled to speak are Bruce Collins (IA) and Doug Kazen (WA). A variety of seminars will be held on Saturday.

For information or overnight accommodations, contact:

G. V. Mathai
(562) 924-5169 or
Grace Bible Chapel
(714) 77-GRACE

▷ MARITIME MEETINGS

The Christians in several assemblies in Eastern Canada would like to extend an invitation to the meetings that are planned with J. B. Nicholson, Jr., this fall. Nov. 21-23 will be in Fredericton, NB; Nov. 24-27 will be in Saint John and Norton, NB; and Nov. 28-30 will be in Dartmouth, NS. For information, contact Ernie Adsett at (506) 363-3068.

▷ THE ASTONISHING ELEMENTS OF LIFE

A new video on recent scientific evidence for a Creator has just been

released. Using chemical experiments, and the latest scientific insight this 60-minute program presents an up-to-date challenge to those who deny a personal Creator. Professor David Humphreys demonstrates how the molecules of life give testimony to a purposeful design by an intelligent Creator.

Dr. Humphreys, a commended assembly worker, is Professor Emeritus of Chemistry at McMaster University in Hamilton, ON.

For info or to place an order:
Dr. David A. Humphreys
Phone/Fax: (905) 627-4672
Email: humphrey@mcmaster.ca

▷ SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Rest Haven Homes

Rest Haven Homes, a retirement community and nursing home in Grand Rapids, MI, is hiring Christian workers (minimum 16-years old) in various areas such as house-keeping, laundry, and the kitchen.

There is need for people to work as nurse's aides. A 3-week course for this position is offered in Grand

Rapids, the expenses of which are covered by Rest Haven.

Inexpensive housing within walking distance can often be arranged for single workers, upon request. Transportation to all the meetings of a nearby local assembly is available.

Also, if anyone living in West Michigan is interested in volunteering, there is need for help at the reception desk, answering the phone, and in the activities department.

To receive an application form or for further information, call Kathy Dahnke or Brian Wilson at (616) 363-6819.

Shepherd Retirement Community

Located in the heart of Florida, this retirement community is near attractions but surrounded by lakes, golf courses and citrus groves.

A business manager for the retirement community is needed immediately. The individual would also assist with assembly functions. For a free video or information, contact:

James D. Dunbar
16 Bradford Blvd.
Frostproof, FL 33843
(941) 635-5102

▷ COMMENDATION

David and Beth Wilson

Fifth Avenue Chapel (Belmar, NJ) is pleased to announce the commendation of David and Beth Wilson to full time service in the Republic of Ireland. After two years of careful prayer and evaluation, the Wilson's have shown themselves to be of sound character and faithful in their walk with God as well as having being servants of God's people.

They will join the work at the assembly in Kilkenny for Bible teaching and youth ministries, DV. **U**

SOON TO BE REPRINTED!

The original Newberry Bible, large type, single column "Penfold" edition. This classic study Bible will be available again in the Spring of 1998 DV due to a special *limited edition* printing. It will be printed on high quality India paper and be bound with a semi-yapp quality leather binding. An interleave edition is also planned. The retail price for the regular editon will be \$99.95; CDN \$139.95. Gospel Folio Press is now taking orders. Reserve your copy today.

Q & A: What About Little Rock?

J. B. NICHOLSON, JR.

I spent two weeks recently in Northern Ireland. Christians from across the country gathered in Newcastle for the Northfield Bible Weeks. The day consisted of morning ministry meetings, evening prayer meetings (for almost one hour) followed by a gospel meeting, followed by an open-air gathering at the town center. The believers spent their days visiting in the area, and many tourists and local people were invited to the evening gospel meetings. A team of young people fanned out through the countryside, delivering invitations to every door. Also special children's meetings were held in nearby trailer parks and a number of these professed to be saved.

A large tent, seating 1,000, had been pitched in a farmer's field on the outskirts of the city, and much prayer had gone up to the Lord about the effort. Was it any surprise when the Lord came in with blessing, and quite a number were saved? The tent was too small the first night, with 1,200 in attendance.

The prayer time was well attended in the prayer tent pitched beside the main tent, and the intercession was heart-felt. The congregational singing at the meetings was out of this world, and there was a spirit of expectancy in the audience as the Word was opened. My heart cries out: *Why not here in North America!*

In our last issue of *Uplook*, we dared to raise the possibility of 1,000 or so believers gathering

Is your heart stirred for the desperate spiritual need of North America? Could we join together in its heartland to raise the gospel standard and cry out to the Lord to do a great thing among us?

next June, D.V., in Little Rock, Arkansas, for a concerted gospel outreach. Let me seek to answer some questions that have been raised.

Q. *Where is Little Rock anyway?*

A. The capital of Arkansas (almost completely destitute of assembly work to our knowledge) is within driving range of the bulk of assembly Christians in North America. About 600 miles southwest of Chicago, Little Rock is 271 miles from Tulsa, OK; 352 miles from St. Louis, MO; 418 miles from New Orleans, LA; 346 miles from Nashville, TN; 314 miles from Dallas, TX; 539 miles from Atlanta, GA; and 615 miles from Cincinnati, OH.

Q. *What size is the city?*

A. Little Rock has a population of approximately 400,000. With about 100,000 homes, 500 pairs of workers could manageably visit every home in the area (about 35 homes per day) over a six-day period.

Q. *What will it cost per person for this?*

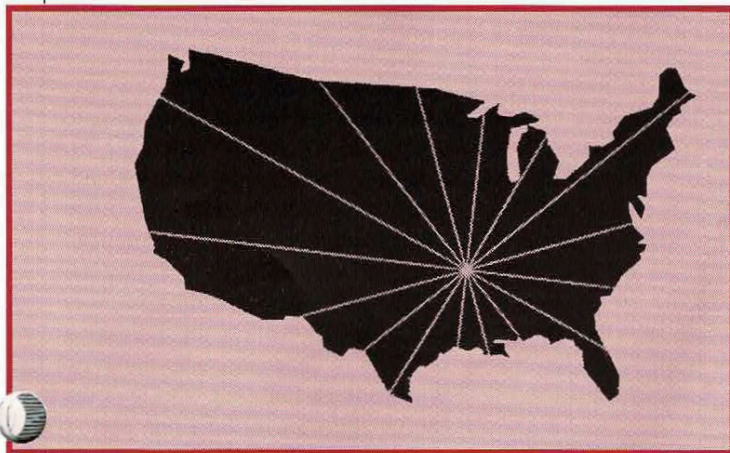
A. Not counting travel costs (which could easily be subsidized by most assemblies, I would think), we would try to secure college dorms and a cafeteria for the week. With nine months to save, a few dollars a week put aside would probably cover room and board. If the 1,000 prayer warriors at home wanted a practical investment in the work, a small gift of about \$10 each would rent a large auditorium for the evening meetings!

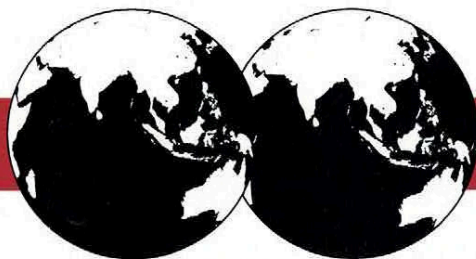
Q. *What are the dates of the proposed outreach?*

A. The first week of June, I understand, is graduation week for many colleges. The second full week, June 6-13, 1998, DV is being proposed as a good time, before most camps begin.

Further questions will be answered in next month's *Uplook*. Keep in touch. Keep praying. Keep looking up!

U





▷ MAF PLANE CRASHES

Dan Osterhus and Job Orellana, two pilots with Mission Aviation Fellowship and Walter Orellana, a brother of one of the pilots, died in a plane crash near Shell, Ecuador, on September 14. Base manager Steve Marks says the men had located a downed plane and were circling it. For some reason, the MAF plane crashed about 200 feet from the other accident, killing all three occupants. The deaths will have a dramatic impact on the work among the tribal people and will curtail the operation significantly. Dan and Job were two of the most experienced pilots and they will be dearly missed. Hopefully, MAF will be able to continue meeting the needs of the missionaries and the ambulance needs of the indigenous groups living in the jungle.

—*Mission Aviation Fellowship*

▷ REVISED RUSSIAN RELIGION BILL ADOPTED

Religious freedom has taken a backwards step in Russia, because of the September 23 passage of the revised law, "Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" by the upper house of the Russian State Duma. The 137-0 vote drew immediate criticism from the Vatican, US Congress, and human rights groups.

This "compromise" bill is very much like the bill that Yeltsin vetoed in July. Unlike the first bill, it does not make the distinction between "traditional" and "non-traditional" religious organizations. The bill would limit the activity of foreign missionaries and guard against totalitarian sects. One of the most controversial clauses says that religious groups must be present in Russia for

15 years before they can publish or distribute religious literature, or invite foreigners for preaching activities. Such groups cannot hold worship services in hospitals, senior citizens' homes, schools, orphanages, or prisons. They could not form educational establishments, found newspapers or magazines, and their clergy would not be exempt from military service.

Only a handful of religious groups were allowed to operate during the Soviet era, with its official ideology of atheism, and therefore most do not meet the 15-year requirement. Groups which have not yet registered would have even fewer rights and would have to inform the government of their existence every year in order to receive limited rights after 15 years. Some feel that Brethren Assemblies could have a strong position considering their long history in the country, beginning with Baedeker and Lord Radstock in the 1800's.

Supporters of the bill say Russia needs to protect itself from foreign sects and cults which have been coming to the country since the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union. The Mormons, now have about 500 missionaries in Russia and thousands of church members nationwide.

Critics claim that the Russian Orthodox Church sees it as a way to prevent other Christians from operating freely in Russia. They argue that despite minor changes, this new bill is as restrictive as the old one, and in some ways more so. Both versions seem to violate the 1993 Russian constitution, which says that all religions should be treated equally.

▷ FAMINE IN NORTH KOREA

The German Red Cross, fresh from a visit to North Korea, called the famine there one of the worst the world has seen since World War II, with around 10,000 children starving to death every month.

Spokeswoman Susanne Anger, just returned from two weeks in the reclusive state, pleaded for more international food and medical aid to save lives. "The mortality rate for children under seven has risen to 40 percent," she said. "About 800,000 children are chronically undernourished and have severe developmental damage. Nine- or 10-year-olds look like three- or four-year-olds."

▷ U. S. IMMIGRATION LAW

An immigration law in the United States that impacts religious workers and mission groups expires on September 30. If this particular act is not renewed, it would become substantially more difficult for Christian workers who are non-US citizens to come to the States. This doesn't apply so much to ordained clergy but to almost every other category.

▷ CHURCH WEDDINGS IN JAPAN

The latest craze in Japan—which is mostly Buddhist and Shinto—is the church wedding. One entrepreneur, Masatoshi Kurosaki, paid \$620,000 for everything in the St. Mary's Church in Bristol, England, and had it all shipped to Tokyo. He has the innards of 16 other Anglican churches besides. Using real pastors, he holds Christian wedding services in the rebuilt chapels for increasing numbers of Japanese, who make no profession of faith but who love the church atmosphere. Said one pastor,

"Mr. Kurosaki's services provide you with a captive audience of 80 people every hour." —*Pulse*

▷ **US GIRLS' DRUG PROBLEM**

More American girls are turning to drugs and alcohol. Girls are trying out drugs and drink at earlier ages and a study shows dramatic increases in initial use of alcohol and drugs by girls aged 10 to 14 over the last three decades. In the early 1960s about 7 percent of new drinkers were girls aged 10 to 14. But that rose to 31 percent by the early 1990s. In the 12 to 17 age group, as many girls as boys abuse alcohol and drugs, although girls are more likely to abuse drugs such as tranquilizers.

