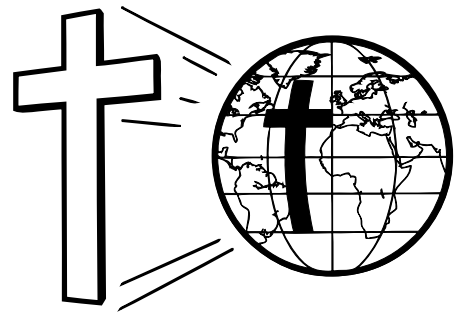


Foundation of Faith



ENCOURAGEMENT

CULTIVATING HOPE

THE RAINBOW IN THE CLOUDS

A CHEERFUL FACE

**WINNING THE
BATTLE AGAINST
DISCOURAGEMENT**

THE PATH TO HAPPINESS



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Editorial

Dear Reader,

In Psalm 100:2 we find the encouraging exhortation: "Serve the Lord with gladness."

It is such a wonderful, splendid thought, because we serve the divine Creator, the loving Redeemer, the Savior, who has all control in heaven and on earth. To serve the Savior joyfully is the greatest mission on earth, for we are servants and laborers of the Most High.

Many people are employed by prominent, worldwide corporations, enjoying honor, material wealth, and often, special privileges. But from the vantage point of eternity, everything is so vain and transient.

To be imitators of the Lord, to live for Jesus, His Church, to live for precious, immortal souls, and to gather treasures for eternity is the most satisfying service on this earth.

Although the Apostle Paul was brought from Jerusalem to Rome as a criminal in chains and bonds, although he had to suffer grief and pain, storms, and mortal agony in the Mediterranean, he still wrote as a prisoner to the brothers and sisters in Philippi: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4). Yes, the Apostle was so grateful and content that he could testify: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

Dear reader, you too are to rejoice in the Lord, for as children of God we are so privileged, in spite of our needs and the injustice and ungodliness all around us. This song often comes to my mind:

*To God be the glory! He did me awake,
And out of my sinful security shake;
To God be the glory! By faith now I see
The Lamb upon Calvary suffered for me.**

Do you, my dear reader, know this happiness and joy in the Lord?

H. D. Nimz

**Above lyrics by Robert T. McCheyne (#30 in Songs of Praise)*

The Comforter

The poor woman! Tears ran down her face uncontrollably. It was obvious that she was suffering greatly.

“You did not know my husband. But I have to tell you about him. Oh, we were so happy together. He would have taken the stars from heaven for me if I had asked him. Look, here is his picture! This was taken when we were together in Bad Eilsen.”

This woman was not hysterical, but she was in the throes of great grief. The poor woman!—She poured out her grief . . . and I was silent. Suddenly, she interrupted herself. The tear-streaked face desperately looked at me: “Give me comfort.” I was silent. “Do you not want to comfort me?” “I, I can’t!” “But you are a clergyman. You must know of a consolation!” “If a heart is really wounded, no person in the whole wide world can comfort you.”

She put her hands over her face. Between her fingers, I saw her excruciating tears. Then she sobbed, “This is terrible!”—“Yes, it is terrible!” I confirmed. “Look, when I had to give up a son a second time, I felt an aching that made me understand your grief. And many people approached and offered me so-called words of comfort.

And to my horror, I discovered that the words did not even reach the wound of my heart. It continued to bleed unhealed.” “That’s exactly how it is!” she cried. “And what did you do then?”

“One day I opened my Bible and found where Jesus says, ‘My peace I give to you’ (John 14:27). Then it was as if scales fell from my eyes: There is One who can really comfort. This is the Lord Jesus! He is alive! And then I simply fell on my knees and said, ‘Lord Jesus! I do not understand and do not want to understand why this grief has come over me. But you see my terrible pain. And now I ask you to make your Word come true and to give your peace to my bleeding heartache.’”

“And?” she asked breathlessly.—“He did it! He does not lie!” “What am I to do?” Her face looked as if her eyes saw a light in the distance. “Just do the same! You have lived without the Lord Jesus until now. You cannot do that now. Now you must look for Him, call and find Him, or despair.” “Do you really think He can comfort?”

“Dear woman! I know He can. I have experienced it. Now He’s waiting for you.”

The Blessing of Trials

Above the bed of our dear grandmother, who had been paralyzed for many years, an unusual painted verse hung on the wall. Around the one somber word “suffering” grew a flower wreath, where several small, white stripes shone out from among its dark green leaves, on which was written: “I must”—“I can”—“I will”—“I may.” “Grandmother, what does that mean?” we asked.

She answered with a beautiful smile, she who always sat so patiently in her chair: “Yes, you see, first, when a person is led into the school of suffering, he thinks only of the severity of the illness. He moans and groans under

the bitter ‘I must.’ Eventually, he learns to say ‘I can,’ for he feels that God gives him the power every day to bear the suffering.

“Again, after a time—it often takes a long time—he steps forward to the obedient ‘I will,’ and finally the bright light shines with him in the darkness of suffering: ‘The Lord loves me in special way!’ Then he can finally say ‘I may.’ Now you are still too little, but you will understand it later.”

Grandmother was right, and the blessing of suffering also came to us.

I. M.

Deliverance From Doubt

There is deliverance for every soul that will accept God's way, even from the severest case of doubts and fears. If you are a doubter, settle it that God is true and that He loves you with an everlasting love. Though you may have failed a thousand times, God loves you still. And though you have been unfaithful many times, yet He abides true; "He cannot deny Himself"; and "His mercy endures forever."

