

Through It All

Testimonies of Faith in Hardship—By Maria

Dear Family,

THIS GN is a little different in nature, in that it is a compilation of stories and testimonies from those who have passed on to their Heavenly reward. These are testimonies of heart-break, love, yieldedness, forsaking, compassion, and honor. They are also a testimony of the Lord's love, comfort, peace, grace, and the faith He gives when in the throes of uncertainty, heart-ache, confusion or discouragement. We pray these testimonies will be an inspiration and encouragement to you in your own life and walk with the Lord, as you continue to trust, yield and obey Him in all things, and claim the power of the keys for whatever challenges you face.

The Chaplain

GEORGIE GRAEME [pronounced "Graham"] slipped deeper into the trench as the whine of the howitzer* shell grew louder. He knew that within seconds it would land somewhere very near him, exploding in a hail of white-hot shrapnel, burning and tearing into anyone in its path.

3. "Keep your bloody head down, Reverend!" shouted Joe White, the regimental sergeant major, who at this time happened to be in the trench next to him. "Pagan Joe," the soldiers called him—a man of undoubted bravery, but one who had earned the epithet* because of his almost constant cursing and disregard for any religious sentiment. He was, in his own words, "a heathen gladiator determined to slaughter as many in combat as would fit on his bloodied bayonet, and equally as determined that all who served under him would do the same. And if any man jack* of his regiment shirked their murderous duty, he would have their guts for garters."

4. Normally the British Army was a little

more mindful that the senior enlisted man of a regiment would have a higher claim to rectitude* than Pagan Joe. But the murderous battles of Ypres in Belgium and others in the Great War had relegated such moral sensibilities to somewhere near the end of the list of priorities. The job at hand was to win battles, and if it took someone like Pagan Joe to do it, then so be it.

5. Georgie Graeme was another kettle of fish.

6. Destined for the clergy for as long as he could remember, he had grown up in the Cornish countryside of southwestern England. Sickly as a youth, with recurring bouts of consumption (tuberculosis), he wasn't regarded as the best catch around for any of the ladies of Cornwall. He had devoted himself to a bookish, almost monkish, life at Christ's College, Cambridge, where he earned his Doctor of Theology and eventually was ordained into the Church of England. He then became a curate* at a small Cornish village. There, much to his surprise and all who knew him, he met, fell in love with, and married the lovely Meg Tavistock, the catch of the county. Georgie had grown out of his juvenile infirmities, but the lanky and awkward curate was not regarded as much of a match by the locals for the lovely and cultured Meg.

7. Still, it seemed that the marriage was a happy one, and soon there were several little Graemes running around the rectory* where Georgie became the rector* on the retirement of old Reverend Douthy. Theirs was an idyllic* world in many ways. The parish was not a big

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one and Georgie had lots of time to indulge his passion for reading. He had also become somewhat of an expert on the history of Cornwall and spent many of his days going to various historical sites, and even engaged in some amateur archeology. The old Celtic Cornish culture was his special love and he enlisted the help of several of the elderly in his parish to help him learn to speak Cornish, the old Celtic language of the region. He secretly thrilled to the deeds recounted in the old poems and ballads, of the bygone heroes and villains, of druids and dragons.

8. Meg loved Georgie and she loved their children, but she had her sights on grander things than being the wife of a village rector. The church was a career and she had dreams of being married to Bishop Graeme and being a high-flyer in not only Cornish society, but British society in general. *Once George is a bishop, he will be able to sit in the House of Lords and I will be known as Lady Margaret Graeme*, she often thought to herself. So she indulged Georgie's passions while she schemed, in a nice and polite way, of course, as to how to achieve her dreams.

9. Then came the fateful day of June 28, 1914, and "the shot that was heard around the world." Soon all of Europe was at war, and the doleful news of the horrors of war began to be the daily staple on the pages of the newspaper.

10. It was May 15, 1915, Georgie's great day of choices, as he now looked back on it. A letter had arrived from the bishop in Truro [the county seat of Cornwall] and Meg excitedly rushed in with it in her hand. Meanwhile, Georgie was sitting at the dining room table, his eyes fixed on a small article on page three of the newspaper. "Army Seeks Chaplains," said the headline. Meg's voice finally broke through the trancelike state that Georgie was in.

11. "Darling, it's a letter from the bishop!" she exclaimed. "Open it, Georgie. I am sure it is wonderful news!"

12. Georgie looked up at his beautiful Meg and smiled. Almost as though in a stupor he reached for the envelope, opened it, and pulled out the handwritten letter.

13. "What is it, Georgie?" Meg begged.

14. "The bishop wants me to come to

Truro," replied Georgie. "They are considering separating the office of dean of the cathedral from that of the bishop and he wants to interview me as a candidate to fill the post."

15. "Oh, Georgie, that's wonderful!" shrieked Meg. "This is our chance to move on to greater things. That will put you right in line for becoming bishop once the old man retires. And you're so young and all for a job like this. This is a marvelous opportunity. You must go at once!"

16. Georgie sat stunned in his chair. Meg was absolutely right, this was an incredible opportunity and any other day he would have had no hesitation at all. But just seconds earlier he had had the most amazing experience of his life, his epiphany, as he would come to call it. For the first time in his life he had had what he could only term as a spiritual experience. As he had been reading the article about the need for chaplains he swore he had heard out of the blue a deep, resonant voice intone: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2Tim.2:3-4).

17. Those scriptures were well known to Georgie. Paul's admonition to Timothy was something that he had read many times, but somehow he had never associated the word war in the scriptures with actual warfare. Georgie knew at that very moment what was being asked of him. He was being called to a mission of reaching the tommies* in the trenches of Europe. The unexpectedness of it had left him dumbfounded. He went about the rest of the day's business almost as if he were in a dream. Meg rushed down to the station to buy him a ticket to Truro on the next morning's train and then hurried home to pack his day bag for the trip. Georgie somehow managed to go through the motions of all he had to do that day, but that night in bed he lay awake.

18. Meg lay beside him and he gazed at her sleeping face illuminated by the moonlight coming through the window. *She is beautiful*, he thought. *How can I bring myself to leave her?* A tear rolled down his cheek as he timidly stroked her face. "Lord, You cannot be asking me to leave

her to go off to war,” he prayed. “You are the Prince of Peace and I am a minister in the church. I should be promoting peace, not involved with war.” These and a thousand thoughts and prayers like it ran through his head. After several hours, Georgie quietly got out of bed and slipped out the bedroom door. He stopped by the children’s rooms one by one and gazed at the little sleeping bodies. “Lord, these are my children that You have given me. How can I leave them? What right have I to leave them without a father? What will Meg and the children do? How will they survive without me?”