▷ **BOOK STAND BOMBED**

On September 15 at an Exhibition Fair in Gaziantep, Southern Turkey, the Good News Publishers' stand was bombed. The results of the bombing were the death of one person (a young child) and also 25 people injured, of whom 7 are still in the hospital, one in serious condition (a child as well).

Officials at all levels of the government have made public statements expressing sympathy for the victims, as well as explaining that those who made the attack not only attacked the Good News Company but the whole country of Turkey.

Prior to the bombing, those working at the stand received threats. The threats were expressed that if they continued to sell New Testaments then they would pay the price for their activities, that is, death. Seven members of a little known faction of Islamic terrorists have been arrested.

Good News Publishers has participated annually in Europe's largest

book fair held in Istanbul. Because of this incident, they may or may not be able to have their book stand at the exhibition in the future. Please pray that the organizers of the fair would permit us to do so, and that the Lord would provide the necessary protection.

▷ **ISLAMISTS IN EGYPT STRUGGLE**

The tide may be turning against Muslim conservatives in Egypt. *The Economist* magazine reports that while Egypt is more conservative than a few years ago, the Muslims have less political power. The fundamentalists have faced court setbacks, a heavy-handed government crackdown, as well as an economy growing by over 5% per year, which had lessened the allure of radicalism. A similar trend is being seen in Afghanistan, Algeria, Sudan and Turkey.

In July, Egypt's justice ministry formed a committee to draft a law that would apply the same rules to the building of churches as already apply to mosques. As has been the case for many centuries, Egypt's president must personally approve any construction or repair work to churches. That approval has rarely been given. President Hosni Mubarak said recently, "Egyptian Coptic Christians are an original part of Egypt's national cohesion. Their rights are guaranteed because they are the rights of each Egyptian."

▷ **CHURCH TO PROBE GIFTS FROM DRUG LORDS**

The Mexican government asked the Roman Catholic Church to investigate reports of lavish gifts the church may have received from drug

barons. An official said Mexico could launch an investigation of its own if the Church finds evidence it received donations from drug profits. The alleged "alms" came to light Friday when a Church official said major drug traffickers had given generously to the church despite being "sinners." If the Church finds proof confirming the remarks, "the corresponding authorities, the prosecutors, would have to conduct the investigations and act accordingly."

▷ **CHANGE OF HEART**

A decade ago, military leaders in Fiji engineered the South Pacific's first coup and withdrew from the British Commonwealth. While a 1990 constitution reinstated civilian rule, it made it impossible for Fijian Indians to hold power. Now however, former army officer (and current Prime Minister) Sitiveni Rabuka has applied for Fiji's reinstatement in the Commonwealth. In the last seven years, the economy has suffered with the outflux of about 50,000 Indians, who have taken their business to Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The proportion of Indians in the population has plunged from 52 percent in 1970 to 42 percent today.

▷ **PROBLEMS IN FRENCH PRISONS**

On a per-capita basis, France has more people imprisoned than any other country in Europe, save Spain and Britain. Some 58,000 people are behind bars—double the number two decades ago. Forty percent are simply awaiting trial. One in six prisoners is a drug addict, while one in five has the hepatitis-C virus. More than 1,000 had the AIDS virus last year, according to tests. **U**

Strengthen Thy Brethren



Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come...He will come and save you...And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. **Isaiah 35: 3-4, 10**

SPEAK OUT

*If you have a friend worth loving,
Love him, yes, and let him know
That you love him, ere life's evening
Tinge his brow with sunset glow.
Why should good words ne'er be said
Of a friend—till he is dead?*

*If you hear a prayer that moves you
By its humble pleading tone,
Join it. Do not let the seeker
Bow before his God alone.
Why should not thy brother share
The strength of two or three in prayer?*

*If your work is made more easy
By a friendly helping hand,
Say so. Speak out brave and truly,
Ere the darkness veil the land.
Should a brother workman dear
Falter for a word of cheer?*

Scatter thus your seeds of kindness
All enriching as you go—
Leave them. Trust the Harvest Giver;
He will make each seed to grow.
So until the happy end,
Your life shall never lack a friend.

*Forget yourself for others, and
others will not forget you.*

But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. **Luke 22:32**

During a meeting with George Eliot, not long before her death, a vase toppled over from the mantelpiece.

The great writer quickly and unconsciously put out her hand to stop its fall. "I hope," she said softly as she replaced the vase from where it had stood, "that the time will come when we shall instinctively hold up the man or woman who begins to fall as naturally and unconsciously as we arrest a falling ornament." *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.* **Galatians 6:1**

**Upon a dark bemired life
A gleam of human love was flung
And lo, from that ungenial soil,
A noble life upsprung.
—L. M. Montgomery**

**Are you
bearing one
another's
burdens or
bearing down
on them?**

Christ died for the Church. Anything worth Him dying for is worth saving. This is what God has called us to do: to save and build the Church, for which Christ gave His life. **—JAMES HAMILTON**

RESTORATION

*And when with grief you see your brother stray
Or in a night of error lose his way,
Direct his wandering and restore the day,
To guide his steps afford your kindest aid,
And gently pity whom you can't persuade;
Leave to avenging heaven his stubborn will
For, O remember, he's your brother still.*

—Dean Swift

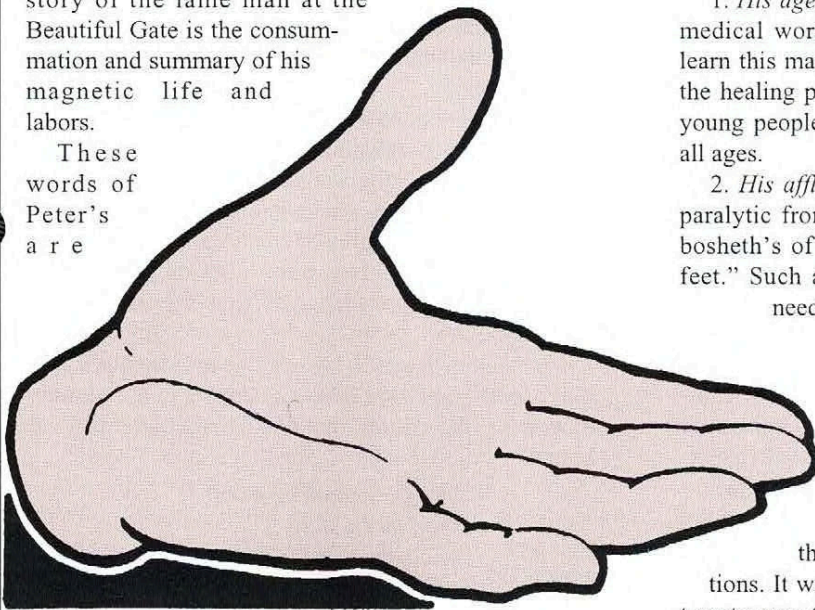
Simon Peter: The Giver

LES RAINEY

The life of Simon Peter has always been of particular interest to God's people. His very names blend together the human and the divine, even as does Jacob/Israel. How vividly he manifests the frailty

of human nature and the rock-like character of divine transformation. While much has been written concerning his call to discipleship in John 1:42, his consecration to service in Luke 5:1-5; 6:13, his confession in Matthew 16:13-18, and his companionship with Christ so wonderfully unfolded in his letters (Mk. 1:28-37; 3:13-35), the words "I give" in the story of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate is the consummation and summary of his magnetic life and labors.

These words of Peter's are



remarkable: "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee." In these days of immense expenditure on places of worship, religious organization, and ceremonial services, it is searching to think that the gospel was preached in mighty power without money. Our Lord went about doing good, but He had no money with which to do it. It is still possible for a few simple preachers to go out in poverty and win a mighty harvest of souls for Christ.

John and Peter were complements of one another. What Peter lacked, John possessed. They were devoted to their Master and to each other. Their source of power was prayer. Their eyes were towards the Lord,

The religious world makes God out to be a taker. But He is a giver, the giver of every good gift. He wants His people to be like Him in this.

and the incident in Acts 3 reveals that the true wealth of the Church is not material but spiritual.

LAI D UP (vv. 1-5)

1. *His age.* The first thing a good examiner seeks in medical work is the case history of the patient. We learn this man was above 40 years of age (4:22). Like the healing power of Heaven, restoring little children, young people, and adults, the salvation of God is for all ages.

2. *His affliction* (v. 2). Here was a helpless case, a paralytic from birth. His case was similar to Mephibosheth's of the Old Testament—"lame on both his feet." Such a condition aptly sets forth the sinner's need.

3. *His abode.* The place where the man lived is not recorded, but we do know where he spent most of his time. He was a beggar outside the temple at the gate called Beautiful. This gate was made of Corinthian brass (a metal more precious than gold at the time), of costly and magnificent proportions. It was 80 feet high and 60 feet wide and took twenty men to close it. Yet for all its magnificence, it was a doorway to nowhere for this man. He needed contact with the One who said, "I am the way"; "I am the door."

4. *His alms* (v. 3). As the lame man spotted John and Peter coming to the temple at the hour of prayer, he asked alms. Like the little Southern girl said, "He asked for alms and got legs." God never disappoints and He is able to meet every need of saint or sinner.

RAISED UP (vv. 6-7)

The helpless man became the happy man. The man who offered hope—"look on us"—became the man who imparted health—"immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength." He was raised up by the

Simon Peter: The Giver

power of God from the state of a beggar to that of a worshipper.

His healing may be viewed from two aspects:

1. *The negative aspect.* It was not on the silver or gold standard: "Silver and gold have I none" is the language of Peter. The healing of the lame man was not by human means. Neither Peter nor John were men associated with the schools of the day, yet they had the power of God. Again the law proved its weakness to change a life; only Christ can do it.

2. *The positive aspect.* Health came to this man because of the object of his faith. "And His name through faith in His name, hath made this man strong" (v. 16). The name of the Lord Jesus speaks of His person and work. Peter used the historical name of Jesus of Nazareth, as well as the divine name, Christ, the anointed One.

TUNED UP (vv. 8-11)

The lame man experienced the power of God in his life. He became the first witness to the power of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice the steps: "He received strength," "stood," "walked," "leaping and praising." What holy joy surged through this man's life as he knew and felt the grace and power of God in reality. In these words we have the history of the soul. Salvation—he received strength for his utter helplessness. Strength—he was able to walk. Singing—he exchanged his role from a beggar to a blesser of the Name. How this reminds us of the history of the psalmist in Psalm 40.

I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust.... (vv. 1-4).

On a visit to the Pope at Rome, Thomas Aquinas was shown the papal treasures. The pontiff said, "You will observe the Church has no longer to say, 'Silver and gold have I none.'"

Aquinas answered: "Neither can she say, 'Rise up and walk.'"

Though Peter had three falls—before the Lord, before the world, and before the Church—how encouraging it is to know that he not only was graciously restored, but was given a ministry as a result: "when thou art restored, strengthen thy brethren."