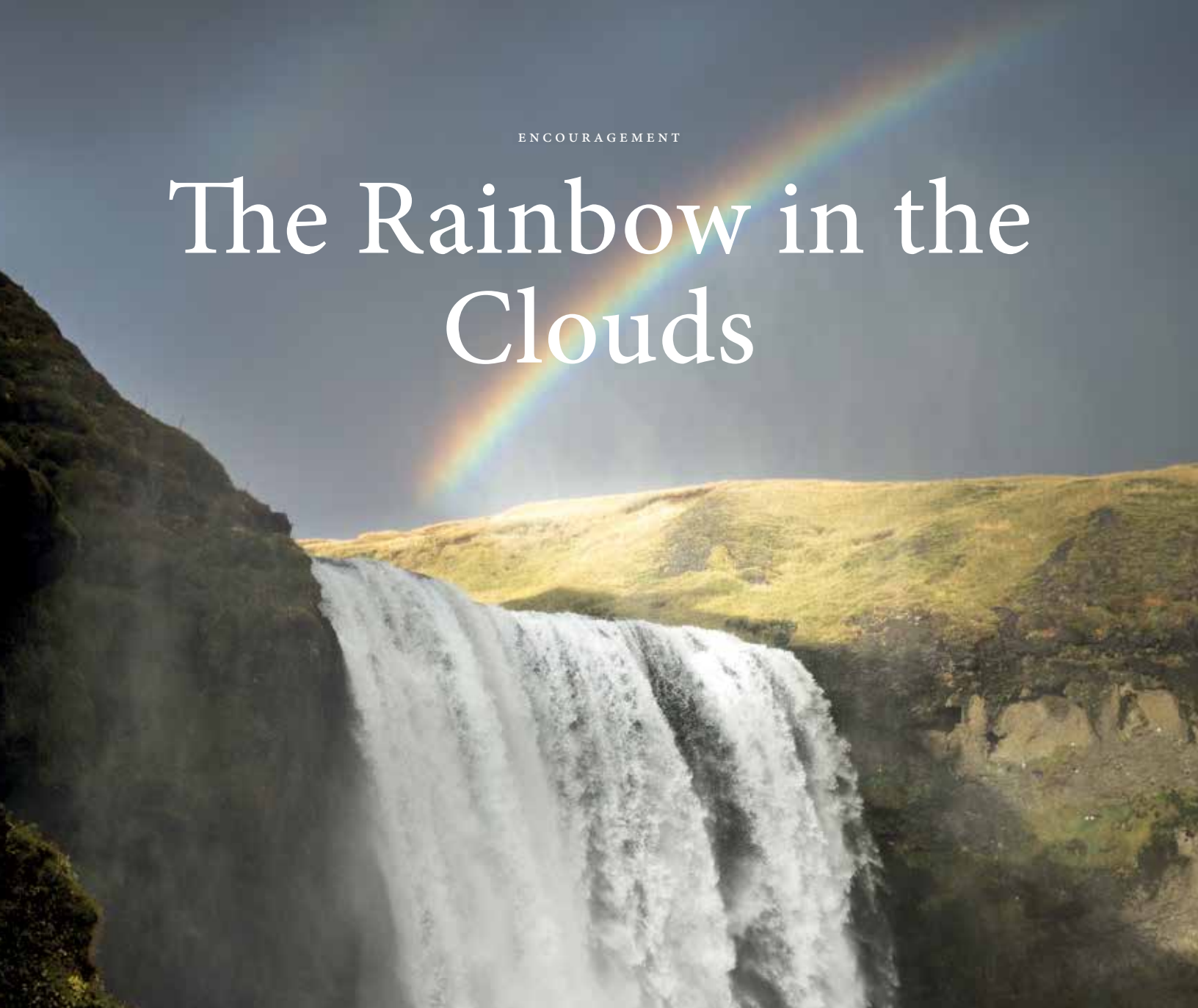
Your doubting, unbelief, and failures will not make God unfaithful, or untrue to His Word. God is just as true to you as if you had never doubted. Peter once said to the Lord, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21-22). Seventy times seven equals four hundred and ninety. Jesus also said to His disciples: "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him" (Luke 17:3-4). If God requires us to forgive each other until seventy times seven, and seven times in a day, is He less merciful than we? Should you forgive your brother seven times in a day until you had forgiven him for seventy times seven transgressions, you would forgive him seven times every day for two months and ten days. If God requires this much of you, how merciful must He be! This should not make you doubt God, it should in fact inspire you to believe that God will forgive you once more, even though your doubts and failings have been many. There are two things you must rely on, trust in, and cling to. These are (1) The written Word of God, (2) Your God-given reason, or judgment. Without these two landmarks you could never find the way to deliverance. Feelings will deceive you, doubts assail you, and past experience fail you; but the unchanging Word of God and your better judgment are way marks on the road to peace.

Meet the conditions of the Word as best you can, implore the help of God, and resisting Satan, set your face toward the land of victory, determined to conquer or die, and Satan, doubts, and fears will stand back and let you pass. Believe where you cannot see nor feel, and trust where you cannot trace. Your fight may be a feeble one for a while, but "each victory will help you some other to win," and you will soon be able to vanquish every foe, and standing on the banks of sweet deliverance you may sing the victor's song and sway a scepter greater than that of which any earthly ruler has ever dreamed. Never be discouraged; all discouragements are of the devil and should be resisted as the devil himself. Use your reason and strengthen your conscience; look at the mercy of God and His loving kindness. Read the Bible, obey it, and believe it despite all your feelings to the contrary. Emotions are the doubter's worst enemies, except the devils themselves; but faith can conquer every foe. Tie the anchor of hope fast to the rock of eternal truth with the unbreakable cable of faith, and then emotions may rise and fall and the storms of doubts may rage, but your anchor is sure. And sooner or later you will learn to pay but little attention to superficial emotions, and to trust in the truth. After you have once gained a victory over Satan, you will be much stronger.

Never give up on your faith when tired or feeling bad, for you are not so capable of judging at such times. Wait till you feel well, and then consider. Put off giving up your faith till tomorrow and you will get along much better; and when tomorrow comes, put it off again. Or what is better still, abandon the idea and go to helping someone else out of trouble, and God will bless both you and others.

Rays of Hope
D. O. Teasley

The Rainbow in the Clouds



In the distance, the thunder rolled dull and heavy after the passing thunderstorm. Here and there were flashes of lightning. The severe weather had come up so quickly, and several people were still visibly shaken. Suddenly, a cheerful ray of sunshine peeked through the clouds and greeted the Earth, which had just trembled under the fierce thunderstorm. And there it was, the wonderful rainbow with its bright colors. Who doesn't recognize a rainbow? Who has not enjoyed it? Who has not marveled over its beauty?

For Bible-readers, the rainbow's appearance lets our minds rush back in time. In a mere second, our mind flashes back to an event related not only by the Bible, but

pagan traditions as well. The great flood was indisputably the greatest catastrophe that has come over humanity. And so it will remain until the day of which is written in the Holy Scripture, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise; the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up (see 2 Peter 3:10).

The ark, in which the godly man Noah and all who were with him were saved from death, settled on solid ground. After a lengthy time of weeks and months, God commanded them to leave the ark and rejoice that their lives had been spared.

However, Noah was in complete awe of what transpired. While building the ark, he had endured much ridi-

cule and scorn from wicked and violent people. Through Noah's words and righteous walk with God, the sins of his fellow men were brought to light, which surely caused some kind of persecution. All waiting, urging, and calling went without avail, and even the preaching and message of the ark made no impression. Thus came terrible judgment upon the people. A shocking experience! Noah saw all life around him disappear and perish.

God had spoken the judgment that would come upon these people who lived in sin, and now it had come to pass. His righteousness was revealed in a terrible way. He had warned them of the coming judgment but at the same time offered them His saving Hand. What a foolish act not to accept the Hand of the Saviour. They had never expected the judgment to be so severe.

Now that the flood was over, Noah, the just and righteous man, stood in an entirely new world. Everything was new, although the area still showed signs of the terrible disaster. Noah and the few survivors were the carriers of life for a new generation.

But look, what do we see? There in the dark clouds appeared a new sign: a rainbow in its wonderful colors. While Noah stood in amazement and considered this new miracle, a question probably rose up within him: "God, what does this mean? What is it?" And God's answer was: "I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth" (Genesis 9:13).

So this rainbow should be a sign of the covenant. Noah, whenever you see this rainbow, you will know that your God has not lost interest in humanity. When you see the rainbow in the sky, you shall remember the everlasting covenant between God and Earth and every living creature on the earth. When fear and anxiety surround you, then this sign of God should remind you of the great goodness of your God who has given you life in emergencies and dangers. Just think of His power, His reliability, and trust Him with a childlike faith. You may experience great things. "For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed" (Isaiah 54:10).

Noah and those with him, who experienced the wonderful grace of God in surviving the great flood, are no longer here. Generations come and go. People were born and have passed on. However, the thoughts of a man's

heart were and continue to remain evil. Humanity has continued to be evil towards God and each other. Many nations have also experienced God's punishment. But God repeatedly sent His Messengers of Peace to the people reminding them of God's covenant, His judgment, and His great kindness. Thousands of years passed. Then there appeared a new and even more glorious light: Jesus, the Son of God, came down to earth, became a man, suffered, and died a horrible death on the cross to redeem those who allow themselves to be saved from sin and eternal punishment. Through Jesus, God's grace is available for all who are willing to come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and grace (read Hebrews 4:16 and Romans 3:25). All who labor and are heavy laden will find rest for their souls and forgiveness of sin at the fountain of peace.

After the flood, God placed the rainbow in the clouds to show His faithfulness. Even when people turned away and betrayed Him, God remained faithful. If this was Noah's experience, how much more we, who live under the new covenant. What greater assurance are we guaranteed because Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of His Father.

This rainbow of light is needed the most in the densest and darkest clouds. When the sun refuses to shine, we need the most encouragement to remain safe in dreary weather. In times of worry, distress, and anxiety, when we are misunderstood, when we lose courage and we are in danger of despair, or if death casts a shadow over our pathway, then, right then, the rainbow with its beautiful colors shines even more brightly towards us to lighten up our darkness.