19. At length, Georgie made it to the living room and turned on the light and sank into his easy chair. The family Bible sat on the small table next to him and he picked it up. “Lord,” he prayed as he set the Bible on his lap, “I have not been what You would call a great worker in Your harvest fields. I have been a pastor to a small flock that has given me time to pursue a lot of hobbies and interests on the side. I am not what You would call a terribly ‘profitable servant.’ I have done my little bit, but I am certainly no battlefield evangelist. Why on earth are You calling me?”

20. Then that deep resonant voice rang again, this time not audibly as before, but in his mind. *Many are called but few are chosen*, it said. *Pick up the Bible and read.*

21. Georgie lifted the Bible and it fell open to Matthew chapter nine. “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest” (Mat.9:36–38).

22. Georgie groaned inside because now it was becoming more than obvious that his calling to the chaplain service was undeniable, and any objections he had, he knew he would be striving with God on the matter. *Sheep scattered abroad. Certainly that describes these poor soldiers overseas*, he thought.

23. He flipped through the pages of the Bible and it fell open to Luke 10. “Therefore said He unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the

laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves” (Luke 10:2–3).

24. “Almost the exact same words,” he wondered out loud. “Lord, I am in turmoil inside. How can I do this?” Again he flipped through the pages, hoping to find something that would perhaps point in the direction of Truro and not the battlefields of France and Belgium. His eyes fell on the following:

25. “And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And He said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto Him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man saith unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven: and come and follow Me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

26. “Then said Jesus unto His disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. When His disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

27. “Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or

sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first" (Matthew 19:16–30).

28. Georgie's eyes went back to the line "or wife or children." "Dear God," he whispered, "You are asking an awful lot here. Surely I am not supposed to forsake my wife and children! After all, I am in Your service and have not had to forsake them so far. Surely this is too much and You are calling me to too great a task for one as I. One more time, Lord. Please confirm to me what You are doing. Make it unequivocal so for me there is no ambiguity."

29. As he flipped through the pages one last time, his eyes fell on the second half of Luke 14. The first verse shocked him as he saw that the Lord had made it extremely plain where his future lay.

30. "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassy, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple. Salt is good; but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Luke 14:26–35).

31. There was no denying the calling. Georgie slipped out of the chair and onto his knees. Burying his face in the carpet, he cried and prayed until the sun broke through the liv-

ing room window. Wearily, Georgie rose to his feet, retraced his steps of the previous night and slipped back into bed. Meg stirred and opened her eyes.

32. "Goodness me!" she exclaimed, "It's morning already and you need to be on your way, Georgie Graeme! Rise and shine, you sleepyhead. I've pressed your best suit. Get dressed now and I will make you breakfast."

33. Meg was in such a state that she didn't notice her husband's tearstained face as she pulled on her robe and headed off to the kitchen. Georgie dutifully obeyed, dressed, ate in silence, and was pushed out the door with a peck on the cheek.



34. Later that day he found himself sitting across a table from the elderly Bishop of Truro drinking tea with lemon and eating dainty little biscuits and scones. The bishop was a kindly old man with a genuine love for God and his flock. Picking up a stack of letters tied in a neat little bundle, the old bishop waved them at Georgie.

35. "Your wife's relatives have been doing an inordinate amount of lobbying on your behalf, young fellow. Scarcely a day goes by and I don't have a Tavistock writing me about your wonderful virtues and eminent qualifications for the job of dean. If I am to believe everything I read, why, I would imagine that I am speaking to a future Archbishop of Canterbury."

36. "Forgive them, sir," Georgie said in a low voice. "I think they talk much too highly of me. I had no idea that they were bothering you in this way. I am embarrassed at their pressing my cause. I really had no idea."

37. "Well, what would you think if I offered you the post?" inquired the bishop.

38. "I would be extremely honored and even flattered," replied Georgie, "but I am afraid that I would have to turn it down. It seems that God has other plans for me that I knew nothing about until yesterday."

39. "What do you mean, young man?" inquired the bishop further.

40. Georgie then went on to relate all that had transpired in the last 24 hours. The bishop

listened intently, nodding, smiling, and giving an occasional verbal prod and seeking clarification on some points.

41. “And that’s about everything,” Georgie said as he finished.

42. “Congratulations, young man,” said the bishop after a moment’s pause. “God has spoken to you in forthright and unequivocal terms. That is not something a lot of us can attest to. There must be a great work for you at the front, and I would not want to hinder you in the least from answering that call. I hereby withdraw your name from the consideration of the lowly job of dean of Truro cathedral and hereby recommend you to the head of the Chaplain’s Service of His Majesty’s Armed Forces for the great and noble task of apostle to the tommies.”

43. “But my wife and children, my lord. I fear I cannot leave them for this task, and if I do, they will hate me for it,” Georgie responded despairingly.

44. “Leave your wife and children in God’s hands,” replied the bishop. “There are none better, not even your own. Do not let yourself miss your calling. You will hate yourself if you do and will undoubtedly earn the scorn of your loved ones in the long run. Take it from an old soldier of Christ who didn’t achieve much because he settled for a bishopric. Don’t take the same second best as I did.”

45. Georgie looked up at the old man and noticed a tear travel down the wrinkled face.

46. “Yes, you heard right,” smiled the bishop. “I could have been a missionary to China, but I settled for a cathedral in Truro. Believe you me, not a day goes by that I don’t regret my decision. So get you to the front. The Lord needs His soldiers there to fight for the souls of all those boys. They say there are no atheists in foxholes, so the harvest will surely be plenteous as the Lord told you.”

47. Georgie rose from his chair and kissed the ring on the old man’s outstretched hand. He then fell to his knees and begged the bishop to pray for him.

48. The old man closed his eyes and laid his hand on Georgie’s head. “Dear God,” he prayed, “bless this Your soldier who is off to fight Your battles. He was a peacetime, behind-the-lines

soldier, but now You have called him to the thick of combat. Help him to go in the spirit of Saint Paul, Your great warrior and apostle of old. Help him to know that it is by Your might he shall prevail and that by Your love he shall succeed. Help him now as he has to go home to fight the toughest battle of all, that of explaining to his loved ones that he is called away from them to fight on foreign shores and that they may never see him again in this life. Grant him Your help, for You fail us not. Amen!

