

Hiding in the Cleft of the Rock

Peter DeGraff

On the Gettysburg battlefield, there are two round-top hills with a rocky area between them known as "Devil's Den." It became a place of refuge during the fierce battle. Following the battle, many bodies were retrieved of soldiers seeking refuge "in the cleft of the rock." What was hoped to be protection became a vault by which they were entrapped.



Boulders and monument at Devil's Den

During times of threat and harm, we have been promised refuge that cannot be penetrated by the most cunning enemy. David had found refuge in God's protective custody many times, about which he wrote with these words: "I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies" (Psalm 18:1-3). God's glory is seen from the Rock as it is expressed by the words of the old song, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee." I find comfort in the passage where God told His people of the Exodus, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock" (Exodus 23:21-23).

There is the story of a little bird that was being chased by a much larger bird of prey. The little bird flew to save its life, darting about while being pursued by the larger bird. The little bird quickly flew into a crevice in a rock face inside the cleft in the rock. The larger bird gave up. The little bird had found shelter in the rock, out of reach from fearsome claws. Its life was saved. How like the little bird are we!

Keep in mind, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 9:1). "He will cover you with His pinions and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark" (Psalm 91:1).

The wonderful and warm embrace of our Heavenly Father is a place of refuge and not a "Devil's Den." When we try to find comfort in the clutches of alcohol, drugs, sex, money or so many other cares of the world by which we are surrounded, they become prisons and not refuges. We must take confidence and courage in knowing that our God is our protectorate and never a threat!

~ Gospel Gazette Online ~

Rock of Ages, cleft for me.

News & Notes

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES: ALL services are now at the church building. **Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.; Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.** The Covid-19 restrictions (masks & distancing) still apply.

IN SEARCH OF THE LORD'S WAY: Each Sunday at 8:30 a.m., **WTOV, Channel 9 (Steubenville)**. No longer to be televised on WTRF, Channel 7 (Wheeling).

PANTRY: Peanut butter & jelly.

REMEMBER IN PRAYER: **John McClung** (son of Keith & Elaine) in St. Elizabeth Hospital, Youngstown (ICU) after emergency surgery. **Rick Beck** (minister at Weston, WV), in addition to cancer he has been diagnosed with pancreatitis and is in critical condition in the hospital.

SICK & SHUT-IN: Jim Hadley, Jenny Rhodes, Ernie Robinson, Cam Adamson, Charlie Delong, Marlene Evans, Shirley Beagle, Russell Martin, Doris Dunham, Alex Harless. **FOX:** Tom Postlethwait. **CROSSROADS:** Sarah Miller. **VALLEY OAKS CARE CENTER:** Fred Larrimore, (Room 110). **IN TENNESSEE:** Steve Higginbotham (address on bulletin board). **IN FLORIDA:** Ilene Rayl.

THE CARDINAL'S ADVICE

"Of all the counseling we can possibly give to your Holiness, we reserve the more important of it to the last. We must hold our eyes well open and intervene with all of our power in the affairs we have to consider. **The reading of the Gospel must be permitted as little as possible**, (especially in the modern languages, and in the countries under your authority). The very little that is read generally at the Mass should be enough and **it should be prohibited for anyone to read more**. (As long as the people are content with that small part, our interests will prosper; but from the moment that the people desire to read more, our interests will begin to suffer).

Here is the book that more than any other provoked rebellions against us, storms that have been risky in bringing us loss in fact, **if anyone reads accurately the teaching of the Bible and compares what occurs in our churches**, he will soon find out the contradictions and will see that our teaching is far removed from that of the Bible and more often yet is in opposition to it.

If the people realize this, they will provoke us without rest until all become unveiled and then we will become the object of ridicule and universal hate. It is necessary that the Bible be taken away and snatched from the hands of the people, however, with much wisdom in order to not provoke trouble."

(This advice was given to Pope Jules III of Rome in 1550 by his Cardinals. It is found in the National Bibliotheque in Paris, France. The Volume is Reserve 22719; Pages 101-102).

- Author Unknown (via Beacon, Bellview church of Christ, Pensacola, FL) -