We cannot look at the clouds; we must look at the rainbow in the clouds. This is what the apostles did, and Scripture encourages us to do the same: "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

How rewarding when we have learned to look past the clouds and instead look up to Jesus in faith, who will not let us be put to shame.

Here we see only one half of the rainbow. On earth, we understand all things only little by little. However, through faith we look into this rainbow and see God's glory. In heaven, all riddles of life will be answered, and we will see Him as He is. In other words, we will completely understand God's glory and be a part of it (read 1 John 3:2 and John 17:24). How great will this joy be, and it will never cease!

A Cheerful Face

“A merry face makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.” Proverbs 15:13

What an encouraging effect a cheerful countenance can have on a tired, discouraged person! When the enemy of the soul rages like a river so that you are almost unable to hold your head above water, then a “cheerful countenance” is like balm. The kindness visible in the eyes of a child of God may encourage the downtrodden. We only need to open our eyes and peer into the countenance of those about us to see what these people are seeking: encouragement!

“A cheerful heart results in a cheerful countenance!” It is an experience that involves the heart. When your heart is cheerful, you will have no difficulty with your countenance. You will not have to work at putting on a cheerful face because your facial expression will be the result of a cheerful heart.

We are admonished to not only be cheerful and courageous when our life’s path goes by a cool and shady place or many beautiful flowers. Yes, at a time like that we might feel prompted to sing. Yet, we are also admonished to be cheerful when we travel along rough and gloomy ways. When Paul was traveling by ship in a rough sea (Acts 27), all sailors worked to their utmost to turn the ship in the right direction. However, all their efforts proved unsuccessful. For many days, the raging sea tossed them around like a ball. Even the sun and stars were not visible to them for many days. Yes, all their hope had vanished and they despaired of surviving. No doubt their hearts were depressed by the thoughts that they would all drown and be buried in this raging sea.

However, just then an angel of God appeared to Paul. Because of this, he was able to encourage the sailors not

to despair, and assured them that not a single life would be lost. I can image how their facial expressions changed after the apostle’s comforting words. Having fasted for a long time, they now ate and were encouraged even though the storm still raged.

Jesus said to His disciples that in this world they would be afraid and distressed, but He encouraged them to be confident and cheerful. He consoled them with assurance that He had defeated all these things.

There are, of course, people who are naturally more cheerful and others who are more easily disheartened. Nevertheless, with the help of the Lord, we are able to overcome a natural tendency to be disheartened and depressed. Brother Orr wrote in his book, *The Hidden Life*: “The pictures you are viewing cast a shadow before them. Satan is in the picture business. So also is Jesus. Satan’s pictures, being dark and gloomy, will cast a shadow over your life if you look upon them. But bright are the pictures that Christ presents to view. They will cheer you, make sunny all your way. Be careful where you look.”

In this way, we can develop and nourish cheerfulness. Never allow Satan to discourage you through failures. Only have bright pictures decorating the walls of your conscience and memory and remove all others. If you are fellowshiping with a depressed and downtrodden person, it is easy to become infected by their mood. Be alert!

Let us be a usable tool in God’s hands by having a cheerful heart and projecting a cheerful countenance to help remove burdens from other souls.

B. C.

Cultivating Hope

Some people are naturally hopeful, others naturally despondent. One man sees hope where there is no hope, and hopes on when he has no foundation whatever for his hope. Another man cannot see hope where there is hope. While it is true that an unreasonable and unfounded hope is undesirable and is likely to cause us a great many disappointments, it is no less true that a lack of hope robs many a dear soul of the joyful expectation of future good and of the happiness peculiar to the hopeful heart. Those who can see only the dark side of life are certainly to be pitied. In the most auspicious of all ages, the glorious day of grace when the bright hope gleams from Calvary's cross, the soul that is not hopeful certainly needs a word of encouragement to point it upward. No picture is so dark, no experience so gloomy, that it has no bright side to the hopeful Christian. It is Satan's business to show you the dark side of everything; it is your business, if you will attend to it, to find the bright side.

The reason why most people are not hopeful is because they look too low. If within the compass of your present vision you can see no light, hope, nor cheer, lift up your head and look higher; continue to go forward and upward till the angel of hope greets your vision. If you cannot see her near, look above and beyond the stage of natural action and you will see her at the threshold of that eternal world, holding out a crown of rejoicing to all the faithful. Look forward and above the trials now surrounding you until you see the hope gleam from above; fix your eyes upon it and rejoice, even though now, if need be, you are in manifold temptations. Leap and shout for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. But we do not even need to not look so far ahead; the trials of life seldom gather so dark about the Christian pilgrim that he can see no sign of hope in this life. There are too many rich promises, too many bright victories just ahead, to allow the light of hope to be entirely obscured.

If you would cultivate hope and thereby cultivate happiness, give vent to the faculty of anticipation; pluck

from the tree of life by faith some joy, some victory, some freedom, that you have unwisely supposed was not for you. Do not feel that you would rob heaven by enjoying all that you can today.

There is no better way to cultivate hope than to meditate on the goodness of God and the pleasures held out to us in His promises. "My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us" (Psalm 62:5-8). Let your expectation be from the Lord, and base that expectation on the revealed promises of His Word. In doing so you will drive trouble from your door, and though you have long been despondent, God will come to your deliverance. Though it seems to you as if you had been forgotten, as if the Lord had forsaken you, if you will obey the Word of God by hoping in the strength of Jehovah, you will be comforted. "For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever" (Psalm 9:18).

Hear the testimony of the apostle Paul. From him you can learn to cultivate hope in the midst of the sorest trials. The testimony that I am about to quote was given by him when he lay bound in chains at Rome, surrounded by enemies of the cross and pressed by Satan on every hand, yet his hope was bright. "For I know," he said, "that this [trouble] will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:19-21).

D. O. Teasley

“I’ve got it!”

We are very excited when we have invented something or when we have discovered something beautiful. We want to tell everyone about it. Many inventions have enriched the whole world. There is one Joy that surpasses all the knowledge and riches of this world. It is the desire of every soul. Have you found it?

One of the greatest inventors of the past was Archimedes. He was born 287 B.C. in Syracuse. Hiero, the king of Syracuse had ordered a crown of pure gold. Since the king did not trust the goldsmith, he asked Archimedes to determine how much impure metal was in the crown.

According to the current state of science in those days, this was almost impossible to determine. Archimedes pondered the problem over and over. One day as he was sitting in his bathtub, an idea suddenly came to him that resulted in a solution to the problem. With great excitement, he jumped out of the water. Forgetting everything else, he ran out of the house yelling: “Eureka! Eureka!” which means: “I’ve got it! I’ve got it!”—He finally found the answer to the question he had pondered for so long. Now his joy was so great that he could forget everything else. But, what Archimedes had found was simply a temporary success.

There is, however, a fortune that brings eternal joy to those who find it. It is not found in an invention or by acquiring gold, treasures, or glory. It is in finding the Son of God, the Lord, Jesus Christ. When we discover Him as the Savior, whose love and grace is immeasurable and unending, we find real fortune that fills the heart and mouth with overflowing joy.