49. “Go in peace, my son. Make the Lord proud.”



50. Georgie’s trip home was the longest and most agonizing one he had ever taken. He stood at the front door of the rectory for the longest time as he tried to pluck up the courage to enter. Finally, he turned the doorknob. Meg was at the door before he had opened it all the way.

51. “You’re home!” she squealed, as she threw her arms around him.

52. Georgie hesitatingly hugged her back. Meg quickly noticed the hesitation in Georgie’s manner and pulled back to look him in the eye.

53. “That old bishop turned you down, didn’t he?” she said bitterly. “After all my family has done for that decrepit old man. He owed it to us to appoint you dean.”

54. “It’s not that,” stammered Georgie. “The bishop was very kind and we talked a lot. He might have offered me the post if ...”

55. “If what?” demanded Meg.

56. “Well, we decided that the Lord was calling me to a different place of service,” said Georgie, gaining a little confidence.

57. “There is another opening elsewhere?” said Meg, suddenly thinking that all was not lost.

58. “Yes,” said Georgie, “but I am afraid it is not what you’re expecting. The Lord is calling me to be an army chaplain.”

59. “Army chaplain!” Meg almost yelled. “Where? How? You don’t mean at the front, do you? You could get killed! No, you will be killed. You’ll leave me a widow and your children fatherless. That is the height of irresponsibility. I won’t allow it, Georgie! I won’t allow it. Your place is here with your family, not off on some

atrocious battlefield.”

60. Meg then sank into a chair and started crying uncontrollably.

61. Georgie knelt down beside her in an effort to comfort her. He prayed with all that was in him for the words to say. Slowly he pulled her head toward his chest and began to speak in a steady and reassuring voice.

62. “I have to, my darling. God is requiring it of me, and I cannot turn my back on His call.”

63. “But you are serving God in the church. You are serving God here. It is unfair of Him to take you anywhere else. I need you, your children need you, your parishioners need you,” Meg sobbed.

64. “God needs me elsewhere for now,” said Georgie. “It would be unfair of me and of you to refuse to let me go where the need is greatest. The need is with the troops at the front.”

65. “But why you? You are a sickly, awkward man. You are not robust like all these young recruits. They need a man of stronger constitution,” Meg tried to reason.

66. “God has unmistakably called me,” said Georgie in a calm and soothing voice that surprised him. “I cannot let Him down, else both of us will spend a lifetime regretting it.”

67. Meg coolly pushed herself away. “So that’s the end of it?” she questioned.

68. “I am afraid so,” said Georgie, trying to look as reassuring as he could.

69. Meg stood up and straightened out her dress and turned back into the rectory living room.

70. “Dinner is ready,” she said icily. “I will call the children.”

71. The meal, along with the next few days, were some of the most difficult times Georgie had ever experienced. Meg had coolly told the children at the table that father was going off to war and might never come back. The children were a little more enthusiastic than Meg and wanted to know if daddy would wear a uniform and carry a gun like all the other soldiers. They were disappointed that Georgie wouldn’t have a gun and thought that would make him a rather second-rate soldier.

72. Georgie found himself crying often during the day when he thought of what he was

going to be missing, but Meg never shed another tear after her initial outburst. She had retreated behind an icy exterior of British decorum*. Many of the parishioners came to wish Georgie luck, and she was as she had always been—the perfect hostess and village parson’s wife.

73. But then on the last day before Georgie shipped out, Meg melted.

74. “I can’t do it,” she admitted. “I can’t hate you. I have tried my damndest to hate you but I can’t. I have tried to hate God and I can’t hate Him either. I want to hate you and Him for what you are doing, but all I can think about is what a good and loving man you are and how I have been so fortunate to have you as my husband. I thought I was going to ride on your coat-tails into the upper strata of society, but instead I am liable to be a war widow. I am so scared of losing you...” she broke into tears, unable to finish her sentence. “Please be careful!” she finally managed to get out between sobs.

75. Georgie broke into tears too as they both hugged and cried for a long time.

76. “You know this is the hardest thing I have ever done in my life,” Georgie finally said.

77. “It darn well better be!” said Meg. “And when you come back, it better be for good.”

78. “I can’t promise that,” said Georgie.

79. “I know you can’t,” replied Meg. “But I will be having lots of debates with God while you are away and I am going to try and talk Him into letting you stay, not to mention that He’d better take care of you over there. I need a husband, and you are just on loan.”

80. “As much as I would like to agree with you, I think it might be the other way around, that we are both on loan from Him,” said Georgie.

81. “You and He are so infuriating!” said Meg with a look of resignation in her eye. “I can’t seem to get anything my way.”

82. “Well, by the time I get back, maybe you would have talked Him around to your way of thinking,” said Georgie with a grin.

83. “I haven’t so far,” Meg replied with a smile, “but it won’t be for lack of trying.”



84. Their last night together was the most wonderful they had ever had. Something magi-

cal seemed to come over them. The bittersweet memories of that night stayed with Georgie and he dwelt on them often, especially when the shells were whistling overhead.

85. Pagan Joe was cussing up a storm next to Georgie.

86. “Are you an atheist?” shouted Georgie over the din.

87. “I am a heathen pagan,” Joe shouted back as the two men were showered with earth kicked up by a shell exploding nearby.

88. “But do you believe in God?” shouted Georgie.

89. “Wouldn’t matter if I did,” yelled Joe.

90. “And why is that?” Georgie yelled back.

91. “Because if there is a God I am going to Hell, and if there’s not, I’m already in it. Either way, I am fodder for the furnace,” shouted Joe.

92. “But Jesus loves you, sergeant major, even if you are Attila the bloody Hun reincarnated,” Georgie yelled. Inexplicably, at that precise moment there was a momentary pause in the shelling, and in the silence Georgie’s voice carried over the battlefield. A roar of laughter went up from soldiers nearby who overheard the comment.

93. “Don’t go embarrassin’ me in front of the men,” Joe replied, laughing.

94. “What? For calling you Attila the Hun?” asked Georgie.

95. “No, for saying Jesus loves me,” replied Joe.

96. “Look lively, men,” an officer yelled in the distance. “Jerry’s* coming calling.”

97. The faint outlines of a horde of German soldiers could be seen in the distance disgorging themselves from their trenches.

98. “Hold your fire,” shouted Joe. “Wait till they are so close you can’t miss ’em. Pick your targets! Hold it! Hold it! Fire!”

