

## **THE MISSING KEY**

Harry Foster

WE often grumble about our weather here in England, but if we had a little experience of a very humid climate with the thermometer up to 95°, we might be more grateful to be cooler. At least that is what I have found in recent journeys. Imagine travelling in a car under such a fiery sun! To open the windows would be like opening an oven door to let in blasts of witheringly hot air. Happily people do not have to suffer in this way, for there are cars fitted with air-conditioning apparatus so that, provided all the windows are kept shut, the inside of the car remains cool and fresh.

In Los Angeles our Chinese friends were going to take us to an important conference about two hours' drive away from the city and, to provide for our comfort, they had been able to borrow such an air-conditioned car. So there we were, with our bags all packed, ready to be driven off to the conference, when the Chinese lady who was to drive the borrowed car, drove up to the house to collect us.

But she had bad news. There was enough petrol -- or 'gas' as they call it there -- to drive a short distance, but not enough to get us to the conference camp. The owner of the car had left the ignition key, but had forgotten to leave another very important key, the one needed to open the lock of the petrol-tank cap. We were quite ready to fill up the tank with enough 'gas' for the journey, but there was no way of getting it into the tank. The engine was in good condition; there was no difficulty about the flow of petrol from the tank to the engine; but the trouble was that the entrance to this tank was closed and locked. Fearing that people might steal her petrol, the owner of the car had had a lock fitted to the cap. This did not matter, provided the driver had the key of this lock, but the kind friend who had lent the car did not think to hand over this key, and so we were left stranded.

Various suggestions were made, but as they were in Chinese I could not understand them. When, however, the driver went off alone in the car, it was explained to me that she had gone to the locksmith to ask him to force the lock. This seemed a good

idea, so we went back into the house with our luggage, fully expecting that after a short delay we should be able to set out on our journey.

However another disappointment awaited us for, when the lady driver returned, she had to report that the locksmith had refused to do what she asked. This was not because the task was difficult, but due to the fact that she was not herself the owner of the car. She explained that it had been lent to her by a friend, but the man rightly said that it would be illegal for him to break open the lock without the owner's permission.

So we were back in our old predicament. Here was a car which could be started, which could go part of the way, but which could not complete the journey. One friend suggested that we should set out in faith, but the others rejected the suggestion, since it is never any use starting a thing unless one has the resources to finish it.

Well, in the end a solution was found to our problem, the cap was opened and the tank filled with the petrol which would enable us to finish our journey. We were late; but we got there in the end. I will not stop to tell you just how it was done, because the real purpose of this story is to remind you that the Christian journey can only be satisfactorily completed by those who keep open the intake of divine power. However well you may start and run at first, you will never reach your spiritual destination if something is locking up the channel of inflow of the Holy Spirit. You must have the key to that intake, and you must use it. The locksmith could<sup>[119/120]</sup> have broken open our cap but he would not. The Lord could easily force His own power into your life, but He will never do that. So if you have mislaid the key, find it again and use it to open up your being to the free flow of the eternal life of the Lord Jesus. The key is called 'Faith', and the Bible tells us that God will always respond to it. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Hebrews 11:6).

*From A Witness And A Testimony 1973, London, England*