All earthly success, as wonderful as it may be, can crumble into rubble, leaving darkness and despair behind. But whoever has found Jesus will never be disappointed. What a blessed thing it is when one can believe that the Son of God died for us and that He can save, carry, and protect us, and that He has prepared a place for us in the Father’s house. Yes, now I will always belong to this wonderful Lord! Allowing one to rejoice with the following words:

*Now it has happened! I am no longer my own,
To the Lord I’ll ever, eternally belong!
He created me, and bought me,
He’s the One, who baptized me with spirit and fire!*

There was once a Bible salesman who came to a large home and presented his valuable goods: Bibles and Christian books. The lady of the house asked him: “Have you already made peace with God?”—“No my lady,” he replied humbly.—“What?” she declared, “and you go around selling Bibles and giving away tracts, and probably preaching the gospel!”—“Yes, that I do.”—“And still you haven’t made peace with God?”—“No, my lady,” the Bible messenger responded, “for I could not make peace with God. But, Jesus Christ already made peace with God approximately 2000 years ago. And He did this through His blood, as we read in Colossians 1:20: “and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, . . . having made peace through the blood of His cross.” God gave me the grace to believe in this Word, and to base my salvation on it. I have found righteousness through faith and since then I’ve had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The lady was amazed and asked the Bible messenger to come into her house to proclaim the gospel. People were invited and the evangelist preached. He explained how one could find peace with God and receive assurance of salvation through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

The son of the house was moved by the Word of God and was convicted of his sin. He recognized that he was lost and deserved eternal punishment. But he could not accept grace, and remained without peace.

Shortly before the close of the year, the Bible messenger visited the young man again. On his way out he

handed him a sheet of paper with a sermon of the gospel. In March he came again and apologized that he had not visited for such a long time. “Yes,” said the young man, “it is now exactly three months and one week since you were here.”—The messenger wondered how he knew the time so exactly.

“Oh, I will never forget the day. As you left, I sat down and read the page that you had given me. In the title were these words: ‘These Five go Together.’ It examined John 5:24, ‘he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.’ Once or twice I had

already laid the paper on the end table, but I picked it up over and over again. The thought would not leave my mind and I could not let go of it. The evening came, and I went to bed, but could not sleep thinking about it. Finally light shone into my soul. ‘I’ve got it!’ I called out loud and woke up my wife in order to tell her my great discovery. I even woke up my father and mother to share my joy with them!”

The work of God in him was unmistakable. He had found peace with God through Jesus Christ. To everyone that he met, he testified what the grace of God had done in his life.

v. Vb.

The Rescue

Can I tell you of my miraculous rescue? I must admit that I don’t enjoy talking about it. There are things that are uncomfortable to talk about, and perhaps as a fisherman I have learned silence from the fish.

That morning, I had drained the water that had seeped into my boat, stowed the fish tank, and started the boat engine. Just as I prepared to leave, my six-year-old boy came, desperately wanting to go out on the water with me. He proudly showed me his fishing rod, intending to help his father fish. How could I refuse this request?

We headed out to the center of the lake. Oddly enough, I was about to have an extraordinary catch on this disastrous morning. I called to my son to fill the fish tank with water. As he eagerly scooped up water with his bucket, I started up the boat engine and began to retrieve the catch.

Deeply absorbed in my work, I suddenly heard a splashing sound behind me, which could not come from any bucket or fish. When I looked around, my son had disappeared. He must have fallen into the water. Without thought, I jumped in after him. His hand appeared for a moment before me. A couple of strokes, and I was already at the place where he had sunk. I dove under and finally got him. I managed to resurface with my boy in my arms. Now to quickly get into the boat!

But there was no boat there. I finally spotted it far out on the lake, and saw how it was quickly getting further

away. Had I forgotten to stop the engine in my agitation?

I stared at the boat, stunned. Should I and the child I had just rescued be lost forever? We were alone and helpless on the expanse of the lake. There was no salvation from this prison. Who would have been able to hear or even see us in this boundless wasteland of water?

I felt the hopelessness take away the rest of my strength. In such moments, only one thing remains: pray, pray fervently! And then it happened, the unexpected, the inconceivable! The abandoned, drifting boat suddenly made a wide arc, and then, as if by an invisible hand, steered straight towards us.

How I got into the boat, I no longer know. I must have been unconscious after I rescued my child and dragged myself over the side of the boat.

How had all this come about, this rescue from the greatest distress? A miracle had happened. Or is the word “miracle” only for those events for which there is no natural explanation? No, there was a higher power here. God had heard my prayers! This power, which prevails over us, had simply wound one of the lines I had thrown out around the boat’s propeller and rudder blade, causing the rotation of the steering which gave the boat a different course. But that it would come directly back to us—who could come up with a satisfactory explanation for that?

M. Rieple

Returning Home

What joy there is when after long, anxious years of waiting a person returns home from captivity to his family! He is received with open arms! The hardships and suffering of captivity have finally been overcome, and the familiarity of home washes over him.

All humans find themselves, inherent by nature, in the captivity of Satan and the power of darkness. Some are prisoners of their lusts and desires throughout their entire lives, and waste away in the chains of their passions.

Is there liberation from this captivity of the archenemy of the soul? Yes, there is a complete liberation and rescue from the chains and snares of Satan. Yes, even if you, dear reader, are still bound, you can experience the graven hand of our Savior that is strong enough to break your bonds and make you free. Come to Jesus! He is the only One who understands your troubles and sorrows. Only He can completely renew your life and your heart, which is tainted with sin and guilt, by cleansing it with His precious blood that flowed for your guilt, too, on the cross of Golgotha. Repent and turn with all of your heart to the living God, Who wants to save you in Christ. “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Hebrews 3:7-8).

Countless people, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, old and young, took this step toward Jesus and received rest and peace for their poor, agonized hearts. They returned home out of the slavery of sin and separation from God back to the heart of the Father and became truly happy people. They experienced the true, pure joy of holy communion with God.

When I was 16 years old, I, too, experienced a time when the Lord Jesus revealed Himself to me and drew me to His loving heart. I was so happy! I had found the only true purpose for all time and eternity in the wounds of the Lamb of God.

Are you homeless and abandoned? Tell Jesus about your troubles and bring Him your hurts. He understands you in your sorrow and distress. He can and wants to help you:

I must tell Jesus all of my trials;
I cannot bear these burdens alone;
In my distress He kindly will help me;
He ever loves and cares for His own.

I must tell Jesus all of my troubles;
He is a kind, compassionate Friend;
If I but ask Him, He will deliver,
Make of my troubles quickly an end.

Tempted and tried I need a great Savior,
One who can help my burdens to bear;
I must tell Jesus, I must tell Jesus:
He all my cares and sorrows will share.

O how the world to evil allures me!
O how my heart is tempted to sin!
I must tell Jesus, and He will help me
Over the world the vict'ry to win.

Are you sick and suffering? The Lord is also a physician for your body and your soul. If you believe in Him, you will experience the glory of God. No illness is too big or too hard for Him to heal. I know people who had so-called incurable illnesses and their doctors had given up on them. When they came to Jesus and dedicated their lives to the Savior, their bodies were healed by the Great Physician, Jesus Christ, and they went on their way rejoicing. Nothing is impossible for the Lord!

Are you fearful of death? Jesus Christ is risen and has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (see 2. Timothy 1:10). For those who believe in Him, death is no longer terrifying, but rather entry into eternal life. How many thousands of martyrs joyfully testified of this and courageously met death with glowing faces for their Lord and King, Jesus Christ!

For that reason, dear reader, give your heart to the Savior as well, and you will become truly happy—in this life and some day in eternity.

O. S.

The Invisible Rope

We long for security and assurance in our life. We like to make everything as secure as possible. What happens when suddenly everything changes and all our supports shake or even break? What gives us support in those days? Blessed is the soul that has a strong connection to God in those situations.

With ropes, climbing axes, special footwear, and mountaineering equipment, we set out to be the first to conquer a still untouched rock wall in the mountains. My climbing partner, an experienced rock climber, led the way. Working diligently, we reached an impressive height in just a short time. Then came the most dangerous portion of our climb. With great care, my partner moved his agile body forward onto the smooth rock wall. Then it was my turn. Would I be successful? All at once, I was overcome by a strange, gripping fear. I thought of my parents, my brothers, my teacher. If they only knew! But there was no going back now. I called up to my companion: “Wait, I’m coming, I just need a few moments.”