Whether on a pivotal day such as Pentecost or on an ordinary typical day as recorded in Acts 3, the dominating passion of Peter's life was giving. He gave what he had, and so can the very poorest of us today. Peter could do nothing better than give what he had. We may be failures financially. We may be physically weak or unimpressive. We may not be greatly gifted intellectually. We may think we are devoid of talents. But in spite of all shortcomings—in spite of all weaknesses—we can give.

Every man can be a giver if he wants to be. Can we write our own biographies, as Peter could, with one sentence—"I give"? In a world full of people wanting to get, called consumers, a giver stands out.

But how can we give? What can we give? Peter gave what God had given him. Our God is "the giver of every good and perfect gift." Thus we can afford to be generous.

Remember the little lad who gave what he had to Christ and it was used to bring blessing to a multitude. Remember the chorus that has often challenged our hearts:

*Shamgar had an ox-goad,
David had a sling,
Dorcas had a needle,
Rahab had some string,
Samson had a jawbone,
Moses had a rod,
Mary had some ointment, but...
They all were used for God.*

Remember that the One who asks us to give was the One who gave His all for us. And remember that He is no man's debtor.

Peter gave what he had, not what he expected to have tomorrow, nor what he had yesterday, but that which was a possession of his at that moment: "What I have, I give." May we follow the example of one of heaven's multi-millionaires, who did not make excuses for what he could not give, but simply gave what he could.

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Simon Peter Steps Out in Faith

C. H. MACKINTOSH

The close of Matthew 14 presents a scene in the life of Peter on which we may dwell with profit for a few moments. It furnishes a good illustration of his own touching inquiry, "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

Our Lord, having fed the multitude, and sent His disciples across the sea, retired to a mountain to be alone in prayer. In this we have a striking foreshadowing of the present time. Jesus has gone on high. Israel is, for the present, set aside, but not forgotten. Days of trouble will come—rough seas and stormy skies will be the lot of the remnant; but their Messiah will return, and deliver them out of all their troubles. He will bring them to their desired haven, and all will be peace and joy for the Israel of God.

All this is fully unfolded on the page of prophecy, and is of the deepest interest to every lover of God and His Word; but for the present we can merely dwell on the inspired record concerning Simon Peter, and seek to learn the lesson which that record forcibly teaches.

And straightway Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray; and when the evening was come, He was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves, for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered Him, and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O, thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

This brief passage presents to our view some of the leading features of Peter's character. His zeal, his energy, his devotedness of heart, no one can for a moment call in question. But these very qualities—beautiful as

It has been said that walking on the water spoils you for riding in a boat. This well-known author shows us the two necessities for supernatural progress above the tossing waves of life.

they surely are—led him not infrequently into a position of such prominence as to render his weak points all the more conspicuous. A man of less zeal, less energy, would have remained on board the ship, and thus avoided Peter's failure and breakdown. Perhaps, too, men of cooler temperament would condemn as unwarrantable rashness Peter's act in leaving the ship, or pronounce it a piece of forwardness which justly deserved a humiliating rebuff.

All this may be so; but we are free to confess that the zeal, energy and devotedness of this beloved servant of Christ have far more powerful charms for the heart than the cool, calculating, self-considering spirit which, in order to avoid the shame and humiliation of a defeat, refuses to take a bold and decided step for Christ. True it is that Peter in the interesting scene now before us completely broke down. But why? Was it because he left the ship? No; but because he ceased to look in simple faith to Jesus.

Here lay the root of his failure. Had he only kept his eye on the Master, he could have walked on the water, though it was rough. Faith can walk on rough water as easily as on smooth. Nature cannot walk on either. It is not a question of the state of the water, but the state of the heart. Circumstances have nothing to do with faith, except that when difficult and trying, they develop its power and brightness.

There was no reason whatever, in the judgment of faith, why Peter should have failed in his walk on the water. Faith looks not at the things that are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal. It endures as seeing Him who is invisible. "Faith is the evidence of things not seen." It lifts the heart above the winds and waves of this rough world, and keeps it in perfect peace, to the praise of Him who is the sustainer of faith.

But our beloved apostle utterly failed in faith on the occasion now before us. He, as we so often do, took

Simon Peter Steps Out in Faith

his eye off the Lord and fixed it on his surroundings. As a consequence, he immediately began to sink. It must ever be. The grand motto for the life of faith is, "Looking unto Jesus." It is this alone which enables us to "run the race set before us," whether the way is rough or smooth. When Peter came out of the ship, it was either Christ or drowning. He might well say at such a moment, "Lord, to whom shall I go?" Where could he turn? When on board the ship, he had its timbers between him and death, but when on the water he had nothing but Jesus.

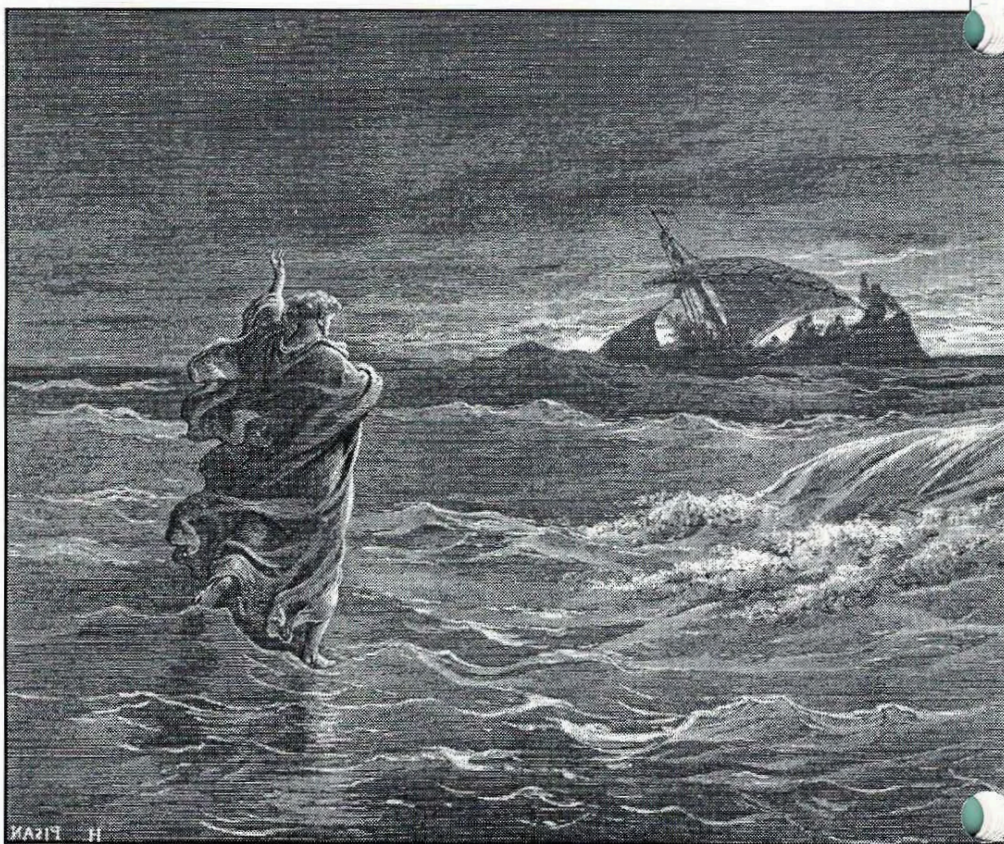
And was He not enough? Yes, if only Peter could have trusted Him. This is the point. All things are possible to him that believes. Rough seas become like glass and lofty mountains are leveled when faith brings the power of God to bear. The greater the difficulties, the brighter the triumphs of faith. It is in the furnace that the real preciousness of faith is displayed. Faith has to do with God, and not with men or things. If we cease to lean on God, we have nothing but a wild, watery waste around us, where nature's resources must hopelessly fail.

All this was proved by Peter when he came out of the ship to walk on the water; and every child of God must prove it in his measure, for Peter's history is full of great practical lessons for us all. If we want to walk above the circumstances through which we are passing—if we would be able to give an answer, clear, distinct, and decided, to the skepticism, the rationalism and the infidelity of the day in which we live—then, assuredly, we must keep the eye of faith

firmly fixed on "the Author and Perfecter of faith." It is not by logical skill or intellectual power we shall ever meet the arguments of the infidel, but by an abiding sense, a living and soul-satisfying apprehension, of the all-sufficiency of Christ—Himself, His work, His Word—to meet every need.

It may be the reader feels disposed to condemn Peter for leaving the ship. He may think there was no need for his taking such a step. Why not abide with his brethren on board? Was it not possible to be quite as devoted to Christ in the ship as on the water? Did not the sequel prove that it would have been far better, and safer, and wiser, for Peter to remain where he was, than to venture on such a course?

To all this we reply that our apostle was evidently governed by an earnest desire to be nearer to his Lord. And this was right. He saw Jesus walking on the water, and he longed to be with Him. And, further, he had the



direct authority of his Lord for leaving the ship. We freely grant that without this it would have been a fatal mistake to leave his position; but the moment that word "Come" fell on his ear he had a divine warrant for walking on the water. In fact, to have remained would have been to miss great blessing.

Thus it is in every case. We must have authority before we can act in anything. Without this, the greater our zeal, energy, and apparent devotedness, the more fatal will be our mistake, and the more mischief we shall do to ourselves, to others, and to the cause of Christ. It is of the highest importance in every case, but especially where there is a measure of zeal, earnestness, and energy, that there should be sober subjection to the authority of the Word. If there is not this, there is no calculating the amount of mischief which may be done.

But there is another thing which stands next in importance to the authority of the divine Word, and that is the abiding realization of the divine Presence. These two things must never be separated if we want to walk on the water. We may be quite clear and settled in our own minds, having distinct authority for any given line of action; but if we do not have with equal distinctness the sense of the Lord's presence with us—if our eyes are not continually on the living God—we shall certainly break down.

This is very serious. It was precisely here that Peter failed. He did not fail in obedience, but in realized dependence. He acted on the word of Jesus in leaving the ship, but he failed to be occupied with Jesus in walking on the water. Mere authority is not enough; we want power. To act without authority is wrong. To act without power is impossible. The authority for starting is the word. The power to proceed is the divine presence. The combination of the two will always give success. It matters not what the difficulties are, if we have the stable authority of Holy Scripture for our course, and the blessed support of the presence of God in pursuing it. When God speaks, we must obey; but in order to do so, we must lean on Him. "Have not I commanded you?" "Lo, I am with you."

Here are the two things so absolutely essential to every child of God. Without these, we can do nothing; with them, we can do all things.

It was so in the case of Simon Peter, and it has been

We can tell the **tendency**
of the human heart because
all our **sympathies**
are with Peter when he
began to sink.
What more **reasonable**
place to be than on top
of the waves
if our Lord has **invited**
us to come?

so in the case of thousands since. It is one thing to make a good start, and another thing to make good progress. It is one thing to leave the ship, and another thing to walk on the water. Peter did the former, but he failed in the latter.

But where did he find himself? In the arms of a loving Saviour! "Lord, save me!" How touching! He casts himself on a well-known love—a love which was yet to meet him in far more humiliating circumstances. Nor was he disappointed. Blessed be God, no poor failing creature can ever appeal to that love in vain. "And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Exquisite grace! If Peter failed to reach his Lord, his Lord did not fail to reach him. If Peter failed in faith, Jesus could not fail in grace. Impossible! The grace of our Lord Jesus is exceeding abundant. He takes occasion from our very failures to display His rich and precious love. Oh, how blessed to have to do with such a tender, patient, loving Lord! Who would not trust Him and praise Him, love Him and serve Him?