99. The withering hail of bullets ripped through the enemy lines, but the horde kept coming. The British kept firing, but the Germans had reached the British trenches and now the fighting was hand to hand.

100. A tall German sergeant lobbed a grenade into the trench near Georgie. Georgie instinctively grabbed it and went to fling it in another direction, but the grenade went off just as

it cleared the top of the trench, only a few feet from Georgie’s hand. The blast blew his arm off. Georgie lay on the ground mortally wounded.

101. “Get the stretcher-bearers over here,” roared Pagan Joe.

102. Two medical corps personnel scurried over to Georgie and pulled him onto the stretcher. The Germans were retreating, now having lost the best part of an infantry regiment in the failed assault. *Trench warfare is total idiocy*, thought Joe, as he was relieved from the pressing business of fighting the enemy. *They attack us, we attack them, thousands are killed on both sides, and we all stay just where we started. Total idiotic lunacy.*

103. Joe rushed after Georgie and the stretcher-bearers as they wended their way back through the maze of trenches to the British field hospital.

104. “Hang on, Reverend,” said Joe as he caught up to them. “We are going to get you patched up and you’ll be right as rain.”

105. “Don’t be a Kraut’s ass,” Georgie replied in a hoarse whisper. “I’m slipping away here and you know it.”

106. “You’d better not go slipping away, Reverend,” said Joe, fighting back tears. “You’ve still got unfinished business.”

107. “What’s that?” asked Georgie, slipping in and out of consciousness.

108. “You’ve gotta save the heathen,” replied Joe.

109. “All right, you big bloody heathen,” whispered Georgie, “repeat after me: Jesus, I want You to come into my life and save my immortal soul.”

110. “I can’t do that, Reverend,” said Joe, fighting back tears.

111. “You’d better bloody well do it,” whispered Georgie, “else....”

112. Georgie’s voice trailed off and his head slumped lifelessly sideways.

113. Joe, the hardened veteran who had seen it all and seemed to be touched by nothing, broke down. Claspng Georgie’s remaining hand in his, he looked down at the amazingly serene face of the man he had secretly admired most in the world.

114. “All right, I’ll do it,” cried Joe. “Jesus,

this was the best bloody man I have ever known. He went about doing nothing but good, and he didn't deserve this. He was a source of warmth and comfort to everyone in this regiment, and I never admired a man so much in my life. I wanted so much to pray with him when he was alive, but never had the gumption to do it. I want You to come into my life and save my immortal soul."



115. In December 1918, one month after the Great War ended, a tall, burly man in a sergeant major's uniform stood outside the village rectory. Nervously, he knocked on the door. Meg opened the door inquisitively.

116. "Mrs. George Graeme?" asked the man.

117. "Yes," replied Meg.

118. "The name is Joseph White, ma'am. I had the distinction and honor to serve with your husband in the war. The best man I have ever known."

119. "Pagan Joe!" exclaimed Meg. "Come on in."

120. "You know of me, ma'am?" asked a surprised Joe as he entered the house.

121. "My husband scarcely wrote of anything else," Meg replied. "You were a major part of every letter I received from him. He and I made a pact to pray for you every day. Ever since Georgie's death I have continued to keep you in my prayers. What a wonderful surprise to see you here!"

122. "Well, I guess those prayers of yours worked. I somehow survived four years of the foulest war that ever was. And the most amazing things kept happening to keep me alive, like God was protecting me or something. Your husband got me believing in God and then he prayed for me as he was dying. I asked Jesus into my life at that point and that was the end of 'Pagan Joe.' Some of the men were even calling me 'Saint Joe' before the war ended. I didn't get to know a lot about being a Christian and going to services and all that, but it seems I sure learned a lot about God and being different than I had been."

123. Meg smiled, and Joe thought it was the most beautiful smile he had ever seen.

124. "Your husband was a mighty lucky man to have a beautiful woman like yourself for his

wife," Joe said. "I can't understand how he could have left you and gone off to war like that. Being a reverend and all, he didn't have to go."

125. "It was God's call in his life and we couldn't deny it," explained Meg. "Oh, believe me, I tried to. I made some of our last weeks together hell for him, but the last day and night together is something I will cherish always. And of course his letters meant the world to me. The day he died he visited me, you know. I didn't see him, but his presence was here. I knew he was dead but somehow I knew I wouldn't be alone, and I had a serenity that I couldn't explain. The news came from the War Office a few weeks later that he had died trying to save others by throwing a German grenade out of the trench."

126. "I was next to him, and what he did saved my life and that of several others," said Joe. "It was an act of uncommon valor and ..."

127. "Love," interjected Meg.

128. "Yes, love, I suppose," said Joe, "like he was sacrificing his life for the rest of us."

129. "That was the Georgie I loved," said Meg, "and the one I will love forever."

130. Joe stared at Meg and he swore he could see a glow about her.

131. "Mr. White..." said Meg.

132. "Just Joe, ma'am," interrupted Joe.

133. "Joe, what are your plans now?"

134. "Well, I have no family, so I don't have a lot to keep me any place in particular right now."

135. "Do you think you would consider staying here awhile? The bishop has allowed me to stay at the rectory since there was no replacement pastor available for this village. But the old place is in quite a state of disrepair and I can't afford to pay for the work, but if you wanted three good meals a day and a roof overhead..."

136. "I would be honored to, ma'am," replied Joe. "Just show me where to begin."

137. And that was the beginning, a new beginning. As you might have guessed, Joe and Meg eventually married. Their life, however, took an unexpected turn as Joe and Meg became active in the Salvation Army. Joe, being an ex-army man, seemed to feel at home in a denomination based along military lines, and the evangelizing, coupled with social work, were something both Joe and Meg felt called to. They eventually

moved to Liverpool and performed great works in the name of charity and won many to Jesus in their long and fruitful lives of service.

138. So the death of a witness resulted in another taking his place. While one was brought Home to a Heavenly reward, another picked up his torch. Is there a torch near you waiting to be raised?

Father Smith

As told by Demetrius Gallitzin

I AM DEMETRIUS AUGUSTINE GALLITZIN. Born in The Hague on December 22, 1770, to Russian prince Dmitri Alexander Gallitzin and Princess Amalie (from a great German family), I was a member of one of the oldest, wealthiest, and most illustrious families of Russia. Our family was both respected and envied, and with my noble lineage, all thought an illustrious future awaited me. Noble and illustrious, yes, but not in the way anyone thought it would be.