My climbing partner could sense the fear in my voice. But in a fatherly and calm tone, he replied from above the vertical wall: “Come on up! You’re attached to my rope. I’ve got a hold on you.” It is an indescribable feeling to know that you are firmly supported when you find yourself above a great abyss. With trusting assurance that the one above me had a firm hold on the rope supporting me, I was able to traverse the dangerous spot successfully. Certainly, I used every ounce of strength I could muster—but nonetheless as one who was supported.

Since that climb, I got to know a different rope, one that keeps us safe above a great abyss as well. It is the invisible rope of faith.

Have you not experienced this fear of the abyss? The fear of being unemployed, the fear of cancer, the fear of war, or the fear of death? And when you think of the future, are you not staring into an endless abyss? And now I can reassure you that with the invisible rope of faith, you can conquer the depth of the unknown. You can acquire the assurance: “The Lord upholds me!”

Your fear may not completely subside. But it is a conquered fear. The rope of faith connects you with the one from above who calls out: “In the world you will have tribulation [fear]; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Why struggle with

sleepless nights? Why get up in the morning with anxiety? Why such a demeanor, as if there was nothing but a great chasm beneath you?

Look up! The bright sky is blue above. He, who went on ahead of you, passed through the grave unto the resurrection. Jesus Christ has conquered death, the world, and the gates of hell!

The invisible rope, the rope of faith, connects you with Him. Securely supported by this rope of faith, Dietrich Bonhoefer mused:

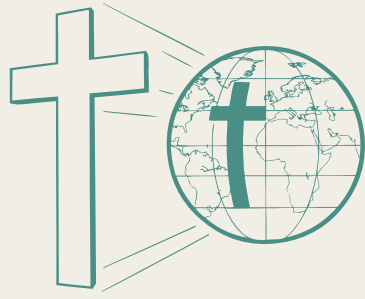
Inside me is darkness, but with You there is light,
Though I am alone, You’re here day and night.
Although I am timid, Your help will not cease
And since I am restless, You give me Your peace.
I do not understand Your ways
But You know the essence of my days!

The writer of the 73rd Psalm, who went through a great spiritual battle, was able to attain victory by grasping this solemn “nevertheless” by faith, saying: “Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory” (Psalm 73:23-24).

Do you have such a secure grasp? Are you attached to the rope of faith? This is a question of life or death. What is your answer? Falling into the abyss means sure death. But being connected by the invisible rope of faith to the crucified, resurrected, and glorified Christ is life. God loves the world and even you so dearly that “He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

The rope of faith is your lifeline. Keep a firm grasp on this rope, which holds you and upholds you. That way you are safe. May it become your infallible assurance: “The Lord sustains me” (Psalm 3:5b NIV). You can rely on it. When all else fails, this invisible rope of faith will not fail!

A. K.



Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs, Kitchener (ON)

The Path to Happiness

“Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and true before the Lord his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. So he prospered.”

2 Chronicles 31:20-21

Being happy is truly one of the greatest desires of mankind. There are probably very few people who would place anything above their personal happiness. The inner urge for happiness is very strong in most people, and one would pay dearly for it. But what is really true happiness in life? Who has it, and how is it to be achieved? These questions undoubtedly move many hearts.

First of all, it must be stressed that the path to happiness is not a fun filled way. We read that Joseph was a happy man even though he was in the foreign country of Egypt, a pain filled road for him. It is said, “The Lord was with him.” And the Lord gave him true happiness.

Just as every other moral value can only be attained under certain conditions, so too happiness in life. We are told of Hezekiah that what he did was good, right, and true before the Lord. That is why he enjoyed good fortune. “To find real happiness,” someone said: “there is no direct route. If we want to achieve true happiness we have to pass through the gate of ‘service,’ enter the village of ‘love,’ and settle in the valley of ‘humility.’ Then it is necessary to walk the path of ‘fidelity’ and ‘sincerity’ to be able to live on the heights of ‘innocence.’ Here we find happiness without having to look further.” Thus the path to happiness is accurately described.

Most people do not think this is the right way to go. They choose quite different paths: the path of worldly

lusts and pleasures, the path of independence and lawlessness, the path to high positions in life and wealth, the path of fame and honor. Can these really be the way to true happiness?

Life experiences do not generally confirm this. We hear in the news that people of high prestige, of high positions, of wealth and popularity, live in inner unrest and dissatisfaction, even in fear and despair. Not infrequently, they plunge from their high positions to death by their own hand. Why? They did not find that expected and much hoped-for happiness! Instead, their lives brought them dissatisfaction, destruction, and bitter disappointments. And one can not bear this without the grace of God.

It is a fallacy to believe that true happiness lies in satisfying all the desires of this life. Worthless motives and selfish desires do not bring us happiness but disappointment and disillusionment.

The apostle got it right when he said: “For he who sows to his flesh [the passionate, unbridled, ungodly desires of life] will of the flesh reap corruption” (Galatians 6:8). This passionate, lustful life is the life of most people. It does bring them all different kinds of external pleasures, but it does not bring them true happiness. Real happiness springs from another source. It is not in the enjoyment of carnal, temporal things, but in the possession of the

heavenly, spiritual gifts through Jesus Christ. It lies in peace with God, in the joy of the spirit, in the innocence of the heart, in the peace of the soul and conscience, and in the certainty of salvation.

One need not see the innocence of heart and life only during childhood, but it can be carried through our youth, middle age, and into old age.

The innocence of the heart comes from the right relationship with God and our fellow man. The right relationship must come from a right attitude towards God and our fellow man. This position can only be achieved through pure motives and intentions.

The path to happiness goes by the way of the cross! True happiness lies in the forgiveness of our guilt and purity of heart. It is in the harmony of our life with God, His Word, and the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). The richer the fruit of the Spirit and harmony with God unfold in a person's life, the deeper the inner happiness will be.

True happiness does not depend on our environment, on a chosen place of residence, on a particular property, or

on desired situations. If we do not carry in us the spiritual elements from which happiness springs, we simply do not have it. Nothing in the world can make someone happier than a clear conscience and the certainty of being innocent before God. Jesus said: "Blessed are the pure in heart" (Matthew 5:8). How could someone be happy and truly joyful as long as he lives with a guilty conscience before God? No one can be the creator of his own happiness. Real lasting happiness is to be found in God alone.

Paul said: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). If sin is forgiven, the guilt is removed, and one stands in obedience of faith, one can have happiness. Can a child be happy if he fails to fulfill the commandment of his parents? And how can we be happy if we live in disobedience towards God? Therefore, submit to the Lord. Give up all other paths and enter the path of grace, peace, and obedience to God. This is the path to true, abiding happiness. And this path is open to you!

Friedrich Krebs





Filling the Big Void

In a news release one could read the following: “In the afternoon of the 11th of July, at 2:30 p.m. a 21-year old student shot a fellow classmate in front of the Chemical Institute of the University of Bonn.” Crouching next to the dead body, the 21 year old bit through a small tube of hydro-cyanic acid and died a painful death. In his apartment they discovered his diary, in which he professed to be an atheist, a Nihilist and an anarchist. He had had no success with friends, girls, or academics and he wanted to revenge himself against life, which had treated him so miserably. In addition to taking his own life he wanted to take the life of someone else with him. The words in the diary read: “I hate all of humanity. As far as I am concerned the whole world can perish in a nuclear tomb. I desire an ascension to heaven with all of its comforts.”

This student didn’t live in dire circumstances or deprivation, he lived in an upscale neighborhood. His external conditions were not the motivation for this horrible deed, but inwardly he was torn and without foundation. Perhaps this is a sign of our rich, but inwardly so desolate and poor society. What happened in this individual’s life and in this situation is a reminder of what happens in the lives of people and society when you aim to remove God and take the direction of life into your own hands. When divine conditions and regulations are disregarded, the door is wide open to the power of Satan and his demons, leading to the dark night of sin.

Anyone who doesn’t have a solid faith in God has no foundation in his life. When God is pushed aside, your neighbor, and fellow human being is also pushed aside.

Someone once expressed this serious and truthful statement: “He who is not at peace with what’s above, has no peace with what’s below.” Such people lose their purpose and direction in life, and feel like strangers in an inconceivable and apparently senseless world. But God patiently seeks all those “strangers” that are driven by the wild seas of the passion of this world and are drifting aimlessly through life. That is why God opened the door to the heavenly home through Jesus Christ and waits for every lost soul to return home. He wants to give us a new direction and passion in life. Our new passion is to become like Jesus Christ, who came to pay for our debts before God so that we can be made free. He wants to give us access to a life that leads to full inner satisfaction.

Our Lord speaks in the parable of the vine: “Without me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). In the Latin translation the word “nothing” is printed as “nihil.” That is where the term “nihilism” comes from. This belief puts everything into question and leads to a painful void. But Christ wants to fill this void. Not only does He want to give a center of balance and purpose, but a whole new way of living. Like the vine to the branches, Jesus wants to live in us in truth and love. He wants us to live with Him and for Him.

That is where we find peace and freedom, but also the purpose for our existence. The emptiness and fear are overcome. We are no longer alone, having to rely on ourselves, but live in union with Christ. He gives us a refuge, a home, hope, and eternal life.

R. Billau



Winning the Battle against Discouragement

I once heard a story of how Satan hunts for the souls of people. With the story was a picture of a man going down a long dismal street. On his right shoulder sat an imp, apparently speaking into his ear. The street represented life. Just where the man was standing seemed to be the darkest spot in all the street, but far ahead of him light seemed to be springing up, which, however, was not seen by him at the time, for he was looking down. Often if we would look up, we should discover that just where we are is the darkest spot and that ahead the light of hope beams brightly, inviting us on to triumph and victory. The story ran about as follows:

Satan has many imps with which he hunts the souls of people. The most successful one of them he calls Discouragement. Once upon a time Satan saw a man passing down the way of life, and he said to his little imp, Discouragement, "Catch him." Starting off with a bound, the imp soon overtook the man, and springing upon his shoulder whispered in his ear, "You are discouraged."

"No," replied the man; "I do not think so." "Yes," said the imp; "I tell you, you are discouraged." "Well," replied the man, "I am not very much discouraged." Again the imp repeated, "I tell you, you are discouraged." Finally the man said, "Yes, I am discouraged." The imp then went flying back to his master and said triumphantly, "I caught him." Another man came along and Satan again said to the imp, "Catch him." Leaping upon the second man's shoulder, he began as before by saying,

"You are discouraged." This man answered firmly, "No, I am not discouraged." But the imp repeated, "Sir, you are discouraged." This time the man answered, "I tell you positively I am not discouraged." But again the imp said, "Surely you are discouraged." On this the man became angry and said, "You are a liar; I am not discouraged." At this the imp left him and slowly returned to his master, and reluctantly said, "I couldn't get him. I told him twice that he was discouraged, and he answered me promptly, 'No!' I told him the third time he was surely discouraged. At this he called me a liar and that discouraged me."

Firm resistance to the accusations, discouragements, and attacks of Satan will put him to flight, and instead of being discouraged, downcast, and despondent, we can be victors in the name of Christ, and the instruments of Satan sent to cast down our souls will themselves give away under the pressure of firm resistance and faith in God. Finally, dear reader, let me say, or rather let me remind you, that Jesus said of Satan, "He is a liar and the father of it." Though many traps be set along the way to ensnare the feet of men; and many imps be sent out to hunt the souls of those who would do right, no power or imp of Satan can stand before the soul of the least of God's redeemed who resists Satan steadfastly in the faith and trusts firmly in the written Word of the Almighty power of the true and living God. "Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the Lord" (Psalm 31:24).

D. O. Teasley

Experiences with God

*Here I am, my King, I consecrate myself to You.
Take me, use me, Lord, as You want.
Oh, I do not know what has value, what's in me,
Nothing, if You do not fill me yourself.*

*Make what is small to You, small to me;
What's big to You, big to me.
I will follow You, Jesus, only You.
Release me from selfishness
And from myself,
Let me be a useful tool!*

I would like to thank my Lord and Savior for everything He has done to and for me. I am so grateful to God that He teaches lessons that are beneficial for us even when they hurt. To the glory of God, I would like to share with you how my Savior taught me humility.

Two years ago in the fall, we bought a car. It was a bigger car; I was very excited about it. I felt very safe behind the wheel. Last November we moved close to my husband's work, so I got to take the car to work every day. Over time my love for the car grew, and I became proud and arrogant about being able to drive such a nice car. In my personal devotions and prayer, God showed me that my love for the car was hindering my relationship with Him. It has always been my desire that nothing would separate me from God. I was grieved, and asked Him to remove my love for the car and the pride and arrogance that came with it. The song quoted above touched me deeply and while praying it came to mind. With every word, it expressed my heart's desire. I knew God had heard my prayer. I was ready for God to remove my love for the car, but I was not willing to let the car go. My human reasoning was that God would not take our car away just like that, because He knew that I needed it for my daily job. I had to recognize the words of God: "My ways are not your ways, and My thoughts are not your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8).

Some time passed, and as usual, I drove to work. One morning I was in a rush and had only taken a few minutes for prayer. On my way to work, through my carelessness, I caused an accident in which that car was totaled. Even in this accident, God's hand was over me. In his great love, He kept me and everyone involved from harm. I am so thankful to God for His protection. After the accident, my spiritual life came to a standstill. I could not pray, but I knew deep in my heart that God had a way for me.

On Wednesday when we were in the prayer meeting, God began to speak to my heart in a very clear way. Again, He brought that song to my mind and said: "I have heard your prayer, and am showing you now what is great in my eyes. I have pleasure in humility." He reminded me again how He protected me on that day and how much He loves me. I broke down before Him in prayer, and He forgave and removed everything that stood between us. How grateful I am to God for His forgiveness! Now I knew God was leading me on the way of humility.

After that everything worked out so wonderfully! God put it on the hearts of a couple to lend us a car for a while. I was able to go to work. We can now feel how God was caring for us and providing financially. We had saved up a small amount of money, and God blessed us that we were able to buy a good car with the money we had saved up. This was a miracle! When we picked up the car, there was great joy in my heart. I knew, God leads and cares for us. As I was sitting in the car, I took the time to give thanks to God. It was as if I could hear Him say: "This is my gift for you." I cannot describe how beautiful this moment was.

I would also like to thank God for the brothers and sisters He has given us. We have received so much love, they were and are a great blessing for us. I am grateful to God for the molding process that He puts me through so that I can become a tool that He can use more and more. The Lord alone be praised for everything he does! Amen.

Julia Repp
Germany

God Answers Prayer



This happened many year ago, when parts of China had become very dangerous. Armed bands of robbers often attacked individual farms and even small and larger villages.

It was on a dark night. The people of the little village had gone to bed because they were tired from their hard work in the fields. Suddenly, one of them heard a suspicious noise outside. Immediately, he jumped up and woke his neighbors. A large band of robbers had invaded the village and had begun to plunder it. And they had firearms! All the clubs and spears that the village residents had for protection would not help against those.

As they set foot into one house to plunder it, they spotted a scared boy sitting in a corner. "So, little one," they said, "you will come with us. If your father wants you back, he must give us a lot of money. And if he doesn't, then we already know what we will do with you."

All the boy's pleading and crying did not help. He had to go with them. After a long trek, they came to a mountain where there was a solitary temple for the idols. "So, this is where we will lock you up and later we will come and get you again." They pushed him inside and locked the door from the outside.

This was terrible for the little boy, for it was pitch-dark in the room, and he feared the many large and small idols. For a long time, he sat sobbing on the ground.

Suddenly, something occurred to him. He remembered how his grandfather, who was a Christian, had often told him about a Heavenly Father who loved the people, and when they would pray to Him, He would gladly help them. The little boy did not know much about God and His son Jesus Christ. He had never prayed before. But he began and prayed, "Father in heaven, save me from these wicked men!"

Suddenly he noticed a little glimmer of light and saw that the glow came through a crack under the threshold of the door. With his hands, he began to claw at the earth and stones under the threshold. And lo and behold, at last the hole was so big that he could squeeze through it.

As quietly as possible, he crept away. When his eyes had become accustomed to the darkness of the night, he recognized the area, because he had often gathered wood on the hill. Toward morning he returned home. How happy his parents and grandparents were that they had their boy back again.

The boy told them about his experience in the temple, and that he now believed that the true God in heaven had heard his prayer.

M. C.



No Courage To Stand Out

A letter of pastoral care.

This letter pertains to Christian parents. God has acknowledged us as parents to be the closest representatives of God in the lives of our children. According to Ephesians 3, fatherhood on this earth is rooted in the fatherly nature of God. The home of Christian parents should be a small reflection of the fatherly and motherly love of God. Threats to God's gifts of grace exist at all times. We as Christian parents must assume our position and our responsibility in a world that has become one without a standard.

First to be mentioned is the many parents who seem to be without a backbone. The son has gotten to know a female friend. They are not even engaged but go to Italy for fourteen days with the "blessing of their parents."—"What is the big deal? Times have changed!"

In a class at school, 16 of the 20 students have signed up for a course on dancing. The rest of the four do not participate, as their parents said "no" because of an inner conviction—but only at first. For eventually the parents give in because their resolve has weakened from the constant petitioning of the other parents.

I have given a few examples out of life. What do we notice?—Christian homes are in danger of giving in to the pull of conformity. The motto of our time is: "But don't stand out!"

While in times past, children of a family orientated themselves upward, today's danger is that parents orientate themselves down to their children. The father doesn't want to be considered "old-fashioned" in the eyes of his son. And the mother wants to be a friend to her daughter in all situations.

Where are the parents today who stand by and carry out the decisions they made before God, even if

their children and colleagues oppose them? Believing families are called by God to be the conscience of their surroundings. The religion of comfort, "Everything for a well-maintained standard of living!" is trying to put down deep roots in Christian congregations.

It is not surprising when unbelieving people make their careers to be the center of their existence. Our children will notice if serving God is not the priority of our life! The devil is trying to erase the impact of the church of Jesus. "Church" is "Ecclesia," those who are called out. In a modern translation, Romans 12:2 says, "Don't live the way this world lives. Let your way of thinking be completely changed" (NIRV).

By our example, may we strengthen our children and believers who are wavering to say "no" in the right places! We have to demonstrate by our example that it is possible to have a happy family life without conforming to the world. We have to make it clear to those around us "that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 4:11). The life of a Christian and the life of a Christian family chip away at a godless environment. That our children are good examples for society is not a requirement of salvation, but may it be our greatest plea and concern to be faithful stewards of God out of sacrificial love so that we can live out this truth to our children and impress it on them:

If I have Jesus,
I have everything—even if I have nothing.
If I don't have Jesus,
I have nothing—even if I have everything!

Never Alone

“For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. O LORD, You have searched me and known me.

You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.

You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.

You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

Even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.

If I say, “Surely the darkness shall fall on me,” even the night shall be light about me;

Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You.

For You formed my inward parts; you covered me in my mother’s womb.

I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.” Psalm 139:1-14

If You Would Believe

Part 14

Compiled by Hartmut Sonnenberg

How is it with your soul?

“As you look back on your life today, what would you change? What would you do differently?” father was asked on his eighty second birthday. Without hesitating he responded, “I would travel the same road again, with one exception: I would seek Christ earlier in life! When I was a young man,” father reminisced, “I was invited to a youth meeting. As the young people testified how God had impacted their lives, I was so stirred that at the first opportunity I sought salvation for my soul.”

“Not long thereafter, I had the opportunity to testify what Christ had done for me and how my life radically changed. To illustrate, I related an incident from the shop floor, where I was working. ‘I had a mishap at work and I became so enraged that I hurled the tool in my hand clear across the shop. It narrowly missed the head of my co-worker and crashed against the wall. I awoke with a start. “What have I done?” By a hair’s breadth and I would have smashed my co-worker to the floor!’ But at that time, I could not control my temper. Since Christ redeemed me, He has freed me from my fits of rage. By the grace of God, I am a changed man!”

“Gustav,” a listener interrupted, “a little bit of religion is a good thing, but not like this!”

But father was not content to nibble at the fringes of religion. Prayerfully he delved into God’s Word and soon he was proclaiming the good news of the liberating Gospel from behind the pulpit. Since that time, his focus was on helping souls find salvation.

The question, “How is it with your soul?” was not unfamiliar to us children. When father sensed that there might be a problem, he would show his concern for our soul with this question. Mother used to say, “Better ten trips to the altar than one trip into eternity without peace with God.”

It was in connection with an evening of hymn favorites here in the local church not long ago, that I was asked to add some fitting words to the song “It is Well With My Soul.” As I was speaking about our late father’s concern for the well-being of the soul, the piano player bounced up from her seat and confirmed, “Yes! That’s exactly how it was! I was only a young girl when he said good bye to me at the door. He gave me his hand, looked deeply into my eyes, and asked, ‘How is it with your soul, my girl?’”

At the age of eighty-two, father was still serving the church in Hamilton. The theme of his sermon for the Wednesday evening prayer meeting on September 24, 1980 was “Sustaining Damage to the Soul.” Some excerpts from that sermon follow: “Man is not only a physical being. God gave him a living soul. Of the body we read: ‘For dust you are, and to dust you shall return’ (Genesis 3:19), but man’s soul is eternal. The wise Salomon observed, ‘All the labor of man is for his mouth, And yet the soul is not satisfied’ (Ecclesiastics 6:7). We nurture the physical body, but how is it with your soul? There is nothing, absolutely nothing that a man can give to save his soul. Only Christ can restore the soul. Have you found salvation for your soul in the blood of the Lamb? Do you nurture the soul



with daily sustenance from God's Word? Is it refreshed in intimate prayer with the Father? Or has your soul sustained damage? Tell me, how is it with your soul?"

It was his final sermon. Friday evening he completed a short backlog of paperwork with his son. The following Saturday morning, the son found his lifeless body in the vegetable garden under bright sunshine. His eyes were directed heavenward, whence his soul had already departed. Father's prayer, to die without becoming a burden to anyone, God had graciously granted. On his desk, next to the open Bible lay an unfinished radio sermon. A recent entry in the adjacent desk calendar noted his thoughts on a successor to the radio ministry. His soul had departed to God.

*I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith.
Now there is in store for me the crown of
righteousness.
(2 Timothy 4:7,8 NIV)*

How is it with your soul?

And so with this edition of Foundation of Faith, we close the account of experiences from our parental home. Above all, it was my desire that God, Who alone is worthy of honor, glory, and praise, would be glorified. And if perhaps someone has been inspired to seek a closer personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, praise be to God. Eagerly we have shared our spiritual heritage. I am indebted to my father, who recognized my dependence on him and his relationship with God in far-reaching personal decisions, and weaned me from that dependence near the end of his life. And so, by God's mercy and grace, I too can now look back on God's continued guidance and miracles in our lives.

God is real! There is a God! His Word is the truth! And if you would believe, you too would see the glory of God.

END



Meeting Jesus in a Rail Car

“... and then he took his own life,” the man sitting across the aisle whispered to his companion, as I was about to take off my coat and sit in the empty seat next to the window.

My sudden appearance interrupted a conversation between two men who were sitting opposite me—the one was slim, blond-haired, and about thirty years old; the other was somewhat larger, gray-haired and in his fifties. At first, they were a little embarrassed at having been overheard. But after we studied each other for a few minutes, a distant and almost forgotten acquaintance sprung up between the younger traveler and myself. The two men continued their conversation.

“I don’t understand,” said the young man, “how he could have done this to his parents. He was always so good to them, and he treated them with such respect. Why, just a few days before it all happened, I spent an evening with him at his parents’ house. Yes, he did look tired. The last two semesters ruined his health, and he often suffered from lack of sleep. From what he said, he dreaded the upcoming final exams. But he could have passed those exams without much effort. He was a born lawyer already in high school. And he would have had it made. As an only son, he could have taken over his dad’s practice.

“I am only surprised that no one noticed that something was wrong. When his dad went to start the car in the morning, his son lay dead in the garage. He did not leave behind a single word explaining the motive for his actions. There is no way to know if he was unlucky in love or just anxious about the exams or suddenly suffered a nervous breakdown.

“In any case, it must have been something terrible to lead him to the brink of despair. And then, he must have found that he did not have the strength to face it all. If only he had let us know how much he struggled and suffered! If only he had come to us in his time of need! Maybe his friends could have said something to help him.” –Silence–

The train drove into a tunnel. As the wheels turned loudly on the railroad track, the windows seemingly sprung up by themselves. Even when the windows were shut, people had to speak loudly in order to be understood.

The older man broke the silence. Loudly and clearly, he asked the question, “Didn’t he have any beliefs?”

“I don’t know about his faith. At any rate, he did not learn how to pray at home. His dad never talked about such things. Once when I was visiting a friend, he laughingly asked me if I still went to church with my pious parents. When I answered yes, he said that students had more important things to do with their time than to go to church with the old people to sing and hear such unbelievable messages. In the end, people should be committed to science, and science has nothing to do with faith.”

The older man tapped the floor with his feet, and the word “fool” escaped his lips. Then he muttered to himself, “The fools tell themselves that there is no God!” Turning he said to his younger friend, “If only your friend had believed in God! My faith has helped me overcome many things in my life. People who think they can live without faith will suffer some sort of shipwreck sooner or later.”

Silence once again. The train left the tunnel and soon stopped at a station. None of the new passengers sat down



within earshot, and the conversation, which had begun earlier, continued uninterrupted. Only now, I could no longer play the part of the listener.

“What do you mean by faith?” I asked the older man, who was now reflecting on what he had said.

“In my life,” he answered, “I also experienced a long dark tunnel. There was a time when I saw only darkness around me. Then I heard Psalm 139:12 in a sermon, ‘Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You.’ And I told myself that I didn’t have to despair any longer. In time, I would come out of the darkness and into the light because there is a power greater than the power of darkness. And I knew that I could trust Him with my life. He would not leave me in the dark, and then I learned that Jesus is the Light in this dark world and in my own dark life. And that He was the answer to all my problems and hardships.”

“Do you believe that He could have overcome the unspoken needs of my late friend?” asked the young man.

“Certainly, He could have overcome his problems too. There is no need too big for Christ. I have experienced this in my own life.”

“I have experienced this too,” I was allowed to add. “Christ has fulfilled my needs. I was on the edge of despair. My despair was like a foggy, autumn day. Black clouds hung over my life. I began to doubt God’s goodness and omnipotence. In my heart, an unfamiliar voice said, ‘There is no God.’ Then a trusted friend told me, ‘Just like the sun shines above the clouds even when you cannot see it, God’s love shines into your life. Just believe. There will come a day when the clouds will melt away, and you will see the sunshine over your life once again!’

“And I experienced this sunshine when I realized the Savior’s words also applied to me, ‘Your sins have been forgiven.’ On this day, I confessed my sins to this friend and to Christ because I could not live any longer without laying my burden at the cross of Jesus. And then I understood the words of the Savior, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life’” (John 8:12).

Dear reader, Jesus can also take care of your needs. The sun of God’s mercy can shine in your life. Don’t wait any longer. Lay your burdens at the cross of Jesus before you collapse under their weight!

A. K.



The Father

Shortly after the battle of Gravelotte, a father was called to the death bed of his son. The doctors had given up on him, and now the father was supposed to tell that to his son. The young man was apprehensive about leaving this life and pleaded: “Prepare me for death. I know you can do it. You have shown many the way. But make it so clear that I can grasp it.”

At this moment, the father remembered an incident that occurred during the school years of his son and began: “Do you still remember how you came home one day after school and I had reason to reprimand you? You became very angry and spouted unrestrained and insulting words to me!”—“Yes, Father, my heart became heavy when I recalled this story again a few days ago. That is why I wished to see you once more, so that I can ask for forgiveness again one more time.”

“Do you remember,” replied the father, “when your stormy mood had subsided, you came to me, put your arm around my neck, and said: ‘My dear Father, I am sorry that I insulted you. It was not your loving son that did that. I did it out of anger. Can you forgive me?’”—“Yes, I remember it precisely.”

“Do you remember what I told you when you were crying around my neck?”—“You said: ‘I forgive you with all my heart,’ and kissed me. I will never forget those words.”—“Did you believe me?”—“Of course. I have never doubted your words.”—“Were you happy after that?”—“Yes, and since that time I loved you more than ever. I will never forget how my heart became light when you looked at me so kindly and said: ‘I forgive you with all my heart.’”

“See, that is the way to get to Jesus. Tell Him: I am sorry!—Just like you had told me. And He will forgive you quicker than I forgave you. He affirms this in His Word. You must trust His words like you trust mine.”—“Dear Father, I understand. And I am so glad that you came to tell me this.”

Against all odds, the young man became healthy again. But the seed that was planted in him while he was afraid of death flourished to become ripe and fruitful in his life.

It is wonderful that such a Father’s love is available for a sinner and that we are able to know that God gives grace and much forgiveness. However, we don’t want to realize this only in the difficulties of life or come to realize it first in the hour of death. This should be the light of our heart and the joy of our life also in the healthy and good days.



Special Services 2017

Easter Conference in Hamm, Germany

APRIL 14-17, 2017

Fest in Winnipeg, Manitoba

MAY 20-22, 2017

Pentecost Fest in Herford, Germany

JUNE 3-5, 2017

Fest in Aylmer, Ontario

JULY 1-2, 2017

Youth Bible Days in Tuningen, Germany

JULY 27 - AUG 1, 2017

Camp Meeting in Blaubeuren, Germany

AUGUST 20-27, 2017

Convention in Swartz Creek, Michigan

SEPTEMBER 2-3, 2017

Fest in Edmonton, Alberta

OCTOBER 7-9, 2017

The Sweetest Name

Jesus, sweetest name that's given,
Precious refuge for the meek!
Sweetest name on earth and heaven;
Hope for hopeless, tired, and weak!
Though the foe is out to kill,
Jesus' Name is stronger still.

When the ancient, wily Serpent
Seeks to hinder and destroy,
When your plight is dire and urgent,
Jesus' Name in prayer employ.
When the tribulation's gone,
You will praise Him in a song.

Roaring like an angry lion,
Satan seeks souls to devour;
Walk in faith, his rage defying,
Trust in Jesus, every hour.
For this refuge is secure,
Yes, our hope in Christ is sure.

In the holy name of Jesus
Ev'ry knee will surely bow.
Through the valley He will lead us,
He will keep us safe somehow,
And His love has set us free.
For His name gives victory.

G. Berg