U

JERUSALEM:

The capital city of Israel was a key location for many outstanding events in the life of Peter, after the arrest of Jesus. It was in the courtyard of the high priest in Jerusalem that he denied the Lord three times, according to Christ's prediction at the Last Supper (Mt. 26:69-75).

Here Peter witnessed the empty tomb (Jn. 20:1-8), had the Lord appear to him bodily (1 Cor. 15:5), and waited in the Upper Room for the promised Holy Spirit (Acts 1:12-14).

Filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, Peter delivered his impassioned sermon after which about 3000 souls were added to the church in Jerusalem (Acts 2).

He preached and healed throughout the city, and as a result was thrown into prison with John at which time they were commanded by the Sanhedrin to stop preaching the gospel (Acts 4).

It was here Peter rebuked Ananias and Sapphira for lying to the Holy Spirit and they died as a result (Acts 5).

From a Jerusalem prison, Peter was miraculously released by an angel in response to the prayer of local believers (Acts 12).

The last significant event of Peter's life that is recorded in the New Testament occurred when he met with the apostles and elders over the issue of Gentiles keeping the law, and clearly proclaimed salvation through grace alone (Acts 15:6-11).

SEA OF GALILEE:

Peter immediately left the Sea of Galilee and his work as a fisherman there when he was called by the Lord Jesus to be a disciple (Mt. 4:18-20).

It was on this sea that Peter walked across the stormy waters to meet the Lord until he looked around him and, panicking, began to sink. When Peter called out to the Lord, he was saved and the two returned to the boat (Mt. 14:28-33).

After Christ's resurrection, Peter decided to return to the Sea of Galilee to resume his fishing career and several other disciples followed him. Their attempts to catch anything were unsuccessful until Jesus came to the shore the following morning to prepare breakfast for them and caused them to catch 153 fish (Jn. 21:1-14).

Peter's last face-to-face conversation with the Lord Jesus took place on the shores of Galilee where he declared his love for the Lord and received the commission to feed Christ's sheep (Jn. 21:17).

MOUNT HERMON:

Jesus took Peter, James, and John to a high mountain where they witnessed His transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-8). Many believe that the place was Mt. Hermon, since it is the highest in Israel and Caesarea Philippi, their last previous stop (Mt. 16:13).

CAESAREA PHILIPPI:

While nearby Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom do ye say that I am?" Peter declared, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It was upon this momentous truth that Christ would build His Church (Mt. 16:13-20).

BETHSAIDA:

Bethsaida (meaning *the house of fish*) was the hometown of Peter, along with his brother Andrew and another disciple, Philip (Jn. 1:44).

At a deserted place near here the Lord fed 5000 men (perhaps 25,000 people) with five loaves and two fishes (Lk. 9:10-17).

CAPERNAUM:

Here Peter's mother-in-law was healed by Jesus (Mt. 8:14-17).

CAESAREA:

In Caesarea, Peter explained the gospel of Jesus Christ to Cornelius who accepted the Saviour (Acts 10:24-11:18).

SAMARIA:

Peter and John came from Jerusalem to see the work here. Peter confronted Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:14-25).

JOPPA:

Peter stayed with Simon the Tanner in Joppa. When he raised a follower of Christ, Dorcas (Tabitha), from the dead, the news spread throughout the city and many believed on the Lord (Acts 9:36-43).

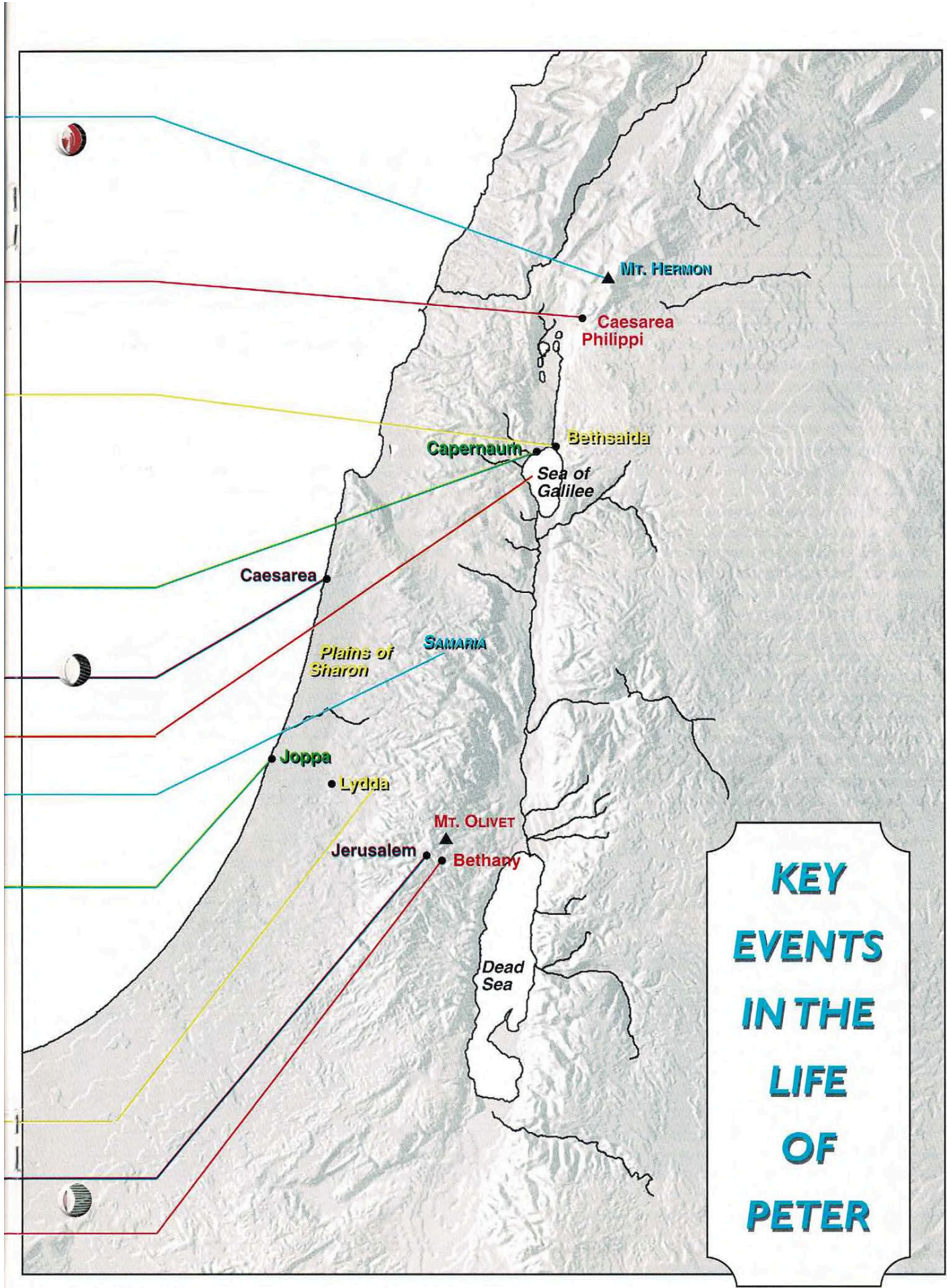
At Joppa, the Lord gave Peter a vision of a sheet with all kinds of animals, symbolizing that God shows no partiality between Jews and Gentiles (Acts 10).

LYDDA & SARON (SHARON):

Peter preached throughout Israel, and the Scriptures record "all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron...turned to the Lord." In Lydda, he healed Aeneas, a paralytic of eight years. (Acts 9:32-35).

BETHANY:

In Bethany, Peter was a witness to the resurrection of Lazarus (Jn. 11). Christ's ascension into heaven from a mountain near Bethany was witnessed by Peter and the other apostles (Lk. 24:50-53).



**KEY
EVENTS
IN THE
LIFE
OF
PETER**

Who Pays the Preacher?

BRIAN GUNNING

It is plain that God calls some believers to be relieved of the demands of secular work to engage in another kind of work, the Lord's work. This is not a distinction between clergy and laity as introduced by men in the church's history, but a simple fact of God's sovereign work in calling His servants.

Nor is it to assume that believers who carry home and secular work responsibility are any less engaged in the Lord's work. A full-time commended worker should have gone into the Lord's work with the agreement of a local assembly who saw evidence of the Lord's call. We are not talking about a strong personality talking weak elders into giving out a thoughtless letter of commendation—a means of avoiding hard work by living off the Christians.

The Bible, always practical, speaks plainly about financial support of full-time Christian workers. The "George Mueller stories" give us cause to wonder again and again at the wisdom, timing, and power of God in feeding His own. But another side to the great principle of "living by faith," has to do with those God uses to feed His servants. Here are some practical observations on supporting Christian workers.

1. It is the Lord who has determined that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14). It was an idea that went back to the days of the Levites' service in the temple. John Heading in his commentary, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, identifies 5 groups of believers who are worthy of financial support: 1) evangelists (Lk. 10:7; 1 Cor. 9:14); 2) apostles (Phil. 4:15-16); 3) teachers (Gal. 6:6); 4) elders (1 Tim. 5:17); 5) poor saints, probably including widows (Rom. 15:26-27).

2. While the Lord meets the needs, as individuals and assemblies we should want to be instruments God can use. The carnality of the Corinthians blinded them to their duty in this matter. The apostle took up self-employment to provide for himself and not hinder the gospel. Imagine how the Corinthians will feel at the Judgment Seat when they see the great apostle was among them, yet they failed to support him.

Preachers are often amused at the question: "Are you a full-time preacher or do you work for a living?"



3. It is best to err on the side of generosity in determining the amount of the gift given to a worker. To invite a worker to travel to an area for a weekend or week long series of meetings, and then give a gift hardly equivalent to an average week's pay, not to mention travel costs, is hardly worthy of Christians. The world generously gives its workers their pay. Should believers do less? See 2 Corinthians 9 on this. In addition, some assemblies do not have resources to give generously. If you can give generously, you are helping another assembly to enjoy the needed ministry of the worker. The Lord richly repays this kind of giving. See Philippians 4:17.

4. Consider sending workers a gift in advance to cover travel costs. Airline tickets can be significantly less expensive if purchased several weeks before the travel date.

5. Canadian assemblies should consider making gifts to American workers in U.S. drafts or cash. Many U.S. banks will hold Canadian checks for up to 3 weeks. Don't make the worker finance international bank transactions.

6. In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul is continuing the Holy Spirit's teaching on Christian liberty. He showed that he had the liberty to refrain from accepting gifts in order that the gospel not be hindered, and chose to take up—for a time—secular self-employment. For Paul the main thing was the gospel, not the gifts. Workers should not be surprised if they are faced with this situation. A lack of support is not necessarily a failure on the part of the worker. Careful consideration should be given to doing what Paul did. There is a snare here, however. Paul did not forsake the Lord's work for secular work. In his case it was a temporary and specific situation in Corinth.

God has infinite resources. He knows how to take care of His servants. In 1 Kings 17, the Lord provided for Elijah in trying circumstances. At one time God used the ravens to feed Elijah; another time, He used a widow. We can't help but wonder where the other 7,000 of chapter 19 were in Elijah's time of need? It may be that God chose not to use them. Then again, maybe they weren't available. Let not that be true of us. **U**

What Rock? What Keys?

