

## A Survivor of the Titanic

Four years after the Titanic went down, a young Scotsman rose in a meeting in Hamilton, Canada, and told the following story:

I am a survivor of the Titanic. When I was drifting alone on a spar

that awful night, the tide brought John Harper, also on a piece of wreck, near me. "Man," he said, "are you saved?" (He meant, "Do you have God's gift of eternal salvation?")

"No," I said. "I am not." He replied, "Believe on

the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31). The waves bore him away, but brought him back a little later. "Are you saved now?" he asked.

"No," I said, "I cannot honestly say that I am."

He said again, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." A short while later he went down, and there, alone in the night with two miles of water under me, I believed. I am John Harper's last convert.

# UNTIL HIS



# LAST BREATH

By John Climie

(From *The Titanic's Last Hero*, George Harper, and Bill Guthrie; Moody Press; 1997)

John Harper was born to a pair of solid Christian parents on May 29th, 1872. It was on the last Sunday of March 1886, when he was 13 years old, that he received Jesus. He began to preach at the ripe old age of 17 by going down to the streets of his village and entreating men to be reconciled to God.

John Harper started his own church in September of 1896, now known as the Harper Memorial Church. This church, which started with just 25 members, had grown to over 500 members when he left 13 years later. During this time he had gotten married, but was widowed shortly thereafter. God did bless him with a beautiful

little girl named Nana.

Ironically, John Harper almost drowned several times during his life. When he was two and a half years of age, he fell into a well but was rescued and resuscitated by his mother. At 26 he was swept out to sea by a reverse current and barely survived.

And at 32 he faced death on a leaking ship in the Mediterranean. Perhaps God used these experiences to prepare him for what he faced next.

It was the night of April 14, 1912. The *RMS Titanic* sailed swiftly on the bitterly cold ocean waters, heading unknowingly into the pages of history. At the time of the ship's launch, it was the world's largest

man-made moveable object, carrying many of the rich and famous.

At 11:40 PM an iceberg scraped the ship's starboard side, showering the decks with ice and ripping open six watertight compartments. The sea poured in. On board the ship were John Harper and his six-year-old daughter Nana.

According to documented reports, as soon as it was apparent that the ship was going to sink, John Harper took his daughter to a lifeboat. It is reasonable to assume that this widowed preacher could have easily gotten on board this boat to safety; however, he did not. He bent down and kissed his precious little girl, telling her that she would see him

again someday. (From what we are told, she made it to safety.)

It was only minutes later that the Titanic began to rumble deep within. Most people thought it was an explosion; actually the gargantuan ship was literally breaking in half. At this point, many people jumped off the decks and into the icy, dark waters below, among them John Harper.

John Harper was seen swimming frantically to people in the water, leading them to Jesus before the hypothermia became fatal. He swam up to one young man who had climbed up on a piece of debris. Rev. Harper asked him between breaths, "Are you saved?" The young

man replied that he was not.

Harper then tried to lead him to Christ, only to have the young man (who was near shock) reply no. John Harper then took off his life jacket and threw it to the man and said, "Here then. You need this more than I do," and swam away to other people.

While other people were trying to buy their way onto the lifeboats and selfishly trying to save their own lives, John Harper gave up his life so that others could be saved.

As Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." John Harper was truly the hero of the Titanic.