140. At the time of my birth, my father Dmitri Gallitzin was the Russian ambassador to Holland. But for 14 years prior to this appointment, he held this same position at the embassy of Paris, where he established close relations with the philosophers of Freemasonry and became a devout atheist.

141. I was raised in great prejudice. Both my father and mother shielded me completely from every religious influence. But God in His infinite love and mercy refused to let the sophistries* of atheism that surrounded me on every side meddle with the destiny of His choosing for me.

142. In 1786 my mother became critically ill. We all thought she would die. But she did not die. Instead, she recovered beautifully. Somehow she knew that it was Jesus who had healed her, and she vowed to take up Christianity seriously. It was at that time that she became concerned for my spiritual welfare.

143. On my 16th birthday, my mother wrote me a letter telling me that it was her great wish that I convert to Christ. In fact, I, too, soon felt I must find the Lord. In short, I found Christ and converted.

144. Though I found the Lord and loved

Him with all my heart, I did not truly want to give Him my all. I entered the military career that my father long desired for me and a career for which I, a young man loving manly deeds and the glorified military life, desired.

145. In 1792, at the apex of the French Revolution, I became the aide-de-camp* to an Austrian general, von Lillien. I felt that I was at the top of the world. I had everything in life that I wanted—everything except the peace of mind that I was in the center of the will of God. I felt His calling in my life, but I ran to the arms of the army, as Jonah ran to the boat that he thought would take him far away from God.

146. I tried to be a good man whenever I was in a position to help others in distress, but I didn't know much about the Lord myself and so I wasn't really much help to anyone at all. My position was my excuse for my double-mindedness.

147. When the King of Sweden, Gustav III, was assassinated, and the death of Emperor Leopold II forced Austria and Prussia to exclude all foreigners from service in their armies, my life took a very different turn.

148. Being one of the many foreign soldiers dismissed, I had no better choice than to return home. Shortly after my return, my parents resolved that I should spend time traveling through America, the West Indies, and other foreign lands. I refused to for a short while, for I wanted nothing more than to develop a military career as a Russian officer. This was my dream. But God had other plans for me.

149. Back at home, night after night I tossed and turned in my comfortable bed, wondering if I would ever find the peace in my soul that I knew was lacking. Though I had never yet felt it completely, I knew it was a gift to be found in the right place, for at times in my life when I had given myself more completely to Christ, I had touched the hem of the garment of peace and of a sound mind.

150. Sensing that the restlessness would never end if I continued with my own plans, I took my father's advice to study abroad and to travel. I chose to do so in the United States.

151. In October of 1792, accompanied by my tutor, Father Brosius, I landed in Baltimore,

Maryland. In order to avoid the inconvenience and expense of traveling as a Russian prince, I assumed the name of Smith, and for many years was known in the United States as Augustine Smith.

152. Upon looking around, I discovered that my newly adopted country was desperately impoverished in faith in Jesus. I was shocked. All around me I saw spiritual destitution and yearned to play an active role in the Lord's divine plan, instead of just studying about it. I resolved to devote my fortune and life to the salvation of souls in America. Despite the objections of my relatives and friends in Europe, I, with the approval of Bishop Carroll of Baltimore, entered St. Mary's Catholic Seminary as one of its first students.

153. I went back and forth between my desire to become a missionary to these people and my desire to return to the military.

154. At last I received ordination, becoming known as Father Augustine Smith. The Archbishop of Baltimore begged me to remain in the Order of Saint Sulpice and to be a priest there. But this was not to be. I knew I had to branch out, for I soon realized that the newly acquired faith I had found placed a duty upon me—the duty to do what my Lord, Jesus Christ, wanted me to do, and not what I wanted or what others wanted from me. I soon separated myself from that society to the place where the Lord wanted me to go—western Pennsylvania.

155. I was a Catholic priest, and as such, because of the indoctrination of the Catholic Church in my days of training, had my share of disagreements with the Protestant Church. It was not my focus to convert Protestants to the Catholic Church, but to win as many people as I could to Christ. This was my sincere goal.

156. In 1799 I made my home in the midst of forests and rocky hills. I built a thirty-foot log chapel, which would suffice for the few committed Christians in the area.

157. But the Lord did not let me settle for ministering to just the few Christians who were desperate for a priest. He wanted me to start a Christian colony, which would eventually flourish.

158. The Emperor of Russia, Alexander I, knew of me and of my work in western Pennsyl-

vania. He was angered and would not forgive me for “betraying the name of Gallitzin” by becoming a Catholic priest.

159. Consequently, in 1808 I received a letter from a friend in Europe informing me of a decision that came as an unexpected shock. Numerous times I had received solemn assurances that upon the death of my mother and father, I would obtain a portion of my father's large estate, as well as my share of my mother's bequest. But instead of allowing the inheritances to be mine, the Russian government disinherited me for becoming a Catholic and a priest, and the German prince who had married my sister was given, and squandered, the entire inheritance.

160. This news disappointed me greatly, for I had hoped for the inheritance to further the work that the Lord had helped me begin. By this time I had spent all that I had, but still refused to receive a cent of salary living as a priest, for I knew that the Lord would care for me if I attended to His business. And indeed He was faithful to supply. The Lord not only provided for me, but also for my household and the many orphans whom I gave shelter to.

161. There were good days, but overall my hardships were many. The most difficult hardships of all were the battles and trials of the spirit and mind, and when my friends turned against me for remaining devout toward my convictions.

162. For quite some years my life for others was repaid mainly by ingratitude. Because I was a Catholic priest in a predominantly Protestant area, my actions were misconstrued, my words and writings misinterpreted, my character vilified, and my honor attacked. I was even attacked physically. But the most hurtful of all this was that it was by members of the flock I cared for. However, the Lord took good care of me, and in the end all was made right and this only served to further the Lord's work.

163. Many people knew of these hardships, but the hardship no one knew of was that for a long, long while, even after becoming a priest, I yearned to run away from the Lord's calling and become a man of the military once again. Being a priest was not easy for me—in fact, had I not felt the Lord's calling so strongly, wearing the robes of a priest was the exact opposite of what

I would have done.

164. The desire to serve in the military was more difficult for me to forsake than a life of riches, ease and comfort as a prince—though from time to time I battled with desiring that too.

165. You may think that living as a priest would have kept me sheltered from great temptations in my life, but in point of fact, my vocation did not shelter me at all, for I allowed my heart to face the wind of unyieldedness. I thought it didn't matter, for no one even knew. But it did matter.