F. B. MEYER

For two-and-a-half years our Lord had lived among His apostles. Making Himself of no reputation, He had given them no certain clue to His dignity. Yet "He could not be hid." To quote the words of His evangelist and friend, who more than any other penetrated beneath the Lord's grace and truth to their hidden fountain: "The life was manifested, and we have seen it."

Only six months of education remained before He was taken from them—a period during which His teaching would become much more intensive; and as a preliminary it was necessary to ascertain what conclusions they had arrived at, as the result of their observations and experiences.



Peter denies the Lord. From an engraving by Doré

Matthew 16 is pivotal. In it are introduced the four chief truths of the New Testament: The Christ; the Church; the cross; and the coming.

In order to secure the necessary privacy for this all-important inquiry, our Lord journeyed to the extreme edge of the northern frontier of Palestine, where Mount Hermon, the chief Alp of the Lebanon range, lifts its mighty mass beyond the snow-line, screening off the northern blasts, and cooling the air, so that the dews of Hermon descended on the mountains of Zion.

THE MASTER'S SEARCHING QUESTION

"Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" The answers were various. It was universally acknowledged that He was no ordinary man. People felt that a Divine fire was burning beneath the pure porcelain of His nature. But their views were as various as the speakers. Some, with Herod at their head, expressed the belief—not without a shudder—that the Baptist had risen from his lonely grave beside the Castle of Machaerus. Others said that Elijah, whom Malachi had taught them to expect, had come to them in the "day of the Lord." Others traced a resemblance between Jesus and one of the old prophets.

Probably our Lord was not especially disappointed or surprised by these replies. It was of small im-

What Rock? What Keys?

portance that conclusions had been arrived at in the Court of Public Opinion. He knew what was in man; and these inquiries were only intended to lead up to the second and all-important question: "But whom say ye that I am?"

Speaking after the manner of men, His heart must have stood still for the reply. And it came instantly, emphatically, and decisively from the lips of Peter, always the spokesman for the rest: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The brusque fisherman had been taught the secret of the mystery "which in other ages had not been made known" to the sons of men, as it was now to be revealed to the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona (son of Jonas or John), for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven."

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

Then for the first time our Lord spoke of His Church. Notice the strong possessive pronoun *My*. As yet the Church—one, undivided, and hidden—existed only in the councils of eternity. The future tense, "I will build," makes it clear that as Eve was builded out of Adam while he slept, so the Church was soon to be built from the death-wound and the sepulcher entombment of Emmanuel. And it was destined to be His bride, His body. His fulfillment, through which He could manifest the complete glory of His nature. My Church! From eternity Christ loved her. By His blood He redeemed her.

The Church is the special object of hatred to the dark underworld of fallen spirits, whom our Lord refers to as "the gates of Hades." Hades is the nether unseen world, the abode of the wicked spirits that rule the darkness of this world, under the leadership of "the Prince of the power of the air," who rules in the hearts of the disobedient.

Long and sore the conflict may be, but the issue is not doubtful. "They shall not prevail." "The Lamb shall overcome, for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

The secret of the Church's prevalence over her foes consists in her foundational fact. Not the personality of an impulsive and fallible man, who within a few mo-

ments was to incur the sharpest rebuke ever administered by those gentle lips; but the Deity of our Lord, as "the Son of the ever-living God."

The Greek phrasing of our Lord's reply leaves no doubt as to His meaning. Two Greek words are here. *Petros*, Simon's new name, signifies in Greek, as *Cephas* did in Syriac, a stone, or bit of rock, broken or hewn from its parent bed. *Petra* indicates the Rock-bed itself. Our Lord carefully makes the distinction.

If He had intended Peter to be the foundation of the Church, He would naturally have shaped His sentence thus: "Thou art Peter, and on thee I will build My Church." But, carefully selecting His words, in essence He said: "Thou art Peter [a stone, a fragment of rock], who under the power of God's Spirit has spoken with strength and certainty; but I cannot build on thee. For the foundation of My Church I must turn from *Petros* to *Petra*, from a fragment to the great truth, which for the moment has inspired thee. The truth of My eternal relationship to the Father is the only foundation against which the waves of demon and human hatred will break in vain. No stone shall give. No such bastion shall ever tremble."

THE GIFT OF THE KEYS

It must be carefully noted that our Lord used the same words which He addressed to Peter also to individual believers in Matthew 18:18, and again to His assembled apostles and others who were gathered with them in the Upper Room on the evening of the Resurrection Day. (See Jn. 20:22-23).

In the light afforded by these references, we may extend the significance of this gift of the keys to include all who live and act in the power of the Holy Spirit. If we have received that blessed gift of the Comforter, as they did on whom the Master breathed that Easter evening, we also may wield the power of the keys.

This is the secret of the quest of the blessed life. Go through the world opening prison doors, lifting heavy burdens, giving light and joy and peace to the oppressed, proclaiming the Lord's Jubilee year. Shut doors opening out on the dark waters of despair. Unlock and open those that face towards the sunrise. For this is work that angels might envy. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

U

George Wishart

JOHN BJORLIE

Three years before Patrick Hamilton was burned at the stake outside St. Andrews Castle, young David Beaton, nephew of the Archbishop James Beaton, sailed over from France to work under his uncle. David had studied at the Scottish University in Paris beside brilliant scholars such as Patrick Hamilton. Very likely they knew one another. But what different choices they made! Patrick went to be tutored by reformers such as Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, and Francis Lambert, whereas David pursued political intrigue and conquest under James Beaton.

How much of a role David played in those early executions we do not know. We do know that David Beaton hated Reformation thinking passionately. Patrick Hamilton forced the Reformation before the Scottish. He was Scottish, not German. More than Scottish, he was one of Scotland's favorite sons. A few years after Hamilton's burning, Henry Forrest was burned (1533), then David Stratton and Norman Gourlay (1534). Others followed: named Simpson, Forrester, Keillor, Beverage, Forret, Russell, and Kennedy (1539). Besides this, droves of Christians became exiles.

The reason for this persecution was obvious. James and David Beaton were prelates in the Roman Catholic church at a time when they may have owned half of the property in all Scotland. The Beatons certainly had a vested interest in stunting the growth of any Reformation on Scottish soil, and we judge that the younger Beaton excelled as the champion of Catholicism in Scotland. On that basis, David Beaton applied for and eventually received the Cardinal's red hat, and after his uncle's death in 1539, also became the virtual ruler of Scotland, titled Chancellor of the Kingdom. All this came his way because he promised Rome that Lutheranism would not sink its roots in Scotland.

In John Knox's words, Beaton was "that bloody wolf the Cardinal," "a vitious priest and wicked monster which neither minded God nor cared for man." Of course, Knox cannot be considered an impartial judge of Beaton's character.

At his sentencing he prayed: ...O Lord, we know surely that Thy true servants must needs suffer for Thy Name's sake, persecution, affliction, and trouble in this present life, which is but a shadow.



But interestingly, even Beaton's defenders do not deny his disolute, debauched lifestyle. He kept his mistress in a luxurious mansion, and he fathered several illegitimate children. Even when trying to exonerate Beaton, author John Herkless wrote,

Beaton...was a typical prelate of the pre-Reformation times, in so far as immorality and worldliness are concerned; and while in these respects he fitly represents the character of that Church, he also stands as one who, by his rank and power, was responsible for her spiritual and moral degradation. The order of prelates...was in later times but a part of the larger order of social aristocrats whose aims were worldly, and whose habits of life were morally gross and politically tyrannical; and whether the Church corrupted the world or the world corrupted the Church, the religious and social life of Scotland before the Reformation had sunk to depths of degradation.

His biographer admits, "Unchaste and worldly he was, and his reputation has paid the full penalty of his sins and vices." This last statement I disagree with. The historian's displeasure is only a foretaste. The full penalty of Beaton's sins and vices will be felt in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

The ignominy given to Beaton's name is owing most of all to his condemnation of George Wishart (1513-1546). The meeting of these two men is a classic study in contrasts. John Knox described Wishart as, "Courteous, lowly, lovely, glad to teach, desirous to learn," yet in the pulpit he appeared like one of the Hebrew prophets who had broken the limits of the centuries and appeared in Scotland.

Living in the decadent surroundings of Beaton's Scotland, how did Wishart become such a man? He did not begin as a preacher. He was an academic who taught the classics. After his fiancée Elizabeth died of the plague, he found comfort in John 14 and there the truths of Christianity came alive. Thereafter he obtained a Greek New Testament, and began teaching it to his students instead of Greek philosophy.

George Wishart

He was tall, slight, with dark eyes, a long black beard, and a receding hair line. Never married; his life was simple and frugal. He gave away any extra clothes to the poor, slept in a spare room with a hard bed of straw under canvas, ate two meals a day and fasted twice a week.

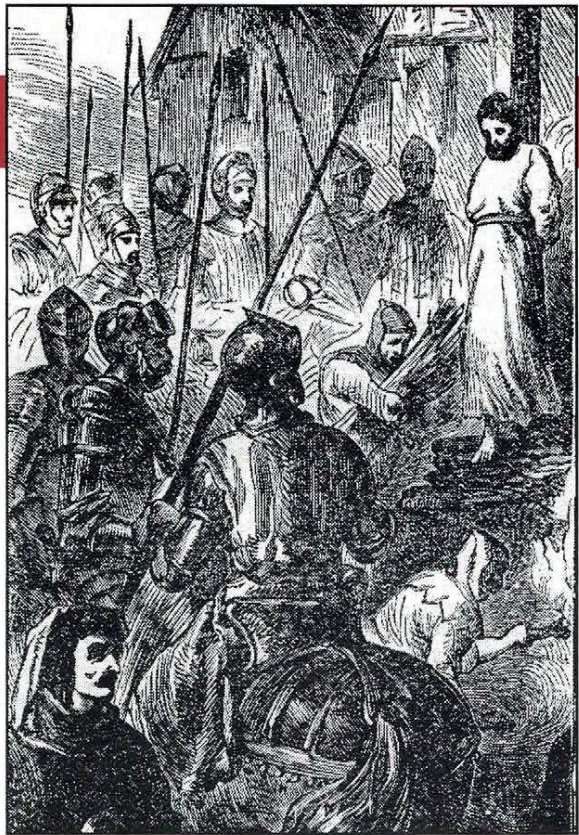
Threatened to desist from teaching the gospel in Montrose, where his school was, in 1839 he fled to England where he taught at Cambridge University in the classics. For a time he was able to go to Zurich, Switzerland, and there his eyes were opened to the possibilities of consecutive Bible teaching. He also went to Geneva where the Reformation was in full swing. Returning to Britain, he was emboldened to preach in his native Scotland as he had seen it done in Europe.

In Ayr, Edinburgh, Haddington, and Montrose, he preached in church buildings and under the spreading branches of friendly trees. Dundee was especially fruitful. There he preached through the book of Romans.

James Beaton had died, and his nephew David Beaton smoothly transitioned into the place of power. Elevated to the rank of Cardinal, his Roman church had nothing to gain from a Scottish Reformation, or from men like George Wishart.

For two years, Beaton plotted and connived for Wishart's capture. Knox claimed that Beaton forged a letter to Wishart to ambush him. The letter, supposedly from Laird Kynneir, asked Wishart to come immediately because he "was stricken with a sudden sickness."

