

OUR NEXT CONVERSION

Scripture citations are to the NIV-UK

In the process of character development it will happen that we stumble and discover we are not so holy as we thought. We will confront situations in which our faith is not up to the job and is wobbly in the face of trouble or suffering. Ten, twenty, or more years into our Christian walk we will find that it's longer and more complicated than we anticipated. Perhaps we're tempted to give up.

Lovingly chastening us, the Lord may allow heavy trials to come upon us. That's when we take stock and re-dedicate ourselves to the Master's cause. To undergo a second conversion, rejuvenating our first love for the Lord, clearing out all the accumulated rubbish from our soul's attic and starting anew — stronger than before (Psa. 119: 67):

Before I was afflicted [*humbled*] I went astray, but now I obey your word.

Peter, the Unready

A case in point is the Apostle Peter who, having literally denied the Lord on three occasions, for which he reproached himself bitterly, with tears, was restored to Christ's favour, Jesus going out of His way at that scene on the beach to underscore His forgiveness (John 21: 15-19). We know from Peter's later writings and the testimony of his apostolic brethren that Peter went on to exemplary service for the the early church and that of the Gospel Age.

Are we sometimes a Peter? We may not have verbally denied the Lord, but we might have set a bad example to others by watering down the principles for which He stands and which we, as ambassadors for Christ, represent. We may have become careless or less responsive to His leading. However, take heart, for Christ is able to rescue us without fail (Heb. 7: 25):

He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

A blest assurance indeed.

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*Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us:
All our weakness thou dost know;
Thou didst tread this earth before us,
Thou didst feel its keenest woe;
Lone and dreary, faint and weary,
Through the desert thou didst go.*

*Spirit of our God, descending,
Fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
Love with every passion blending,
Pleasure that can never cloy:
Thus provided, pardoned, guided,
Nothing can our peace destroy.*

— J. Edmeston (1821)