166. We all have our temptations and things dear to our hearts that we must forsake in order to fulfill God's purpose in our lives. God only knows what will be your ultimate test. This was mine.

167. Being brought up a noble and being taught that honor and prestige was the destiny of a man of the military, and being a somewhat vain man on the inside, though I was known as a "humble man" by others, I chose to not truly give up to the Lord the burden of my desire to return to a military lifestyle. Even the term "humble man" upset me inside. It was not my personal desire to be this "humble, weak way," but it was God's will for me. I am glad to say that after some time, I chose His path and fully submitted. I have not regretted doing so—no, not for a moment, for God's ways are truly above our ways.

168. In the beginning of my ministry, I hit low points numerous times. The disappointments I faced, the misinterpretation and misconstruing of my words, writings and actions, and the betrayal of close friends or those I loved, hurt me deeply. The vilification and slandering of my very character, the mockings by people I lived amongst as a priest of God, the times I was physically attacked, and many other things in my life at the time caused me to feel separated from everyone and to be deeply lonely. I wondered if I'd made the right choice and if the Lord was indeed looking out for me as I did His work.

169. There was one night in particular many years into my service that I fought harder than I had ever fought to remain God's man. I was so lonely that night, and I felt that God had forsaken me.

170. As I fought the Enemy's attacks upon my heart and my thoughts, as the riches and comforts of the princely life that I had forsaken were dangled before my eyes and the spiritually weak state I was in weakened my resolve, a great sweat came over me and I shook so violently that I could not control it.

171. I heard a mocking voice in my head that told me that God didn't care, that serving Him was the weakling's path, and that He was a selfish God for asking me to do His will instead of my own.

172. Facing the sole, tiny window that was cracked open in my bedroom, I sat upon my narrow bed, holding my knees close to my chest and rocked back and forth.

173. I knew that this could be a breaking point in my ministry. Even though many were opposed to me, many others looked up to me, and I did not want to disappoint them, nor did I want to disappoint the Lord. But the things of this world and all that could be mine by a single active choice held a place in my heart still, and I knew that I could go back and forth between my desires no longer. I knew that I would have to forsake them and never look back upon them favorably or I would have to choose the way of the world and my upbringing and all that came along with it.

174. Yet just at the moment I felt I would surely snap, I burst into tears and begged the Lord to take me and use me fully again. I told Him that even if I were tempted and tried this way every night for the rest of my life, my life would remain His because, in fact, He'd already proven time and again that He truly was God, and as such, worth serving with my whole heart.

175. It was at this very moment that I felt a mist come down upon me, as if to wash away all the impurities of my heart that had never fully been given over for a cleansing. This night that I submitted my all into the hands of my God of love, He gave me the indefatigability* needed in the life of a missionary and a kind of courage that I had never imagined before, as well as a true fiery zeal which I believe is a necessity in the life of a missionary.

176. I so much wanted the life of a soldier, and God indeed gave it to me, albeit in His Own

way. I was now 100 percent His soldier. That night God unlocked my heart and gave me the secret desires of it. I had never realized until then just how much I loved Him and how much He cared for me. The Lord gave me what I wanted in a way that benefited me for eternity, and here in Heaven I am still enjoying the blessings of my sacrifice to Him of my worldly desires and aspirations. I am so thankful now that He helped me choose the better thing.

177. In spite of all the difficulties with which I had to contend—and they were many—my life was gloriously crowned with Heavenly blessings, so many that I cannot count them all.

178. It is so easy to use the excuse, “I am only human, you know,” but if we have given our lives over to Him and forsaken ourselves, we become merely vessels, and God’s divine nature can possess us and fill us up. Then we can do things in the realm of the spirit with God’s Own divine nature.

179. After forty-one years spent on the rugged heights of the Allegheny Mountains, I died as I had lived for most of my life—poor. I would say without a second thought that my years were spent in the best kind of service, serving under the best General I could have ever served.

180. I would indeed consider my life and career fruitful to the full—but only because I had given it over to the Lord to use as He would. All the credit goes to the Lord for the many thousands of souls I was able to lead to Him in my lifetime. Jesus gave me tremendous fruit and let me see His church grow, and also gave me innumerable rewards when I got to Heaven that I wouldn’t trade for a thing in the world.

181. I was captured by an inner vision—Christ’s vision—and nothing in the world could have fulfilled me the way serving Him did, not only ultimately, but also day by day.

182. Living for Christ and remaining uncompromised meant a great deal of forsaking for me—giving up my special desire to advance in a profession I was good at and loved, and also my desire to be something or someone in the eyes of those I knew.

183. I know now that because I was a channel for God to work through, my life was filled with all the magic and might and power that it

was made to possess—not my own power and greatness, but Christ’s. He made me to use me, and when I let Him do just that, I was truly a special someone. I was who I was meant to be.

Question: Father Smith had such a small parish in a rural part of the U.S. Did he really win “many thousands of souls” to the Lord in his lifetime?

Answer: When we checked the history books, we were surprised at the impact he had on the early U.S. He labored as a missionary for some 41 years, and, according to both Catholic and secular encyclopedias, “where, at his arrival, only a dozen Catholics were to be found, [at the time of his death] there now resided over ten thousand.”

He traveled extensively to minister to his flock and to preach, and in what little spare time he had, he wrote as well. One historian noted: “Notwithstanding his labors, Father Gallitzin found time to publish several valuable tracts ... [one of] which ran through several editions and was the means of many conversions. So popular were these works that they were translated into French, German, and Italian, and were widely spread throughout Europe.”

So Father Smith loved the Lord and was faithful to His message, and received a crown of life for the many thousands of souls he helped to win!

It Was Worth It All

As told by Florence Nightingale

MANY OF YOU probably know about some of the sacrifices I had to make to fulfill the Lord’s calling in my life. I had to leave behind everything I knew and loved and cared about, for the sake of fulfilling my calling.

185. It was difficult to lose the company of my family and friends and the man who loved me. But the most difficult of all was losing their respect, their emotional support, their backing, and even their love. They rejected me and despised me. Hardly anyone believed in what I was doing, and that included the ones I cared about most.

186. I did what I knew I had to do, by sheer faith and conviction that what God told me was right and true and worth fighting for. In time, the world agreed with me, and even came to admire me. But for most of my life, I fought on, kept on, served on, for the sake of the Lord and those who needed my help. There was no glory or honor in it as far as I saw. At first I was considered a disgrace to my family, to my country, and to the medical profession. I was considered confused, messed up, crazy, even heretical.

187. It's easy to look back now and say that I have no regrets, that I don't doubt for a moment that it was worth it. Now I can see the results; now I can see the positive changes that my sacrifice and service brought about, not only in individual lives, but in the world overall. Yet at the time it wasn't so clear-cut or easily defined. Far from it! There was many a time that I wondered, that I wavered, that my faith and resolve nearly failed, that I nearly gave up, turned around and went home.

188. I knew I was doing the right thing, and I never questioned that, but sometimes I wondered if I could take it any longer. Could I go on for the rest of my life being ill thought of by my family and friends? Could I go on for the rest of my life for the sake of others alone, with no personal benefits to speak of? Could I go on for the rest of my life giving and giving, and receiving nothing in return? That's not the way it turned out, thankfully, but for some years those were the feelings and fears I faced. I had to be willing to go on forever, whether or not anything changed, or I couldn't have made it.

189. If I had only sought the approval of my family or of the world, that would never have been enough to sustain me. I would have been disillusioned, and my strength and hope and faith would have failed me. Putting faith in a person, or in anything other than the Lord, just isn't enough when you're faced with a choice or burden of the magnitude I was. I simply could not look to any earthly comforts or pleasures or promises. I could not count on the word of any man or woman. Many a time promises were made and then broken—but God's promises were never broken.

190. From the start I knew that as much as I

would have loved the companionship of the man dear to me, I could not have gone on and fulfilled my calling for God had I joined myself to him. He would not have followed me into such a lifestyle. He was helpful and courteous always, even after I turned him down, but had I married him, he would have wanted me to stay in England, to be a society woman, to join him in his lifestyle, and that was simply not God's will for me.

191. I knew that all along, yet it took me a number of years to finally make the final decision and commitment that I would not marry him, and not only that, but that I would not look back with regret. I had to accept that God's will for me was far better, far higher, far more fulfilling than married life would have ever been. For some it is God's plan, but for me it wasn't.

192. I knew that from the start, but it was something I wanted, and I hoped for many years that perhaps, somehow or another, I could have both—God's calling for my life and the man I loved. The choice I had to make was agonizing, but by the time I made it, it was clear to me that there was no other option if I wanted to follow Jesus all the way. Not until I made that final decision to leave my lover and my hopes and dreams of love behind, and not seek for it again, was I set free to fulfill my role in God's service to the full.

193. The Lord never promised me an easy life, but He promised me a rewarding place of service, and He was proven completely true. Even on Earth I was rewarded, for the appreciation and recognition of those I served would have been reward enough for me—once I learned to look to God and to those who mattered, those who needed me, for approval, and to forget about what others thought.

194. Because I didn't care what others thought, but chose instead to follow God's will, in the end they honored me. But if I had gone by the whims and wishes and demands of society, I would have remained unknown and unheard of, like so many others who fear to take the step of faith, to throw themselves completely on the Lord, and not hold on to anyone or anything else.

195. The words of our Lord have always

held true, that a prophet has no honor in his own country and among his own kin. So often it has been the case that the Lord has asked those of us who follow Him to serve Him in a way that would surely bring the displeasure of our families and loved ones upon us. The pull on our heartstrings is one of the strongest and most painful pulls of all. We want those we love to understand us, to accept us, to support us, and we feel so alone, so naked, without that support. But as long as we're leaning on anything other than the Lord, we will not have the strength of spirit a disciple needs to have. Until we forsake what is dearest to us and realize that God can give us the grace to go on without it, we will never become fully mature, grown men and women of God. We will remain children at heart, spiritual infants, emotional dwarves, never fully developed, our spiritual gifts never completely refined. Sometimes it takes that kind of purging, that kind of loss, that kind of complete removal of all props, that kind of being stripped of everything but God and His promises, to draw us close enough to Him that we can truly be called His disciples.

196. As He said so long ago: "Whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:33). That hasn't changed, and down through history its truth rings clear. His call is the same today as it has always been. It doesn't end there, though. He doesn't just ask us to give up everything without rewarding us in return. I have no complaints and no regrets. He promised that we who forsake houses, lands, brethren, sisters, brothers, husbands, wives, and children, would gain an hundredfold—and He has never once failed in that promise. He fulfilled it for me. He made all my dreams come true. He helped me and gave me strength to carry out my vision, His plan that helped to change the world. That was all I truly expected, and what I most earnestly desired.

197. But that wasn't where it stopped. In Heaven He has blessed me beyond belief. Not only am I now reconciled with my flesh family, but thousands and thousands love me and are grateful to me, and I am surrounded by those who far more than merely approve of me. I am loved by many, and loved in a very special way by a few. Above all, I constantly feel the depth

of an intimate love with my Savior and Lover of all lovers. He has far more than repaid me.

I Had to Set My Face Like a Flint (Isaiah 50:7)

As told by Alex

I AM A CHRISTIAN MAN—nonexistent in the eyes of history—with my own story to tell. I lived many years ago during a time of persecution. I was a young man at the time, with a beautiful wife and a small child. We had traveled from our country to another as missionaries, with our desire being to share the love of Jesus with those who did not yet have the gift of salvation.

199. Our life as missionaries went on fairly uneventfully for nearly three years. Then persecution of the church came. We were not so prepared for this, but we clung to our faith. During this time of persecution, my wife became ill. I nursed her back to health the best I could, though it was difficult. With limited food and supplies due to the need to remain in hiding, there was not much that could be done in the physical to help her. So we prayed. We prayed. We prayed.

200. But God had other plans. Our hiding place was discovered while I was visiting another house church in disguise. When I returned, there was no trace of my wife, child, or the other handful of Christians who had sheltered with us. The only remains of our secret dwelling was a mess of furniture, and our few possessions were strewn violently across the floor. My heart sank. The tears streamed down my face. I fell to the floor and wept bitterly. I felt I had been thrown into the deepest and darkest pit of despair known to man. The joy of my life—my darling wife and beautiful child—had been snatched away. We had been so happy together, so blessed.

201. Memories flashed through my mind, and each one stabbed my heart with the realization that my wife and child had now been taken away. We had shared years of joy together, teaching others about Jesus. Our united faith was our greatest joy. And now, this faith had cost me something very precious—my wife and child. I did not know where they were or where they had been taken. I hoped they were still alive, but I did not know how to find news of them.

202. I went to a nearby forest and fell to my knees for hours, seeking God, praying, asking Him to lead and guide me. He comforted my heart and gave me a vision of my wife and child, with an aura surrounding them. I was not sure if this meant they had already been taken to their Heavenly Home or not. Only one thing was very clear—the words I heard after the vision passed:

203. “You must leave this country. You are not safe here. I have a job for you. You must stay alive in order to preach My message and bring the lost to Me. Leave your wife and child in My hands. I will bring your family together in My time.”

204. The words were so clear, so loud, so vivid. They burned in my ears as my tears burned hot on my face. There was nothing I could do. I either renounced my faith and my God, or I obeyed Him. After all, I believed and professed that He knew best. Now was the time of purging, of weeping, of persecution, and I questioned whether in this time of great difficulty and agony, I would remain true. I knew I must.

205. I had received my call and I obeyed, but not without a heavy heart. I asked God for forgiveness for my lack of faith and peace, as I struggled to obey. My feet were heavy and moved slowly as I made my way out of the country, still in disguise and wary, for the persecution of Christians was now widespread. I worried for my wife and child. *Had my wife died? What would become of my daughter?* I could only commit them to the God I served in prayer. Then I had to set my face like a flint, as the Bible says, and march onward to my task.

206. For the next two years I lived in a neighboring country, where the people were receptive and broken, where the souls of men, women, and children flooded into the kingdom of Heaven at an amazing rate. I was happy for the message being preached. I only wished my wife and daughter could be there to be a part. The pain I felt in forsaking them was so great. The admonition to my heart was still so strong. God had told me to leave them behind, to press forward, to trust them into His hands, to let them go and to do the work He had given me.

207. It seemed harsh at times, almost cruel. In those moments I had to make a decision

whether to believe and trust in God, or to let go of all that I had known and believed and live my life without God directing it. I knew my lovely wife would not have wanted that. She had always pointed me toward our duty to God first, then to each other. I knew what she would have wanted, but it was almost too hard for me to bear at times.

208. My life went on for many more years. Almost 10 years passed before I saw tangible proof that I had made the right choice, that my heart heard audible assurance. Of course, I had the Word of God to stand on, but in times of endurance and great personal sacrifice, sometimes we humans lack faith in God, and His Word seems to be not enough. How sad.

209. God, in His mercy, gave me word about my family from a now aged woman, one who had been with us in our Christian shelter so many years ago. I met her by chance at a meeting of believers, and her face lit up and she wept as she told me the story of what had taken place that fateful day.

210. “When our shelter was raided,” she explained, “I was in the secret corridor. I had a chance to escape, and feeling the pull of God on my heart, I did. But not before I saw and heard your wife kneeling on the ground, with your daughter in her lap, in prayer. She was in the place of perfect peace before God. She knew what was happening, and she prayed aloud for you. She said, ‘Give Alex strength to do Your will. Let him live and remain free to preach Your Words. Let him continue to fulfill the calling You gave us years ago when we gave our lives to You. Give him the courage to press on, to not turn back, to see that You have called him to go on, even alone at this time. I beg of You, Jesus, give him the resolve to let us go, so he can accomplish what You are asking of him.’”

211. “God had spoken to her heart. God had told her what was to happen. She knew even more clearly than you what God’s plan was, and her face was aglow. She knew no fear. She knew that her job was done, and she fervently prayed for you to realize and accept what your job now was. She begged God to give you the strength to accept it, knowing the high price it meant.”

212. We embraced for what seemed like an hour. The peace of Jesus washed over my heart and refreshed me. I had followed. I had obeyed. I had done what my God had asked of me. And in turn, though the sacrifice and forsaking was great, I was now rewarded. I was given the assurance of knowing that God had given my wife peace and strength in the face of death. The rumor was that they had been executed, along with many other Christians. I never knew that for sure until Heaven, but I always knew for certain that I had heard God's voice. He had asked an almost impossible thing of me, but as I surrendered my will to His, He gave me the grace day by day, and as a result, I not only led thousands of souls into the Kingdom, but I also fulfilled the last prayer of my wife, bringing her great joy as I did my Savior's bidding.

213. We have now been reunited so wonderfully. And though the sacrifice and forsaking of my family was overwhelming at times, my loving Savior helped me through it. I was given grace, and I was given more rewards than I could ever deserve for putting my Jesus first.

214. Sacrifice, no matter how long or difficult, is swept away in only a fraction of a moment when you arrive in Heaven. It is repaid not only in full, but immeasurable times over. The words "it is worth it all" do not come close to describing what the truth of our Savior's promises deliver.

215. I will never regret the sacrifice and forsaking I made, and I would again gladly sacrifice whatever Jesus asks of me, because I have learned through personal experience that His love is so great and His tenderness is so overwhelming, and that He never asks something of us so difficult that is not entirely necessary.

216. As I looked back over my life and traveled back in time to that excruciating moment when I heard the call of God to leave my wife and child behind, not knowing their fate, I saw Jesus next to me, weeping—weeping with me, weeping for me, praying for me, holding me. I knew then that nothing is ever asked of a child of God that is not utterly vital to the purpose of his life and the plan to which he has given his life.

217. So take heart in your sacrifices and in your trials and forsakings. Nothing that you give

away can be worth more than the love of Jesus and the life of happiness that is yours forever as you do His will.

Glossary

Following are definitions of the words marked with an asterisk in this Letter, in alphabetical order. Meanings given are for the use of the word in the text, and do not include every meaning of the word. Please consult your dictionary for words not listed.

aide-de-camp: (n) military officer acting as confidential assistant to a general or senior officer.

curate: (n) a clergyman serving as assistant to the chief clergyman in a parish.

decorum: (n) dignity or correctness that is socially expected.

epithet: (n) descriptive word or phrase added to or substituted for the name of a person or thing, highlighting a characteristic feature or quality, often somewhat insulting.

howitzer: (n) a short mobile cannon used on the battlefield.

idyllic: (n) serenely beautiful, untroubled and happy.

indefatigable: (n) never showing any sign of getting tired or relaxing an effort.

Jerry: (n) slang insult for German soldier.

man jack: (n) individual man.

rectitude: (n) moral integrity; righteousness.

rector: (n) clergyman who is in charge of a parish.

rectory: (n) the house that a rector lives in, provided by the church.

sophistries: (n) subtly deceptive or flawed reasoning or argumentation.

tommies: (n) slang for British soldiers