In the meantime the traitor had provided threescore men, with jacks and spears, to lie in wait within a mile and a half of the town of Montrose, for his dispatch. The letter coming to his hand, he made haste at the first, for the boy had brought a horse; and so with some honest men, he passed forth of the town. But suddenly he stayed and, musing a space, turned back. 'I will not go,' he said; 'I am forbidden by God. I am assured there is treason. Let some of you go to yonder place, and tell me what ye find.' Diligence made, they found the treason, as it was; and this being shown with expedition to Master George, he answered, 'I know that I shall finish my life in that bloodthirsty man's hands; but it will not be in this manner.'



When the Bubonic Plague struck Dundee, Wishart returned there. On earlier visits scores had been converted under his preaching. Wishart stood on a ledge at the Cow Gate of the city and preached so sufferers who were laid outside the gate could hear him as well as those within the city. With sweet appeals, Wishart took Psalm 107 as his main text, "He sent His word and healed them." Each day, as the evangelist continued, the audiences forgot their misery long enough to think about eternal things.

One day, stepping from the ledge, he spotted a monk named James Wilwhite staring at Wishart. Spotting his awkward stare, Wishart shouted, "What will you do?" and grabbed the man's hand, which was concealed under a cloak. A dagger dropped to the ground. The infuriated crowd would have killed the would-be-assassin if Wishart had not pled for his life.

The people knew Beaton's character. Bodyguards came in shifts to protect Wishart, headed by a young tutor from Hampton named John Knox. He carried a conspicuous sword that he held as Wishart preached. Wishart himself disagreed with the use of violence. He knew how the Reformation in Zurich was set back when Ulrich Zwingli went out on the battle field, and was slaughtered alongside Zurich's best young men.

There was no other man so visible, so outspoken for the truth of the Word of God in all Scotland. It appears

that Wishart's emphasis was to preach the gospel. In the main, the Reformers saw the Church and State as two things intermingled and amalgamated. Wishart's own pupil, John Knox, became a magisterial Reformer, therefore repeating the error of the Catholic Church which he protested against. But it cannot be proven that Wishart promoted or ever encouraged the state-church idea, though certain of those who flocked to him were probably more energized by their political ideologies than they were by their thirst for spiritual reality. This was especially true of the lairds, who lived in dread of the grasping Cardinal.

Convinced that Wishart was part of an assassination plot against him, the Cardinal had spies in the realm looking for Wishart. Knowing the time was short, Wishart told Knox, "Return to thy bairns, one is sufficient for a sacrifice." (Knox's bairns were the three young men he tutored). Wishart was at Ormiston, visiting with Cockburn, and a couple other influential friends when, at midnight, the Earl of Bothwell appeared and demanded the surrender of Cockburn's guests. The men discovered themselves surrounded by a company of Bothwell's soldiers. Bothwell assured Wishart that his life would be safe, and therefore he yielded himself up. He was then taken to Elphinstone where Beaton himself was waiting with 500 of the Cardinal's own soldiers.

Taken to the castle of St. Andrews, Wishart was dropped into a bottle-shaped dungeon. The only entrance was twenty five feet up from the floor. The room was fifteen feet wide. He moldered, without light or fresh air in that cell for four weeks before he was pulled out, scrubbed, and brought to trial. He was considered a very important prisoner. One hundred soldiers escorted him to appear before Cardinal Beaton in the Church at St. Andrews. Knox wrote, "Like a lamb led they him to sacrifice. As he entered the Abbey Church door, a poor man, vexed with great infirmities, asked his alms. To him he flung his purse. When he had come before the Cardinal, the sub-prior of the Abbey, Dean John Winram, stood up in the pulpit and made a sermon...taking his matter out of the thirteen chapter of Matthew."

Wishart stood by the pulpit to listen to a long sermon decrying heretics. Strange that Winram did not understand the obvious teaching of Matthew 13:24-30,

34-43. But in those days the state churches thought that John 15:6 gave them all they needed to know about how to handle heretics.

After the sermon, Wishart stood in the pulpit and heard John Lauder read the eighteen charges against him related to the sacraments, saints, purgatory, and the marriage of priests. "When this well-fed priest had read them all, his face running with sweat and frothing at the mouth like a boar, he spit in Master George's face and demanded, 'What answerest thou, thou runagate, traitor and thief, to these sayings, which we have duly proved by sufficient witness against thee?'"

Midway into his defense, Lauder objected.

"Thou hast taken the power at thine own hand, without any authority of the Church. We forethink [repent] that thou hast been a preacher so long." In the background the prelates whispered, "If we give him license to preach, he is so crafty and in Holy Scripture so exercised that he will persuade the people to his opinion, and raise them against us."

Two months after Wishart's execution, Cardinal Beaton was brutally murdered and his body flung from an upper window of his home. Legend has it that it was from the same window that he had watched Master George Wishart being burned to ashes. The assassins commandeered the castle, and against his better judgment, John Knox entered the castle as the chaplain to the new landlords. But the French heard about the insurrection and sailed into the harbor with enough troops to retake the castle. Mercifully, Knox was not executed, but he did serve nineteen months as a galley slave on a French ship until the English secured his release. Emaciated, but no less determined, the wiry Scot went on to become the fierce preacher and shrewd magisterial Reformer which historians cannot ignore.

Materials for this article taken from:

James W. Baird, *Thunder Over Scotland, The Life of George Wishart*, Green Leaf Press, 1982

John Knox, *History of the Reformation of Religion in Scotland*, presently available through Moody Press, Chicago

John Herkless, *Cardinal Beaton—Priest and Politician*, William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh



Peter Prayed Out of Prison

W. M. TAYLOR

The Apostle Paul has told us that when one member of the body suffers, all the members suffer with it, and here we see the assault that was made on Peter affected all the saints in Jerusalem.

Peter had been a leader among the believers in Jerusalem. They had been accustomed to rely on his judgment. They had learned to love him for the manliness of his nature and the generous impulses of his heart; and they could hardly conceive what the Church would be like without him. So it was not all benevolence that moved them to pray; they were afflicted in his affliction. Peter's extremity was their extremity. Indeed, so far as appears, the concern throughout was felt by them rather than by him. He was, we may suppose, like Paul in that strange dilemma—not knowing what to choose; having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, yet willing to remain in the flesh for their sakes.

This illustrates the unity of the Church of Christ. Let one child in the home be smitten with disease, and all the members of the family are deeply affected. But even more keenly than this, the Christian feels the affliction of a brother in the Lord.

Nothing merges relationship into identity so thoroughly as the gospel. In Christ we are all one; and so each feels the other's woe. But then, on the other hand, Christ feels with us all; for "in all our afflictions He is afflicted." This is the true brotherhood. Better than all secret badges or mystic grasps is this "union in Christ." It opens every Christian's heart to us, and gives each believer a personal interest in our welfare.

Let us learn, second, the power of earnest, believing, and united prayer. Observe this statement made by the historian: "Prayer was made without ceasing, of the Church unto God for him." Then mark how the answer came. It was long delayed. The last night had arrived. But at the darkest hour dawn began to break!

We are not warranted to expect such answers as that which in those days of miracle was vouchsafed to the Church of Jerusalem; yet I do not hesitate to say that God would sooner work a miracle like that here described than suffer His faithfulness to fail, or let His

cause be put back. The resources of the universe are at His command, and it is equally easy for Him to answer prayer through the ordinary as through the extraordinary.

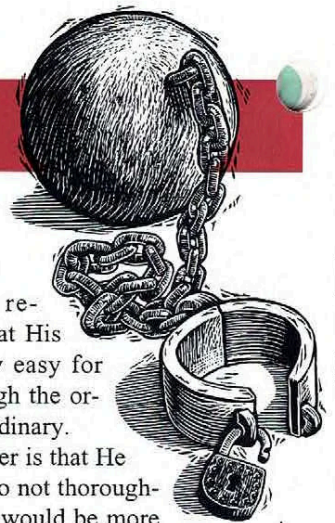
What we have to remember is that He is the hearer of prayer. We do not thoroughly believe that, or else there would be more definiteness, directness, and what I call business-like purpose in our petitions. We do not receive because we do not ask. Is it not the fact that when we have concluded our devotions, it would often puzzle us to tell what we have been praying for?

When we have asked for certain things, we have become discouraged because we have not had an immediate answer. Have we forgotten the story of the Syrophenician woman? Or the injunction of the Lord that we are to "knock" that it may be opened unto us? Why are God's answers delayed? It may be because, in our pride of heart, we are desirous of sharing in the glory of the answer. Have you marked these words in the doxology of the Lord's prayer, "For Thine is the glory"? When we are willing that all the glory shall go to God, the blessing is not far from our hands.

It may be because God wishes to develop patience in us, or bring our faith to the height of her to whom He said, "Oh, woman, great is thy faith." If we were more definite in our petitions, and more continuous in our prayers, we should see frequently the results for which we long.

Nonetheless the Church of Jerusalem prayed Peter out of prison. Let that fact alone sustain us.

Let us learn, in the third place, while earthly glory fades, the Word of the Lord endures forever. See how soon Herod disappears. Like foam on the wave, he dazzled men's eyes for a moment with the reflection of the sunlight; and then, like it too, he burst and disappeared. The shouting of the idolatrous crowd could not keep away retribution from his door. No Roman sentinel could turn back from his palace gate that pale horse which bore the rider whose name is Death. He went to his own place. And all his efforts to retard the progress of the gospel were in vain, for "the word of God grew and multiplied."



U

Peter the Emboldened

GEORGE MATHESON

To outward appearance, Peter's character may be read on the surface. He is a plain, blunt man that speaks the language of the common day and breathes the desires of the passing hour. He is more like an open book than is any other figure in the Gallery. He is one of those men who at a superficial glance promises to offer a very easy subject for study.

And yet the promise is a delusion. There has been probably more disagreement about the character of Simon Peter than about any other New Testament character. It very often happens that those we meet in this world who seem most open and above-board are precisely those who prove the most difficult to read.

Peter is one of these. He not only seems, he is, above-board. There is nothing sinister, nothing underhand; his words and deeds convey exactly the meaning he intends. Yet we find ourselves entangled in what appears to be a web of inconsistencies from which there is no hope of extrication.

We seem to be confronted by a life of opposing qualities: sometimes touching the heavens, at others coming perilously near the nether world; now in the heights of ecstasy, soon in the depths of despair; today winning our admiration, tomorrow exciting a feeling akin to repulsion. The life, in fact, alternates between cowardice and bravery. These are the poles between which he wavers. Every great thing he does comes from a moment of bravery; every mean act to which he stoops comes from a moment of cowardice.

The symbol of his whole life is the sea-walking. That is in miniature the picture of his entire character. We see him for an instant on top of the wave, daring a deed which none of his compeers would have dared. The next he is shrieking with abject terror, "Lord, save me!" And the picture gives no outward cause for this. We see no increase of the storm; the sea does not look more scowling than when he planted his foot on its bosom. It is a struggle pure and simple between bravery in his own breast and cowardice in his own breast.

He makes professions of loyalty to Jesus far beyond those of his brethren; in an hour of real danger he shows courage to maintain them, drawing a sword in the garden against heavy odds. Yet within a few hours he quails before the question of a servant-girl, denying the Lord whom he loves! I see no adequate cause for the change; it came from a tremor in his own soul.

There is no figure in the New Testament Gallery which presents to the eye such a mixture of simplicity and enigma as that of Simon Peter.

Again, he was one of the first to recognize the claims of the Gentiles. Bravely he stood as the champion of Gentile freedom at a time when the thought was stirring deep animosities. For ventilating that thought, Stephen paid the penalty with his life, and Paul had been forced to retire to temporary exile. It was at such a moment that Peter's voice was raised in courageous vindication of a universal gospel. Yet this same man goes down to Antioch, and—in the face of far less danger—keeps aloof from the Gentile converts! Again I fail to recognize an adequate outward cause for the change. The cause, whatever it is, is within the man, his soul a battlefield between bravery and cowardice.

We can understand a mixture of doubt and faith; we can imagine a union of weakness and strength; we can comprehend the existence of a natural placidness side by side with the possibility of flashing fire; but the co-existence of bravery and cowardice, the union of the hero and the faint-heart—that is something which challenges the philosopher and calls for explanation.

Let me give the popular explanation: Peter is an example of the principle, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." He is a monument to the fact that men are liable to fail in their strongest qualities unless periodically renewed by divine grace. Peter was by nature a brave man. He possessed a soul of fire which made him forget his own limitations, which drove him instantaneously into work beyond his power. He lived by confidence in his own strength, and he overrated it. If checked in the assault, he would sink suddenly, ignominiously. All his courage would desert him—conveying the moral that the highest human gift needs to be supported from above.

Now without disputing the truth of the moral, this is not my view of the character of Simon Peter. The Gospel Gallery is a record of transformations in which each man passes from a lower into a higher self. But the view here adduced would make Peter's higher self the original element and his later self the decline.

The whole picture, as I take it, is based on an oppo-

Peter Emboldened

My shining will come with the shadow; my power will wake with the pain; my courage will rise with the conflict; my fortitude will dawn with the fire; my nerve will be strengthened with the need; my resource will be ready with the rain-cloud; my boldness will be born with the breeze. I shall walk with Thee by faith till the fullness of the time.

site concept. Instead of being by nature the courageous man we portray, Peter is introduced to us as a man of extreme timidity. We shall go wrong, in my opinion, if we do not start from this basis. I admit that we are dealing with an inconsistent character; but let us not mistake the nature of the inconsistency. The inconsistency of Peter lies in his strength and not in his weakness. The inconsistency lies not in the fact that a brave man periodically becomes a coward, but that a cowardly man periodically becomes brave.

Christ took men into His kingdom with their old garments on; the ring and the robe were an after-consideration. He let them come with all the elements of their imperfection clinging round them. In His presence they still revealed remains of a former day.

There are incidents in Peter's life which are commonly attributed to bold presumption, but which, to my mind, suggest only the survival of this primitive spirit of timidity. Take that memorable occasion on which the Master broke to His disciples the news of His approaching death and when Peter exclaimed with hot repudiation, "Be it far from Thee, Lord!" It is commonly set down to his impertinent forwardness; I think it was the voice of shrinking fear. No doubt devotion to Jesus counted for something; but they were all devoted as well as Peter. We have to find a reason why Peter was the spokesman. And I think that reason lay, not in his being the most impertinent, but in his being the most timid. He shrank from the thought of danger.

Will it be said that the sternness of Christ's reproof, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" is at variance with such a view? But to whom was that reproof administered? To Peter? No—to Satan, the tempter of the wilderness. We are told that after the temptation, Satan left Him "for a season." This implies that he was to come back. He had come back now, and with the old temptation—to reject the cross for the crown, to choose the purple instead of poverty, to sway by law in place of stooping by love. It was not to Peter that Christ administered the rebuke; it was the tempter once more.

But, all this time, there was growing in Peter a new and higher life. The second stage of his spiritual history is one of struggle between the original timidity and a new principle which stimulated to courage. From where did this element of bravery come? It was born of love. There is no mystery about it; you may see the

same thing every day. One who all through life had shrunk from the slightest hint of danger I have known to rush into a burning house to save her infant from the flames. And yet it does not follow that at this moment the constitutional timidity was dead.

There had come to Peter one great love. And in his devotion to Jesus he had moments of a new experience—courage. Although at first he wavered between cowardice and overcoming, there came to Simon Peter such a time of absolute victory. The final stage of his spiritual experience is that of unbroken courage. Timidity vanishes, and in its room there comes a calm and habitual fearlessness—not the spasmodic burst of confidence which marked his early days.

How do we know that this was the final stage for Peter? Because we have in our possession a letter written in his mature life which embodies precisely this spirit. What is the great characteristic of Peter's epistles? Courage! More than any document of the New Testament this letter is the Epistle of Courage. In every cadence, we find the Peter on the top of the wave looking down on the Peter sinking in the depths and crying, "You were wrong!"

The very first key struck is one of reversal, "Blessed be God, who has begotten us unto a lively hope"—a hope pervading the life—not coming periodically in fits and starts, but taking up its abode with the soul. Listen again! "We are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Where is now the rebuke, "Be it far from Thee, Lord!" The thing from which he recoiled has become "precious." Again, "The God of all grace, after ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." What a comment on his own experience! To be no longer spasmodic, fitful, but "stablished," "settled"—it was the realization of all his wants, and therefore it seemed to him the crown of all perfection.

What a note of autobiography is here! It is the "trial of faith" which he declares to be "more precious than gold." The evening, not the morning is Peter's golden hour. The morning was leaden and grey; the evening is light and glorious. The morning saw his spirit crouch in a coward's lair; the evening leads him forth to dwell in the path of danger. The motto of his maturity is this: "Forasmuch as Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind."

U

Restoration and a New Commission

W. T. P. WOLSTON

The whole Sabbath day Christ lay in the grave. But the resurrection morning comes, and Peter and John, told by Mary Magdalene that the Lord had been taken from the sepulcher, run to the grave, and Peter is outrun by John. I know some say that Peter was older than John, but I do not believe that was the reason John came first to the sepulcher. I believe the remembrance of the denial of his Lord was what made Peter's footsteps slack. A bad conscience always tells on the Christian's pace.

Reaching the sepulcher, the two disciples find it empty, for an angel had come down and rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulcher. To let the Lord out? Far be the thought! No, to let you and me look in, and see an empty tomb, and know that we have a risen, victorious, triumphant Saviour!

John did not at first go into the sepulcher, only looked in; but Peter went right into it—as a Jew defiling himself—in his desire to know the full truth. He departed, “wondering in himself at that which was come to pass” (Lk. 24:12).

Neither Peter nor John were held to the spot by the same attachment to the Lord as marked Mary, who had been the object of such a special deliverance on the Lord's part. Out of her He had cast “seven demons” (Mk. 16:9), and personal love for her deliverer was her characteristic. The two disciples “saw and believed,” and then “went away again unto their own home.” Resting on visible proof, they believed, but their affections were not engaged as hers were.

If any doubts still lingered in Peter's mind as to the fact of the Lord being risen, they were fully dissipated by the touching message which the “young man” gave the Galilean women to carry to him. The Lord Himself, knowing His servant's sorrow, inspired the heavenly communication: “Go your way, tell His disciples, *and Peter*, that He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you” (Mk. 16:7).

In Luke 24, we read that two were going to Emmaus that same day, and “Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.” They returned at once to Jerusalem to tell the disciples the wonderful news. They had their

*The Lord of glory died. His body
was taken down and laid in a new tomb.
On top of the disciples' overwhelming
grief, Peter had a sorer wound still.
He had denied his Lord.*

joy confirmed, as they were met by the news, “The Lord is risen indeed, *and hath appeared to Simon.*” What passed that day between Simon and the Lord I do not know. God has flung a veil over this interview between His erring servant and a Master incomparable in grace. This I know, that confidence between Peter and the Lord was perfectly restored as the result.

The advocacy of Christ had been all-prevailing in Peter's case. “I have prayed for thee” found its answer in deep contrition after his failure, and then, at the first opportunity, confession was followed by full forgiveness, and restoration. We should always remember that contrition and confession, real and genuine, must be the prelude to forgiveness and restoration.

Two interesting interviews with His disciples follow the appearance of the Lord already referred to, at both of which Peter was present, but no reference was made by the Lord in either case to what had taken place in His servant's history (see Jn. 20:19, 26). But the Lord would not allow the failure of the past, so well known by all, to slide into oblivion without His giving him, in the presence of his brethren, the assurance of His forgiveness and restored confidence.

The Lord had bidden the disciples go into Galilee with the assurance that there they should see Him. But the Lord kept them waiting a little. He would evidently test their hearts, as He does ours. In the presence of old associations, old interests, and old occupations, can they simply wait for the Lord to come? This really should be our position now, as outside the religious world, Judea, and finding themselves in Galilee, a despised place, was their position then. The disciple of Jesus has to occupy just a similar position now, as he waits for the return of his Lord.



Restoration and a New Commission

The test, however, seems to have been too great for them, and when the ever-active Peter said to them, "I go a fishing," the rest were not slow to reply, "We also go with thee." It was very natural, but it was not what the Lord sent them there for. How easy, if our hearts are not full of Christ, to resume worldly relations, revive interests, and drop into habits we supposedly had escaped from, when we first came to Jesus.

But the dark fruitless night of toil passes, and, in the morning, One stands on the shore: "Have ye any meat?" They answered him, "No." Again He speaks: "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes" (v. 6). Years before, on the same spot, some of these men had a precisely similar experience. It was doubtless the recollection of this that led perceptive John to say to Peter, "It is the Lord." Of course it was! Who else could it be?

The effect on Peter was immediate. "He girt his fisher's coat unto him, and did cast himself into the sea." His object is clear. He wanted to get near his Lord as quickly as possible, the most absolute proof of how thoroughly he was restored to the Lord.

"As soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land... Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine."

After this mysterious scene the Lord publicly and fully restores Peter's soul. And what sight could be more calculated to lead up to this than that which here meets his eye, "a fire of coals"? How Peter must have thought of that moment when he stood by "a fire of coals" and denied his Master. Now, as he sees not only the fire of coals, but the fish and bread, would he not be feeling—"See how the Lord cares for me"?

The Lord does not reproach him with his fault, nor condemn him for his lack of faithfulness, but judges the source of evil that produced it—his self-confidence. He fully restores Peter by probing his heart to its very core, and making it known to him, so that Peter is compelled to fall back on the very omniscience of the Lord to know that he, who had boasted of having more affection for than all the rest, had really any affection for Him at all.

Three times Peter had publicly denied Him; three

times the Lord asks him if he loves Him. Now Peter, broken down entirely, replies, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." He, as it were, says, "Lord, Thou canst look into my heart; Thou knowest whether I love Thee or not; though others might doubt my love, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I do love Thee."

It was enough: the springs of self-confidence and self-esteem, so ruinous to us all, had been touched; and now the Lord fully restores him, and publicly puts him into a place of confidence and approval, as He sweetly says, "Feed My sheep." He says to him, as it were, "I can trust you now, Peter; I am going away, but I put into your care those I love best, My sheep and My lambs, to shepherd them, and to feed them."

It was perfect grace that acted thus towards Peter, and for his good. Before he felt his need, or committed his fault, this grace had prayed for him, and now it shines in brightest perfection as it expresses its full confidence in him. Most would have thought that the utmost that could happen would be that he should be forgiven by the Lord, and be readmitted to the apostolic circle; instead of that, grace is lavished on him to the uttermost. Humbled by his fall, and restored to the Lord through His grace, that grace now abounds towards him, and commits to his care what it most prized. Such is grace! Such is God! Such is our Lord Jesus Christ! Truly His ways are not as man's ways. We cannot trust ourselves, but we can trust the grace that forgives our faults, and will trust us when we are broken down and humbled, as Peter was here. How well Peter fulfilled that trust, his after-life proved.

This then was Peter's public restoration; and not merely was it his restoration, but the Lord giving him a special charge, thus showing His full confidence in this now humbled, self-emptied, and restored man. What could be a fuller proof of the confidence the Lord had in him? Let us not forget that He is the same today, so we may well sing:

*Astonished at Thy feet we fall,
Thy love exceeds our highest thought,
Henceforth be Thou our all in all,
Thou who our souls with blood hath bought;
May we henceforth more faithful prove
And ne'er forget Thy ceaseless love.*

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The Object of Suffering

TOM WESTWOOD

There is something wholesomely energetic about Simon Peter's forthright manner. The Spirit of God always uses the servants of the Lord consistent with their characters, and this is seen here in connection with Simon. The burden of the entire ministry of this first epistle is connected with suffering, and Peter indicates that the "little while" of suffering of which he speaks is that we might be made perfect, established, strengthened, and settled.

These are sterling words of real value. There is nothing apologetic here. Simon, who himself had gone through much trial and suffering, knew that the end of that pathway leads to stability of character, strong confidence, and establishment in the faith. He knew both the heights of success and the depths of failure in the Christian pathway.

He failed miserably in denying his Lord with oaths and curses, and then went out from the palace hall and wept bitterly. He had proved quite inadequate to the temptation of Satan. All his boastfulness and self-confidence had gone. He could not claim any standing now as a loyal disciple, because he had proved himself

The road Home is not the easy road, but it is the only road Home. The Father knows best. And when we arrive in the Father's House, we will see that it was the best way after all.

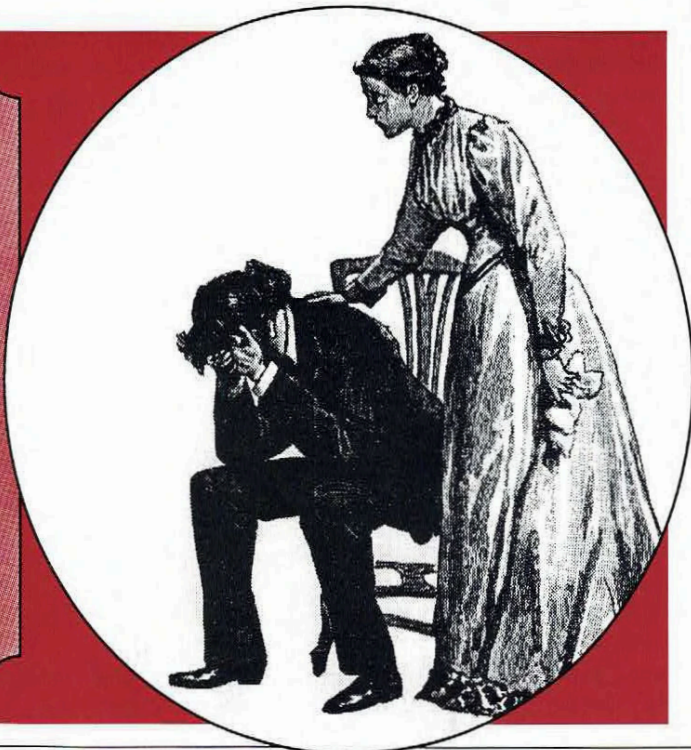
a traitor to the One whom he loved very dearly.

We all know what it is to be driven into the shadows of defeat through self-confidence. It is then we are brought to realize, as Simon Peter must have realized, what he terms here "the true grace of God wherein we stand."

It is sometimes very difficult for the people of God to unravel the skein of the tangled threads of a life of trial and suffering. Sometimes it seems so bewildering that the Lord should lead us through paths of difficulty. Yet this little time of suffering has its objective that we might be made perfect. This does not mean that we shall reach a state of absolute perfection as long as we are in the body. It does mean, however, that every suf-

For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.

1 PETER 2:20-21



The Object of Suffering

fering through which we pass carries us forward to a more mature sense of appreciation of God's goodness. It molds within our spirits something of sterling spiritual value that will bring us at long last into the presence of our Lord in the fullness of the perfection of His own purpose and grace. Suffering in this sense is a great investment for the Christian. Every trial lays in our souls a new deposit of pure gold. It accumulates throughout our spiritual career until, in glorified bodies, we shall be able to portray something of the grace of Christ revealed in the path of suffering.

Paul says: "But we all with unveiled face beholding...the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit." The glory of moral grandeur does not come all at once. We are changed from glory to glory as our spiritual gaze is fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ. The last master stroke of God's purpose in our life will be when we see our Lord face to face. Then we shall be like Him, for "we shall see Him as He is."

"After that ye have suffered a while," Peter says, "the God of all grace [will] make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." Perhaps we do not appreciate the value of trials in our lives. If you want to be established as a Christian, you cannot attain this apart from suffering.

Trials make us long for communion with the Lord. We discover in hard times the necessity, rather than the luxury, of reading of His Word, and meditating on it. It is when the strong, cold winds of persecution beat against us that we send our spiritual roots down into the soil of God's goodness, and draw the nourishment of His power. Thus the same storms that uproot unbelievers make the believer established and rooted in His grace.

That word "settled" does not mean that we cease to make progress, settling down to an attitude of apathy and self-complacency. It is just the opposite. It means that we will not be driven about by every wind of doc-

trine, but that we shall be brought to realize that our true security in this world is found in Christ Himself.

Then Peter goes on to say, as if he would bring us to the climax of all of this: "To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." This expression would deliver us from any thought of self-occupation. We never arrive at a time in our Christian lives when we can afford to sit back and feel that we have accomplished our end. Indeed the further we travel on the Christian pathway, the more one must be alert and vigilant, to see to it that honor and glory accrue to the name of our God.

Then in verse 12, Simon Peter links another brother with him in this letter. His name is Silvanus, or Silas, and he calls him "a faithful brother." Perhaps this is one of the finest designations that one Christian could give to another. We are living in days of such unfaithfulness to one another. Loyalty is a very rare virtue among the people of God. True fellowship among the Lord's people will engender a spirit of loyalty, not only to one another, but to the Lord Himself. Silas was such a brother.

Then Peter says: "I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God

wherein ye stand." Is this not a faint echo from the heart of Simon Peter who stood outside on that night, weeping bitterly because of his own failure? Had the grace of God not exceeded his defection, his end would have been sad indeed. The Lord looked on Peter, and His look was one of loving-kindness and grace. From that moment forward, Peter knew that he stood, not by his own boastful self-confidence, but in the true grace of God.

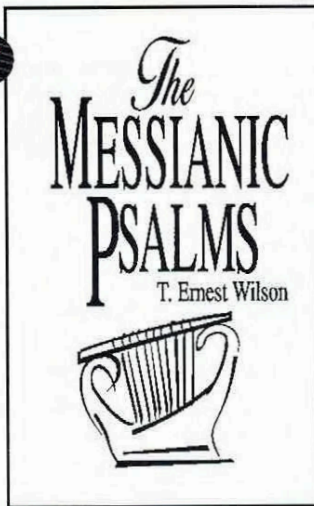
We are not only *saved* initially by grace; we *stand* in the true grace of God. But for God's grace we should fail. By His grace we shall succeed. And, says Peter, it is not only the grace of God, but "the God of all grace" that keeps us. He has called us, and also will do it!

*But the God of all grace,
who hath called us unto His
eternal glory by Christ Jesus,
after that ye have suffered
a while, make you perfect,
stablish, strengthen, settle you.
To Him be glory and dominion
for ever and ever. Amen.
By Silvanus, a faithful brother
unto you, as I suppose,
I have written briefly,
exhorting, and testifying
that this is the true grace
of God wherein ye stand.*

1 PETER 5:10-12

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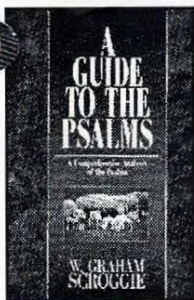
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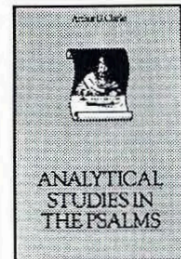
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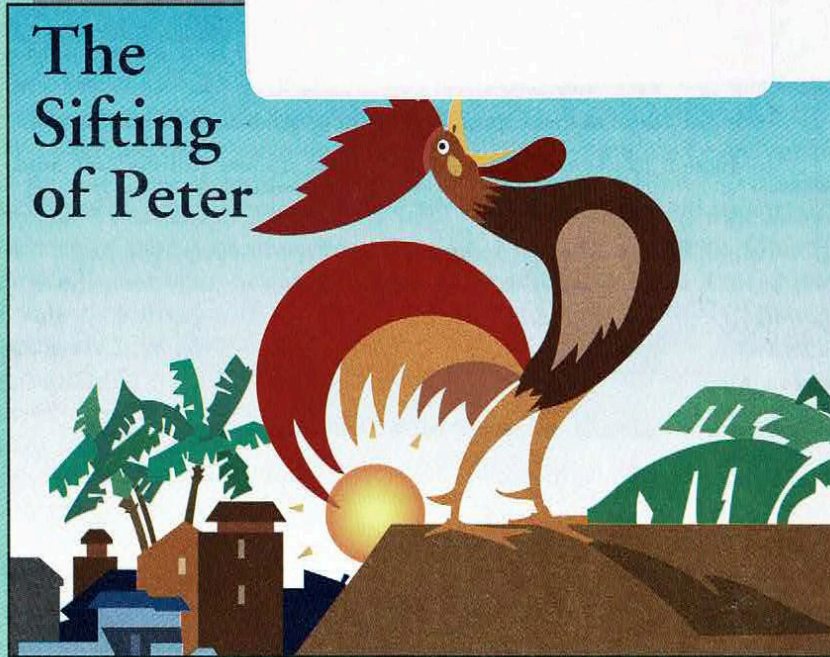
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In St. Luke's Gospel we are told
How Peter in the days of old
Was sifted;
And now, though ages intervene,
Sin is the same, while time and scene
Are shifted.

Satan desires us, great and small,
As wheat, to sift us, and we all
Are tempted;
Not one, however rich or great,
Is by his station or estate
Exempted.

No house so safely guarded is
But he, by some device of his,
Can enter;
No heart hath armor so complete
But he can pierce with arrows fleet
Its center.

For all at last the cock will crow
Who hear the warning voice, but go
Unheeding
Till thrice and more they have denied
The Man of Sorrows, crucified
And bleeding.

One look at His dear suffering face
Will make us feel the deep disgrace
Of weakness;
We shall be sifted till the strength
Of self-conceit be changed at length
To meekness.

Wounds of the soul, though healed, will ache;
The reddening scars remain, and make
Confession;
Lost innocence returns no more;
We are not what we were before
Transgression.

But noble souls, thro' dust and heat,
Rise from disaster and defeat
The stronger,
And conscious still of help divine
Within them live on earth supine
No longer.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow