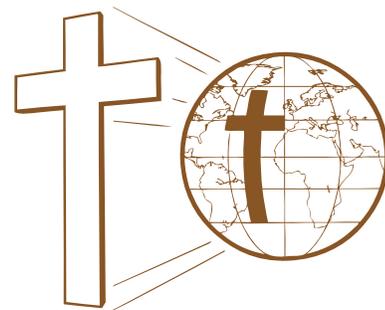


Foundation of Faith



*Humility
and Service*

September 2013

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Editorial

Whoever emigrates to a country where he is unfamiliar with the national language must usually be content to start off with low-paying employment. Years ago, I heard of a mother who was in such a situation, having to take a job as a cleaning lady. She vowed, "My daughter will never slave away on her knees like a servant girl!"

There is certainly nothing wrong with parents seeking a better future for their children. But can pride and conceit become the pitfalls of success? Do we want our sons and daughters to acquire such wealth and social status that they begin to look down on people who are less accomplished, and perhaps even despise their own parents?

This edition of *Foundation of Faith* encourages us toward humility and service. Many in the world hold these virtues in contempt; they are beneath their dignity. God esteems them highly, however. The Son of God left the riches of Heaven and His divine majesty and glory to become flesh, to take the position of a servant (Philippians 3:6-8), and to lead a simple, humble life with His parents in the village of Nazareth.

Before dying on the cross at Calvary, Jesus said to His disciples, "I am among you as the One who serves" (Luke 22:27). Elsewhere, He reminds us: "He who is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 23:11). And Jesus demonstrated this teaching with His own life, not coming to earth "to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

You and I need to be reminded that to love and serve God and to love our neighbor like ourselves brings us to the pinnacle of our earthly experience. Let us heed the prophet Micah's admonition: "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

H.D. Nimz

The General

The Civil War was over and preparations for a big victory parade in Washington were in full swing. General William Sherman was in charge of the planning committee. The parade was to follow a route down Pennsylvania Avenue and past the White House. Protocol dictated that each general was to ride ahead of his assigned division.

On the morning of the parade, a problem arose. General Sherman looked concerned as he headed towards General Oliver Howard. The troops commanded by this general had contributed to the victories in Tennessee and Atlanta. Promoted to the commanding position of the Tennessee Army, he had taken part in Sherman's famous "March to the Sea."

"General Howard, you know that you are to ride ahead of your division?" said General Sherman.

"Yes, Sir," replied General Howard.

"Good, I would like to ask you for a favor."

"At your command, Sir."

General Sherman explained: "The general who was in charge before you would like to ride at the head of his former division. I know you were commander in the last battles, but Howard, I know that you are a Christian and can therefore bear the disappointment. Would you deny yourself and cede the honor of leading the troops in the parade to this man?"

General Howard was momentarily stunned. He had fully expected to ride with the troops that had served him

so faithfully and selflessly. A powerful team spirit had developed as they lived and fought together. The men would have gone to their death for their general and for their comrades. Howard himself had lost an arm in battle. Now he was being asked to give up his place of honor to another officer who was making unheard of and selfish demands. But General Howard immediately regained his composure. In accordance with the military principle, "Your wish is my command," he stood at attention before his superior and said: "Yes, Sir. Because you ask and because I am a Christian, I will forego the honor gladly. My colleague may lead the division."

Sherman looked at him, relieved and amazed, and then said: "Howard, I had expected you would consent. Now I would like to ask you to ride with me in front of the entire army."

General Howard acted like a true Christian. He had learned that rare virtue of humility, which comes from emulating the attitude of Christ. Giving up the need to be recognized and honored goes against natural inclinations, but by choosing to walk the road of humility, General Howard was granted an honor that far exceeded his expectations.



The Unhitched Car

An old man transferred ownership of his company to his son. At first, the son sought his dad's advice before making any business decisions. One morning, however, the son left for work earlier than usual without seeking his dad's advice. The old man was hurt.

He went into the garden where his grandchildren were happily playing train. One child grabbed the other's coat tail, and they chugged through the garden. Only one boy stood off to the side. "You are not playing?" asked the grandfather.

"But I am," replied the young boy with shining eyes. "I am the coal car. Only right now I am unhitched from the train."

"Unhitched..." thought the old man, "that's it! I wonder if becoming unhitched is an easy thing to learn? Right now, being disconnected makes me feel very lonely; I don't really belong to my old life anymore. Nevertheless, my life can still be rich and filled with blessings."

Quite often it is just such unhitched, disconnected people that become well diggers who dig deeply into God's Word and receive blessings that can only flow from the Holy Spring. Through these experiences they have learned humility.

Service

*Serve the Lord, to Him be true,
Honor Him in all you do.
Don't ask why, and don't ask how,
Only yield and humbly bow.*

*Look to Jesus, He will show
You the way you are to go.
Serving is a blessed chore,
Spreading comfort, love and more.*

*Bringing healing, hope is born,
Roses bud among the thorns.
Will they blossom? Time will tell!
Trust with patience, all is well.*

*Be a living sacrifice,
Verbal claims will not suffice.
With news of peace your feet be shod;
Live a song of praise to God.*

*As you travel through this life
Simply serving, shunning strife,
God will bless the seed you sow,
More than you will ever know.*

P. Zilz



Blessings of Humility

Very few people know from personal experience the precious blessings that flow from a life of humility. Are you allowing God to humble you so that He can bless you?

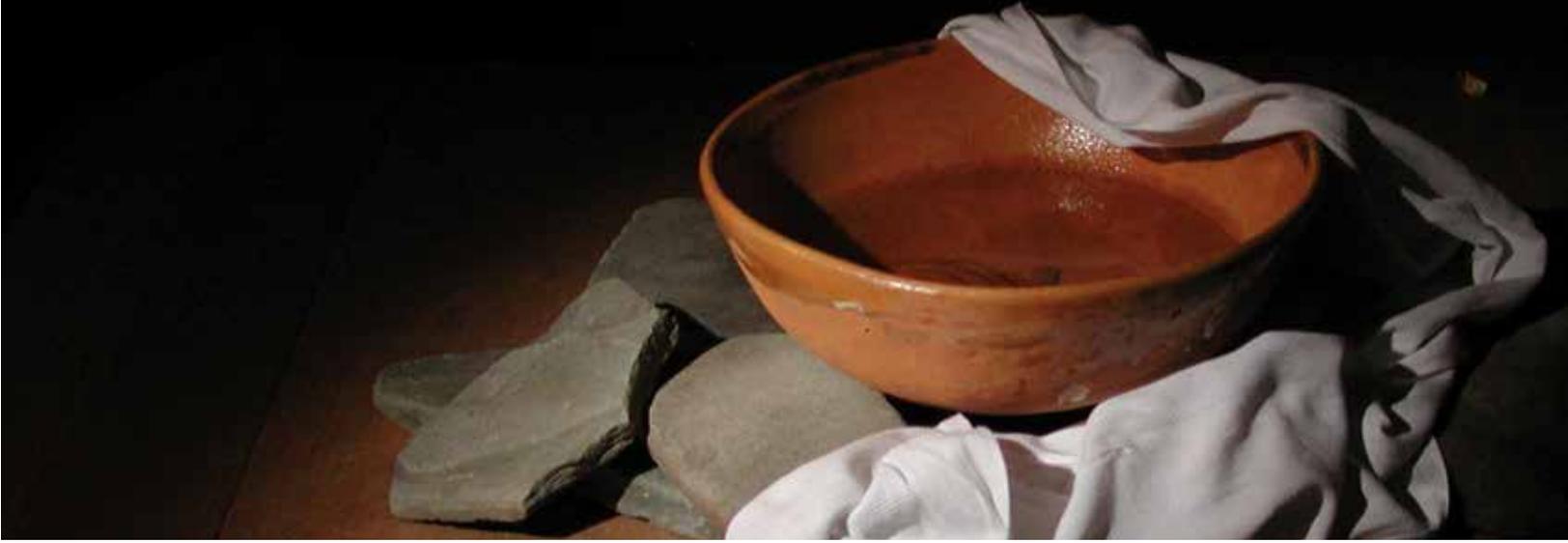
God walks with the humble. What heart could crave a richer blessing? “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest” (Exodus 33:14). Thus, to walk with God in humbleness is to have fullness of rest. If you want to be happy and full of rest, you must be humble. Listen to these words of the Savior, and I trust they may fall upon your heart in their full weight and in all the strength of their beauty. “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (Matthew 11:39). Rest is the result of being lowly. Sadly, there are only few who have found the precious secret! The more humble a man is, the sweeter, richer, and deeper is his rest; and the prouder he is, the more wretched is his state. Sweet, tranquil rest fills the heart and life of the truly humble. The world may scoff at you, but your rest of soul is not disturbed. All those around you may be praised and honored while you are neglected, but your soul rests on. Blessed experience indeed!

God gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). Therefore, the more lowly a man is, the more grace he has. Grace, like water, fills up the lowest places. Suppose you have two cups, each ten inches deep. These cups are connected by a small tube. The tube enters one cup two inches from the top and the other two inches from the bottom. To have the pipe running level, one would have to make one cup six inches higher than the other. Now, if there is an opening in this tube midway between the cups and you begin to pour water in this opening, the water will run both ways. But soon the water in the higher cup rises to the level of the tube, and then all the water you pour in will flow into the lower cup. Christian hearts are all connected to each other by the golden pipe of salvation. This pipe enters the heart at the surface of your humil-

ity. If you have only one inch of humility in the bottom of your heart and your brethren have ten, then as God pours grace and glory into the golden pipe, your heart is quickly filled, but the greater measure flows into other hearts that are more lowly. If you desire more grace and glory, you must humble yourself, because God gives grace to the humble.

“Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5). “The earth is the Lord’s and its fullness” (Psalm 24:1). The meek and lowly have God for their Father; consequently, they are heirs to this world—to all they daily need of it. This is one blessing belonging to the humble. They inherit the earth. This means that God, who owns the earth and everything in it, will supply every need, or give to the truly humble every temporal blessing needed. Those who become anxious and somewhat disturbed because not every temporal blessing is in sight are not as humble as they should be. As a result, faith in God is hindered. Suppose a preacher went to a place to hold a meeting. Now, if the congregation there did not give him what they could to meet his present needs, and he became anxious and restless, it would be because he was not as humble before God as he should be. To humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God includes not only a consciousness of our dependence upon God, but also the rest of faith and trust in Him. God’s humble child shall never want. “[They] shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied” (Joel 2:26). When the grace of humility adorns the heart, God is well pleased, and He keeps that heart full of rest. “The Lord lifts up the humble” (Psalm 147:6).

“He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name. Great is our Lord, and mighty in power: His



understanding is infinite. The Lord lifts up the humble” (Psalm 147:4-6). This is wonderful. The same thought is expressed in Isaiah 40:26-29. The same greatness of God’s power that is summoned to create and sustain the material universe is called into operation in lifting up and sustaining the humble. The heavens may fall and the worlds melt away, but God will never allow His humble child to stumble and fall. It is blessed to be humble. My heart daily seeks for more of this satisfying grace. My soul has tasted of it and prays and longs for more. As the deer pants for the water brooks (Psalm 42:1), so my soul pants after more humility. It is not a restless, anxious, dissatisfied craving, but a sweet, satisfied longing. The meek are exhorted to seek humility (Zephaniah 2:3). The very meekest can yet attain to greater meekness, and consequently our joy and blessedness can always be increasing.

There are many beautiful verses in God’s word that speak of humility. Meditate upon these until your soul tastes of the sweetness they contain. “The poor (meek) shall eat and be satisfied” (Psalm 22:26). Is it not blessed to be fully satisfied, to want nothing, to have full and perfect rest of soul? Such is the wonderful state of the truly humble. Not only shall they have food for the body and be satisfied, but they shall have food for the soul until it delights itself in fatness.

“The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way” (Psalm 25:9). If this declaration does not waken in your soul an intense desire to become more humble, it must be sleeping the sleep of death! The ways of God are peaceful, pleasant, happy ways. There is no sorrow there, no darkness. All is hopeful and bright. The humble shall walk there and shall hear the voice of their

God. His ways are higher, much higher, than man’s ways, but those who will humble themselves He will exalt to walk in His ways. It is tragic that so few in these days of iniquity and cold formality know the right ways of the Lord! But, thank God, there are a few who know—and blessed are those people!

“The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Psalm 37:11). When you have meditated on this text a full hour, you will then begin to comprehend only a little of its depth of meaning. Do you have an abundance of peace? Many who thought they had an abundance of peace found, when the tests and trials came, that their peace was very shallow. One person who testified of being so full of peace lost all his peace when the trial came. On those days when everything seems to go wrong, do you delight yourself in the abundance of peace? If you do not, you need more meekness, for the promise is that the meek shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

“The Lord lifts up the humble” (Psalm 147:6). “The humble also shall increase their joy in the Lord” (Isaiah 29:19). How these words thrill our inner being! No harm can ever come to one of God’s humble ones, for He lifts them above every evil. We set sail upon the ocean of life in sweet assurance of safety. We do not know what storms may rise along the way. We do not know how high the waves may crash, nor what may happen to us. But this we know: If we remain humble, God will lift us high over all, and our joy will be increased. Now that we see how blessed it is to be humble, all our hearts are longing for more humility.

C. E. Orr

Hold Fast to Humility

This Christian virtue is not only pleasing to those around us. The individual himself is benefited by it! Cherish and protect this treasure!

Humility is a treasured virtue. It is, perhaps, the greatest virtue a person can possess. Humility is more than faith, although faith can move mountains. It is more than all the wisdom and knowledge of mankind. Indeed, humility is greater than all the gifts that a person can possess.

No one can please God if he does not have a humble heart. God gives grace to the humble, but resists the proud (James 4:6). Humility is not a pious face, an outward posture, or humble words. People can have and exhibit all these and still be proud; in fact, they can be especially proud of their humble appearance. Although humility does show itself on the outside, it must have its roots in the heart.

Humility is the attitude of our heart before God and man. Its natural consequence is the avoidance of all conceited behavior and pride.

Many people are willing to submit to a ruler, a rich employer, or someone whose position is much higher than their own. But where do we stand in comparison to someone who is our equal or even an apparently lower-ranked individual? Can we have a humble attitude towards such people? God's Word does not make a difference between the exalted and the lowly. It requires the same attitude of the heart from everyone: Humility!

No one should think that a high, influential, responsible occupational position removes this command. David was a great and mighty king in his time, and yet he was a humble man. Through all accolades and positions, the heart can remain humble and we can serve the lowliest and call him "brother."

There is no excuse before God for anyone to be prideful or haughty. Why not? Because although Jesus was exalted above all, His example of humility cannot be surpassed.

If it was possible for Him, as the Son of God, to become brother to the poorest and to serve them, then all proud excuses fall silent before this noble example. God can give and retain in us a humble heart.

A brother once asked me: "How can we understand the Scripture passage: 'Let each esteem others better than himself' (Philippians 2:3) – when we know positively that the other is not better and is also completely wrong? Can we also esteem such people better than ourselves?" Certainly! We do not need to hold up their wrongness as being right, or even overlook it. And yet we can still serve them for Christ's sake, if it is to the glory of God. Serving is the role of the lower-ranked, through which we demonstrate that we esteem the other better than ourselves. Jesus served us in that He took our sins upon Himself.

Humility is of great value. God gives grace to the humble. What grace means for us in this life we will only fully understand in eternity. Humility opens for us the godly canal of grace. It is like a floodgate. The more we sincerely lower ourselves, the more godly grace will flow into our hearts.

Humility is the key to the chamber of grace. Be humble and you will find grace for a godly life, grace to shine where no other light could burn, and where tribulations would extinguish everything.

Humility gives grace to be still, even in situations when our rights are being violated. Only in this state of grace are we able to win souls for the Lord. Winning souls is not the achievement of a lofty, arrogant character; rather, it is the result of a sincerely humble willingness to serve.

How do we acquire true humility of the heart? Jesus says: "Learn from Me!" (Matthew 11:29) As the greatest

Man who ever walked on this earth, He became the lowliest. He was born as an unremarkable Child and placed under the disciplinary authority of His parents. He was submissive to His parents. He was also submissive to the laws of the land of that time, even though He was the Giver of the Law. And this Man said, "Learn from Me!"

When Jesus began His ministry, He was so modest that those who knew Him were offended because they could not see the Messiah in Him. Even at the time of His arrest, after a three and a half year ministry, Jesus was still such an unknown that it took a traitor to identify Him. He was truly an example from whom we have much to learn.

Peter writes: "Be clothed with humility!" (1 Peter 5:5) Satan tries to make us stumble, specifically in the area of humility. We need to be vigilant in holding fast to humility, and ask God for strength to endure in this vigilance.

We should test ourselves in all our activities, in giving, prayer, preaching, visiting the sick, and writing articles: Are we doing all of this with true humility of the heart? Or is there hidden deep in our heart the desire that people will think highly of us? Are we also thankful when we remain unnamed and unknown in all our self-sacrifice, and do not receive our just reward from men?

Jesus tells us: "He who humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:12). To humble ourselves is not to wait until unpleasant circumstances compel us to humility. It is better if we do it ourselves – it brings more of a blessing. No one will remain humble without grace. We must also expect that God will give us opportunities to learn and demonstrate humility. This does not happen on rosy pathways; rather, it takes place in the valley of humility, which will naturally not be pleasant.

True humility is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. He wants to help us in particularly difficult situations, that we can remain victorious over our own feelings.

Humility is evidence that God lives in our heart. Where God the Father and the Son live, there is humility. Humility is also evidence that we love God and man, for love makes itself a servant.

"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:6).

H. W.



Sponges and Watering Cans

It was Jesus' custom to draw spiritual lessons from the things surrounding Him and by some similarity impress upon His hearers a profitable truth. Through this we get many valuable thoughts from the simple things of everyday life. The articles mentioned in the title bring to mind pictures of two classes of people.

The most noticeable feature of a sponge is its power of absorbing a liquid and retaining it within itself. If dipped in or placed in contact with a liquid, it will absorb several times its weight. Some people are like sponges. They go to church services and drink in the truth time after time. They love it. It delights their hearts. They love the singing, the preaching, the testimonies, and the prayers. They absorb and absorb, but, like the sponge, they give out nothing. The sponge gives up what it has taken in only when it is subjected to pressure. So it is with these human sponges. While they love to listen, they have to be urged to do anything. They testify only when they feel duty-bound to do so or when urged by somebody else. They rarely pray in public. They are among the last in all such things. In a congregation where there are mostly sponges one finds that a few are doing all the work, and the meetings there are dull and lifeless. Wet sponges will not burn. Neither will the fire of God burn in a congregation of sponges. A preacher may be full of fire, but he cannot set sponges burning. Do you have to be urged to testify? Are you ready to pray or do whatever you can in a worship service? Do you love to talk to people about salvation? Or do you speak of it only when someone else starts the conversation? Do you have to be constantly urged to do your

duty? Are you a sponge?

A watering can is different. It too will take in to its full capacity, but as soon as it is turned in the right position, it freely gives out again. Streams of cooling, refreshing water fall on the thirsty plants. The drooping flowers raise their heads again to blush in beauty, and their fragrance floats out on the balmy air once more. A delicious coolness surrounds the place, and we delight to be there. While the sponge represents the selfish class, the watering can represents the open-hearted, cheerful giver - one who is ready to pass on the good things and who in return reaps the promise, "He who waters will also be watered himself" (Proverbs 11:25). If the watering can is emptied, does not the gardener fill it again, and with fresh water? Likewise, if we are pouring out to others, we will be filled again. We shall not be empty, but fresh and rich in our souls with the water of life. The great Gardener fills us that we may pour out to others, not simply that we may be filled ourselves. It is said of Jesus that he "emptied himself" (Philippians 2:7 RSV). He became poor that through His poverty we should be made rich.

God wants us to be "ready for every good work" (Titus 3:1). Do not be a sponge. Do not have to be pressed into duty. Do not live in yourself and for yourself. Do not remain content with drinking in. Begin to pour out. Be ready to do your part in worship services, yes everywhere. Be ready to water others. The world is indeed "thirsty ground."



Does the gospel message move you? Do you talk to others about it? Or is it a matter you discuss only when it comes up in conversation?

A sponge, if left to itself, gives out by evaporation until it becomes hard and dry, and in such a state it is useless. Many people have soaked up the truth and delighted in it, but instead of pouring out to others, that they might be refilled, they have just given out by evaporation until they have become dry and formal and lifeless. That is the usual result with spiritual sponges. Who are those who are fat and flourishing, those who have showers of blessings? Are they the sponges? Never! "Give, and it will be given to you" (Luke 6:38). "It is more blessed to give [to be a wa-

tering can] than to receive [to be a sponge]" (Acts 20:35).

Now, face the question squarely. Which of these two items do you resemble? Look over the past year. Have you been ready for duty? Is your testimony always "ripe" - ready for the opportunity? Are you ready for service of any kind? If you have been a sponge, quit being one. Quit now. Ask God to make something better of you. If we are not sponges now, we can soon become so by neglect of duty. The only safe way is to keep pouring out.

Faith Without Works *is Dead*

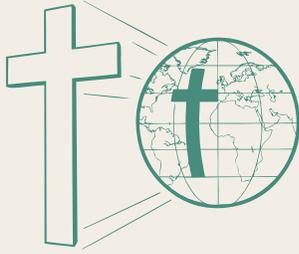
A mission newsletter from many years ago contained a story about a group of European missionaries. They had witnessed to a crowd of Indians near the Ganges river. They had spoken of Jesus' wonderful love, and how this love influenced His thoughts, words, works, sacrifice, and death. They told their listeners that Christ's whole purpose was to save mankind from their hopeless state, now and for all eternity. The crowd listened closely to this message of joy and hope. They wanted to hear more. Abruptly though, one thoughtful listener stood up and cried out, "No, it's not true! It's not true! It's not true! It can't be true!"

"Why can't it be true?" asked one of the missionaries.

"If it were true," the Hindu man answered, "then we would have noticed the difference in your lives, words, and works." He remained firm, "It's not true!"

This little story gives us much to think about! Can people say of us, "It's not true!"; or do we live in such a way that our works reflect our words?

"Faith without works is dead" (James 2:20).



Radio Broadcast

The Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs
Kitchener, Ontario

The Hidden Blessing in Humility

“You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me great” (Psalm 18:35).

“Be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility” (1 Peter 5:5).

The Bible often speaks of very peculiar things. For example, we read of “treasure in earthen vessels” or a “path in the great waters.” It speaks of a “bush burning with fire, but not consumed” and of “peace like a river.” It speaks of “burning hearts” and of a “seared conscience.” And in Ezekiel 37 we read of a wind that causes dry bones to come alive. Do we understand this imagery?

Scripture passages of this type require an explanation, for there is obviously a deep meaning and blessing in them. The Bible texts above are examples of meaningful imagery. David says: “When you humble me, you make me great!” (Psalm 18:35 Luther). Initially this sounds paradoxical, because being humbled makes us insignificant and small. It can be disappointing and make our hearts feel oppressed. And yet, there is a hidden blessing in being humbled! And this blessing or profit is nowhere revealed as clearly as in the Bible.

There is in all of us the general desire to become great and even greater. We wish to be esteemed and praised by others if at all possible. We want to be admired and respected. Many strive therefore to become popular with everyone, regardless of whether the motive is pure or impure. This often leads to envy and contention, aspersions and exaggerations, all because one is striving for what

is falsely perceived as gain. But this is how it is among people who do not know the hidden blessing in humility and do not want to take the low road. They have never tasted the “honey from the rock” (Psalm 81:16) and do not know the “treasure in earthen vessels” (2 Corinthians 4:7). God wants to show us these true values and, for this purpose, lead us into the hidden blessing of humility. He knows and sees when we need this humbling.

A king once had a heavy rock placed in the middle of a busy country road. He waited to see what would happen. The farmers were initially puzzled about it, but detoured around the rock with their horse-drawn carts no matter which direction they came from. But then one of them started to think about why the rock had suddenly appeared on the road. One day he stopped his wagon, got out, and began to work on moving the rock out of the road. It cost him labor and sweat, but when the rock had been dislodged from its spot, he found a rich treasure underneath that rewarded his efforts many times over. This little story reminds us that we have to “dismount” or descend in order to find the hidden blessing. Our great, wise King sends humiliations in our path for this purpose. He wants to lead us to a treasure that we would normally pass by. He wants to give us precious rewards and enrich our lives.



If Peter exhorted his readers to “be clothed with humility,” then there must be a particular value in it. The psalmist writes: “I thank you that you have humbled me” (Psalm 118:21 Luther). He had discovered a profit in humility. In Psalm 119:67 we read: “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word,” and: “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes” (Psalm 119:71). Luther translates afflicted as humbled in both verses. Pride and conceit deceive us and lead us astray, but through humiliations we find a better and higher attitude in life. This is how the biblical witnesses reveal the hidden blessing of humility. That is “honey from the rock” – profit from the depths – and today this blessing is still experienced in exactly the same way.

Among the apprentices in a workshop there was one who was especially talented. Because of his talent, he soon rose above the others, and became arrogant and conceited. His wise master saw this, and began employing some methods that repeatedly humbled the talented apprentice. This brought the young man to the realization that he still had much to learn. Though it was a difficult lesson, he not only gained experience but also the appreciation and respect of his co-workers. He developed into a superb journeyman and master.

Similarly, the Lord uses humiliations as a method to achieve His purpose for us. Through them, He can make us more understanding and useful. They are wholesome intentions for the best of reasons. When David grasped this, he was able to say: “When you humble me, you make me great” (Psalm 18:35 Luther). When we have learned to be small, then God can make us great! The apostle Peter writes: “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5).

Humility opens up the way to the saving grace which we all need. Many people cannot find their way to God because pride and arrogance are in their hearts and lives. Other people cannot effectively minister to others because they do not know the hidden blessing of humility. They do not find the blessing because they are so self-absorbed.

The old church fathers taught that all the other virtues are of little worth without humility. We are closest to heaven when our own self is as nothing to us. Someone has said: “Humility is wholesome because though it makes no demands, it achieves everything!” – Everything that we are and might desire to be in God’s eyes happens by means of grace; and God gives grace to the humble.

Our Lord Jesus says: “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29). How clearly the hidden blessing of humility is shown here! May we and many others find this hidden blessing and apply every effort to keep it!

The Doctrine of Salvation

How can a person be saved?

The way to a person's salvation begins with God. He initiates; He must make the first move. This is certainly true when considering mankind collectively, for God gave His only begotten Son for the whole world (John 3:16). But it is true also when considering mankind individually. Scripture tells us that the sinner is spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:5; 1 Timothy 5:6). It is impossible, therefore, for him to initiate a move towards God. Thus, the first step on the way to a person's salvation is God's awakening of the soul.

A sinner is awakened when he hears the gospel message and the Holy Spirit begins to work on his heart. The Holy Spirit awakens him to his sin. He suddenly sees himself the way God does. He realizes that he has offended God and is in a state of eternal separation from Him. He recognizes that he cannot, in the state he is in, stand before a holy God. When Peter was brought to this awakening, he exclaimed, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8). Isaiah, similarly revived, said, "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). It is this recognition of his condition that brings the sinner to the crisis of a *decision*.

It is now for the sinner to take a step towards God. He must now choose between life or death, for this decision determines his eternal destiny. In Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son, we witness this crucial turning point. The sinful son says, "I will arise and go to my father" (Luke 15:18). Once the sinner humbles himself before God and turns towards Him, the Holy Spirit works within him a deep feeling of *remorse*.

Remorse is the sinner's expression of regret for having committed unrighteousness. It involves an intense revulsion for a life of sin. The soul of the sinner is brought to sorrow; his heart breaks over what he has done. We read: "For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted" (2 Corinthians 7:10). And now, having arrived at this point, the goodness of God leads the sinner to *repentance* (Romans 2:4).

Repentance is a radical reversal of direction. It is more than a new way of thinking. The sinner turns away from

all wickedness, all ungodliness. He breaks with sin and his own sinful vices and, with his entire being, turns fully towards God. He begins by *confessing* his sins to God.

Confession of sin is an important step in the salvation experience. We read: "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). (Please read also 1 John 1:9.) God wants us to confess our transgressions. He wants us to own our sins. It may be that God will remind the sinner of his offenses against other people. If so, it is important for him then to confess these sins to those persons and ask for forgiveness. If the sin involves a wrong that can be made right, then that is what must be done. Zacchaeus said, "Look Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore four-fold" (Luke 19:8). It is best for the sinner to do this immediately. At the very least, he must purpose to do so at the first opportunity.

The way is now open for the seeker to approach God. He can now ask God for *forgiveness* of his sins, something his soul so longs for. Our Lord Jesus offers instruction in this Himself: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). This request for salvation of the soul must be accompanied by *faith*.

Paul and Silas told the Philippian jailer to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31). In Ephesians 2:8 we read, "For by grace you have been saved, through faith." The seeker must believe in the good news of the gospel. He must, by faith, acknowledge that Jesus Christ, God's Son, died on the cross of Calvary for him, and that He who knew no sin carried his sin onto the cross for him. It is this faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ that brings the seeking sinner salvation! By faith he is then justified. Paul, speaking about Christ, writes: "...that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26). At this moment the seeker is born again, regenerated; he receives forgiveness of his sin, and he is adopted into the family of God.

ROBERT WITT *Gifhorn, Germany*



True Divine Healing

The enticing cures that we encounter everywhere today might make us wonder, “What is true divine healing?” In order to answer this question correctly, we must go to the divine book, the Bible. There can be no other method of divine healing than the one that is designated and approved by God’s Word.

When we go to the Holy Scriptures, we notice that the mighty power through which Jesus performed His miracles on earth – such as healing the sick, driving out demons etc. – happened through the inherent power of the Holy Spirit. He would not have been able to affect anything in His great plan of salvation without this power. The Word of God gives us more light and insight into this matter. It teaches us that we are fully dependent on Him, and that in order to execute His holy work we must acquire power through Him. “[...] how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). From this we see that the Holy Spirit bestowed this power upon Jesus. This is the reason that His acts of healing were labeled “divine healing”.

Divine healing is most certainly a spiritual work and is distinct from any other cure that is produced by material means – as opposite as day and night, and as distant as the heavens from the earth. It is a great error to place divine healing on a material and physical level with other cures that result from physical powers and remedies.

Although divine healing is supernatural, not all supernatural demonstrations are of a divine nature. Satan has the power to inflict suffering on people; is it not then also reasonable to believe that he can hold this suffering back

or stop it altogether? He is able to transform into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), and in this same manner he can conjure amazing and alluring imitations. There are many examples of this.

We commonly read of instances of healings that have supposedly happened through both the holy shrines of the Roman Catholics and through the power of bones and other relics. Christian Science with its similar teachings is another example. These teachings stand in direct opposition to Christ’s words, and cannot but affect the person that accepts them. Their impact will lead him away from Christ and the truth. Truly, they are satanic imitations of divine healing that, when accepted and believed, will plunge the soul into eternal ruination and darkness, while the person continues to believe he is experiencing divine light.

Divine healing is the work of the Holy Spirit. The conditions required to receive divine healing must therefore be in accordance with the will and Word of God.

It may happen occasionally that people who are not in a right spiritual relationship with God still receive God’s healing touch. In such a case, it is demonstration of His divine compassion and love. But a true demonstration of divine healing will generally be found among those who lead a pure, God-fearing life, who serve and worship God in Spirit and in truth, and who believe in divine healing on the basis of the redeeming blood of Christ Jesus. “He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses” (Matthew 8:17). In this manner we can determine what is false or true; we can distinguish between a mere imitation and true divine healing.

PREOCCUPIED WITH THE ENEMY

A common mistake that many Christians make is that they keep their focus on the enemy, Satan. They then become discouraged and complain that Satan has great power, which is true. Martin Luther was right in saying, “His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal.” It would be foolish to underestimate the power of the enemy. He is a prince and ruler. His power is evident in our present time. To suppose Satan to be daft and ignorant, as some classic tales would paint him, is a fatal mistake. He is a sly and brutal enemy. By no means should we underestimate him.

However, we should also not exaggerate his power. He is a conquered foe. Jesus removed Satan’s might on Calvary. There, Eve’s seed crushed the head of the serpent of old. Again, Luther’s song aptly describes him:

*The Prince of Darkness grim,
We tremble not for him.
His rage we can endure.
For lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.*

What “little word” was Luther referring to? Was he referring to the word “Jesus” or the “cross”? Personally, I think this little word was “finished”. Jesus said this little word while hanging on the cross. It is the word whereby Jesus’ victory was proclaimed. Satan is forced to retreat when we use this word against him. He does not like to be reminded of his defeat at Calvary.

Thank God that Jesus removed the power of the enemy, and that One who is mightier conquered the mighty! How else could we deal with him? If we had to fight him with our strength alone, we would be forced to lay down our arms and surrender the battle. With Luther, we would painfully concede: “Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing.” However, we need not enter the battlefield against our enemy on our own. We can choose to be on the winning side of Calvary, and thereby be certain that the enemy is defeated and that Jesus has won!

If you are a child of God, what can you possibly gain by giving in to the devil? You should not forget that our preoccupation and concern is not with Satan but rather with Jesus, our Lord! The enemy no longer has dominion over us, because that power belongs to our Lord. The only authority that the devil has over us is the authority that we give him.

In John Bunyan's well-known allegory, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian arrived at a beautiful castle. To his dismay he saw a pair of terrifying lions in front of the castle, whose open mouths filled the air with their roars. Frozen with fear, the pilgrim did not dare to take another step. He was then told to look carefully and notice the chains that held the lions back. Both lions had a chain around their neck and could not go further than their shackles permitted. Christian was then able to walk on a path between the lions, safely beyond their reach.

What a truth this illustration holds for us! Sure, the devil is a roaring lion. But look closely! He has a thick chain on him that restrains him.

In the book of Job we read about Satan’s appearance before God and his mockery of Job’s godliness. God permitted the devil to test Job’s character. Satan was given permission to remove Job’s fortune and destroy his children, but was forbidden to lay a hand on Job. Here we see Satan’s chain: He was restrained within the limits God imposed on him, and Job withstood this fierce test of the devil. In the midst of devastating material losses, Job declared, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21).

Then Satan said to God, “All that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!” (Job 2:4-5). While God permitted Satan to plague Job’s body with sickness, he did not allow him to take his life. Again, we see Satan's chain. Job withstood this test as well. Impoverished, sick, and abandoned, Job still cried out, “I know that my Redeemer lives” (Job 19:25).

Notice that the devil is never allowed to go further than God permits. Therefore, our preoccupation and concern should not be with Satan, but rather with God.

The question is therefore, why would we let ourselves be ensnared by him? We will only become heavy-hearted.

We will focus all our time worrying about the devil until we become completely discouraged.

Let's take our eyes off the enemy and look rather upon Jesus! He must be our focus, our preoccupation! To stare at the enemy paralyzes and frightens us, but to gaze upon Jesus encourages and strengthens us!

GOD LEADS

Hudson Taylor was just a young man when he entered missionary work. He became an effective instrument in the hands of God. He turned an important page in his life when at the age of 23 he began to sense an attraction to his future wife Maria. At first, he tried to suppress the feelings he had for her. He wrestled in prayer with God about the matter, unable to imagine marriage in a life so full of danger and uncertainty. He was met with additional adversity during this time, but also with many blessings. God led him into many physical hardships – though he was constantly encouraged when souls were won to the Savior – and eventually into marriage with Maria. It is a one-of-a-kind love story. Look it up, and be blessed by it!

QUESTION

David said, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5). The apostle Paul said, “Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation” (Romans 5:18). These passages make it clear that every person after Adam is born a sinner. We also read that no one who is sinful can enter heaven: “But there shall by no means enter [heaven] anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of life” (Revelation 21:27). And yet, the Bible tells of Jesus receiving children to Himself, blessing them, and declaring the kingdom of God as belonging to them (Mark 10:14-16)! What are we to understand: When children die, do they enter heaven or do they not? And, what is the eternal fate of mentally handicapped people?

ANSWER

It is important to differentiate between the different kinds of sin to answer this question. There is committed sin and inherited sin. The first is an action; the second is a condition. A person is fully responsible for committed sin because it involves a conscious decision. Say, for example, that you are writing an exam and you are prohibited from using any study materials as helps. If you decide to use your notes anyway, despite knowing the prohibition, you commit a sinful act. A sinful act is always preceded by a temptation to sin. Another example to support this is the fall of Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:3).

We are born with the inclination to sin because of our father Adam’s original sin. No human born can escape this inherited, sinful nature. Adam and Eve were born with the inclination to righteousness. Jesus was born without any form of sin whatsoever. However, every person born after Adam inherited this form of sin, the tendency to commit sin. Because we were born with this tendency, God does

not hold us responsible for it. Therefore, while as a result of their inherited sin children will exhibit a natural tendency toward disobedience, God does not hold them responsible for this. However, when children become aware of what is good and what is evil and then consciously and wilfully choose to disobey, their inherited sin has conceived or developed into actual, committed sin. As long as children “sin” unknowingly, God does not hold them accountable. And, if in this condition children should die, they go to heaven.

The same principle and standard apply for people who are mentally challenged. If they are sufficiently developed mentally that they can discern right from wrong, and are therefore able to sin wilfully and deliberately, God will hold them accountable for their sinful actions. If they are not sufficiently developed mentally, remaining at the level of an innocent child, God is gracious and does not hold them responsible for their sin.

Light from Above

The inventor Professor Samuel Morse was once asked: "Have you ever come to the point as you experiment where you just did not know how to continue further?"

"Oh yes, more than once," the inventor answered.

"And what did you do in such a situation?" he was then asked.

"I will tell you in confidence, but it is something the public does not know. When I could no longer see my way, I prayed for more light."

"And the light then came?"

"Yes, and I can also tell you that when I received distinctions in America and Europe for the invention named after me, I never had the impression that I had earned them. I had created a valuable application for electricity not because I outperformed other men, but simply because God, who had intended this invention for mankind, needed a person to reveal it to. And it pleased Him to reveal it to me."

The Most Difficult Instrument

The composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein was once asked by an admirer: "Mr. Bernstein, which is the most difficult instrument to play?"

With incredible presence of mind he answered: "The second fiddle. I can find many who will gladly play first fiddle, but to find someone who will play second fiddle, second french horn or second flute with equal enthusiasm is a challenge. And yet if no one plays second fiddle, we have no harmony."

This is one of the reasons why Jesus was so different from His contemporaries and the religious leaders of His day. He not only promoted this attitude, but He consistently modelled it.

Not My Portrait

When a friend asked Bishop Paulinus from Nola (Southern Italy), who died in the year 431, for a portrait of himself, he answered: "What portrait shall I send you? The old man is too ugly, and not worthy to be copied, and the new one is not yet finished."

Time of Preparation

Jack Harrison, a missionary in the Congo, arrived in Africa at the age of 21. Here, he witnessed how others were sent to missionary posts while he awaited a specific assignment in vain. He finally asked the director Charles Studd whether he too would be able to go on a missionary journey. The answer was, "No, but do you know how to grind scissors?"

Harrison completed this task so well that he was immediately placed in charge of grinding and sharpening all the tools at that location. Instead of working as a fervent

evangelist, he became a handyman that served everyone as they requested. His heart was, as he put it, "filled with sorrowful and rebellious thoughts." But he stayed and persevered. He spent many nights in prayer, alone in his grass hut, alone with his God. Though he did not realize it, God was preparing him for something great. He was included when Studd conversed with the natives. In almost ten years of this humble service and living with Studd, he was being prepared to become Studd's successor and the director of the entire Congo mission.

What is Worse?

Little Louisa sat quietly and deep in thought beside her mother. The expression on her face revealed the seriousness of her thoughts. Abruptly, Louisa inched her chair closer to her mother's and asked, "Mom, what's worse: lying or stealing?"

Her mother was caught off guard by this question, but wisely replied, "I really don't know; both are very bad!"

After a while, Louisa said, "Ever since I heard that sin saddens the Lord Jesus, I have had a lot to think about. To me it seems that lying is worse than stealing. If something

is stolen it can always be returned, unless of course it has already been eaten. Even then, you can repay the damage with money. But a lie? Lying is terrible. A lie can never be taken back after it is said."

Louisa is exactly right. A lie is something terrible. A liar will never enter heaven, for the Bible says, "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone" (Revelation 21:8).

Children, guard yourself from lying. It may be hard sometimes to tell the truth, but it is always worth it!



Looking Out for the Interest of Others

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interest, but also for the interest of others" (Phillippians 2:3, 4).

Our society rests on the pillar of mutuality. We are created to be there for one another. Whether it involves a relationship between countries, ethnic groups or neighbors, or whether we find ourselves in traffic or in the workplace, life everywhere is greatly improved when mutuality governs our actions. Peace, charity, kindness, sympathy and empathy warm even the coldest human heart. If, for example, we come home late from work and find that our neighbor has cleared the snow from our driveway, we are immediately touched by the act of kindness and resolve to return the favor at the next opportunity.

God designed the home as the first classroom in which we might be prepared for life. The principle of mutuality should be taught and learned in the home. What a privilege it is for both parents and children when the environment of the home is such where each member seeks the good of the other! Our text is written with the church in mind, but it is aptly applied to the family as well. Each member of the family feels warmth and love when they feel the other has their best interest in mind, when individuals in the family are not concerned first and foremost about their own advantages; rather, they seek to lighten the burdens of other members and to bring the other joy.

For this to happen, each member of the family must position himself at the back of the line and "esteem[s]... others better than himself." King David understood the beauty of such a life. He observed, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1) The secret is in seeking other people's happiness before our own. Truly, how good and pleasant it is when a married couple has discovered this secret! Their goal is to promote the good of their partner above their

own. This is love in action. It engenders a reciprocal love, and both husband and wife are made happy by each other.

Happiness in the home is preserved and promoted when children learn the secret as well. Others come first! Unfortunately, this attitude opposes our intrinsic nature. We tend to seek our own interests and insist on our rights. What discord is brought on though by self-seeking and the constant jostling for personal advantage! This is why the Word of God is so crucial for the home. The Bible provides family counseling as well as shining examples of servant life. We can read about people like Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph. These and others, with their humble, peace-loving attitudes, make a deep impact on the hearts of young children. As a family prays together, they can ask God for the strength needed to put into action this servant disposition. Say, for example, that a jar of jam is needed for breakfast. It is in the cold storage downstairs. If willing hearts and hands readily run such errands, the atmosphere of the entire home is improved. One member of the family has the good of the other members in heart and mind.

It is crucial that this servant attitude spreads its influence beyond the home, however. People around us need to see this attitude in action. There is a great area of influence outside the home. Does it require grace to minister to others? Certainly! Often, we serve people who are not able to return the favor, or from whom we notice no visible results. Yet, this is an area of life ministry that children are best equipped for in the home. When families deliberately seek opportunities to serve people around them, the children learn crucial life lessons. A lonely church member is visited, songs are sung for someone sick in a hos-

Christ in Your Home

pital room, a shy student in school is invited to join the group at lunch: All of these gestures convey an attitude of seeking the good of others at the expense of self.

And still there is a higher purpose for nurturing this serving attitude. If we have been taught from a young age to understand that life is not about us first, but about others, we have been wonderfully prepared for our relationship towards God and His kingdom. We are inclined to be small in the presence of His greatness. We are disciplined to offer hearts and hands for the promotion of His kingdom. May God give us grace today that it would be a matter of course for members of our families to seek the best for the church and for the greater work of God, that personal concerns and temporal gains would fade into the background as homes and families stand in the gap for God and His kingdom! Whatever might concern the life and ministry of the church takes precedence over our personal interests.

Thank God that we don't need to look very far in His Word to discover this attitude that paves the way for such blessings! Abraham is famous for being blessed of God. In Genesis 18:19, God observes that His kingdom took precedence in Abraham's home. May our homes be havens of harmony where the good of others is each member's primary concern! May Christ and His kingdom be the delight and preoccupation of us all, and may God's blessing continue to flow freely into communities through families that live for Him.

Sieghard Schulz
Kitchener, Ontario

From beginning to end, at all times, and in all things, make Christ the center of your home!

A group of frightened sailors was rowing against a mighty current. Their craft was carrying Julius Caesar. He calmed them with the words, "as long as Caesar is with you, you will be safe from danger."

As long as Christ, the King, is in control and the center of your home, you will be safe, no matter what storm or trouble comes your way.

Extend the influence of your home so far that your children will be impacted for the rest of their lives.

At the age of 76, Henry Clay, an American senator from Kentucky, lay on his deathbed in Washington. A pastor waited by his bed. Lying on his bed, the dying man was transported in his thoughts back to his childhood. Already semi-conscious, he repeatedly called out, "My mother! Mother! Mother!"

Let us strive to make our parental influence effective and holy, so that our home on earth would be a foretaste of our home in heaven. There we will meet them all again: father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother, grandchildren, and every loved one. In heaven we will be reunited for eternity. In that place we will thank God for the great love and grace He gave us through Christ.

John Wesley wrote:

One family, we dwell in Him,
One Church, above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.

One army of the living God,
To His command we bow;
Part of His host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.

Gertrud Tarutis

Jesus' Ideals for the Lives of His People

In His moving prayer recorded in John 17, Jesus provided standards by which we can measure ourselves to see if we are on the right track. Let us measure our lives by these standards.

We must personally recognize and experience the Lord.

“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3).

Jesus came to this earth to return mankind, estranged from God through sin, into the right relationship with God. It is not until we come to know God and experience Him that we can begin to follow Christ. Once our relationship with God has been restored through Jesus Christ, we become disciples of Jesus.

Nature offers many marvels and attractions. People often try to describe these natural delights for those who have not personally witnessed them. And yet, first-hand witnesses of these natural wonders will always have a much better understanding of them than those who only read or hear about them. Similarly, Jesus wants disciples who have personally witnessed and experienced God. It was never His intent for them to merely read, converse, or even debate about His teachings. They are to have God in their heart and exhibit Him by their life. They are then to share the message joyfully with others, saying, “Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!” (Psalm 34:8) This is a message of personal experience. Only someone who has personally experienced the Lord can be a true and living witness of that experience. To know about the experience is not enough.

Almost every person alive knows about God. But truly knowing Him is another matter, and this is essential to true religion. It involves a personal experience that has restored a person into a relationship with God, has regenerated his heart, and has given him a brand new life and purpose.

The personal experience that brings a person into a right relationship with God is variously described as regeneration, justification, the new birth, redemption, and reconciliation.

1. Regeneration

This word expresses the new spiritual or divine life that springs from the salvation experience. In his unregenerate state, man is spiritually dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). Regenerated, he receives new life from God; he is resurrected into spiritual life.

2. Justification

The sinner is released from the guilt and penalty of his sins.

3. New Birth

The salvation experience changes the nature of a person. He becomes a new creature in Christ, where the “old things have passed away, [and] behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

4. Redemption

This word describes the forgiveness a person receives for the sake of Christ, paid for by the blood of Jesus. By Jesus' blood a person is redeemed not only from the guilt and penalty of sin, but from sin itself.

5. Reconciliation.

This word describes the restoration of a broken relationship. Through Jesus man is reconciled with God (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

These words/terms are familiar to many people. However, unless what these words describe has been personally experienced by those who use them, they remain estranged from God and do not truly know Him.

We must be willing to learn.

“For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me” (John 17:8).

Jesus came into the world to bring us the revelation about God. He revealed God’s character, His position towards man, and the plan of salvation. Jesus’ object and desire was that all who heard this message would be influenced by it, and that their whole lives would be changed. He wanted His disciples to respond joyfully and obediently to all the words He had received from the Father to give to them.

The Lord Jesus has reserved for Himself the right to guide His people. He does not want them to wander about aimlessly, filled with anxiety, doubt, and fear. He wants them to be firmly grounded in their experience with God; He wants them to be sure of their salvation.

God has marvellously provided a way that we can be sure of our salvation, and know that we are on the right track. We read: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5, 6). When a person fully trusts in the Lord and acknowledges Him in all of his ways, he can be certain that God will direct him on the right path. We can learn what God expects of us by reading His Word. When we obey what we learn with a faithful heart, we will have the assurance that He is pleased with us. He wants to give us the necessary strength and grace to do His will at all times and in every circumstance.

Being ready and willing to do the will of God and to be led by Him is crucial for success in the Christian life. When we want our own way, and act according to our own will, then God cannot lead and guide us as He would like to.

Unity in the Father’s name

“Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are” (John 17:11).

We now come to an extremely important and yet often neglected ideal that Jesus wants for His followers. As He prayed, Jesus expressed the desire that His followers would all be one and not fractured by human division. When the Word of God is used as the standard, rather than human conventions, unity will be the result. And all of those who have experienced salvation personally and

are obedient in all things to the Word of God, can encourage other seeking souls to see the truth in regard to God’s one true church.

The New Testament reveals very clearly the nature of the church. Pastors must ensure that their messages clearly show how a person can become part of the church: People are made members of the church that Jesus builds by the new birth. It must continually be emphasized that it is the personal experience of salvation, nothing else, that inducts a person into God’s church. Church membership, when understood in this true light of the Holy Scriptures, unifies believers. It does not separate and divide them.

A Holy, Active People

“Sanctify them by Your truth; Your word is truth” (John 17:17).

The next ideal that Jesus expresses for His followers concerns their purity and consecration. He wants His people to be holy, entirely consecrated to His will and purpose for their lives. He wants a people that live separated from all wickedness and uncleanness, who serve Him in holiness and righteousness that is pleasing to God. It was in Jesus’ plan that all of His children would, through God’s sanctifying work, be filled with the Holy Spirit and God’s power, and thus be equipped to glorify God here on earth.

Love must motivate everything.

“And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:26).

Jesus said in John 13:35 that the world will recognize His disciples by the love they have to each other. Even the world can discern the marks of this true love and devotion. And when the world sees this love among Christ’s followers, it will have a positive, convincing effect on them.

It was Jesus’ desire that all people would experience God personally, and that they would then willingly follow and obey Him. He wants His own to live in unity and to be preserved in the Father’s name. They are to be a pure, holy people, diligent to do good works. And it is to be the love for God in their hearts that motivates all their actions.

Harold L. Phillips

Experiences with God

”Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High” (Psalm 50:14).

How often have we promised God in our thoughts or prayers, “Lord, if You answer my prayer and help me out of this situation, I will praise you openly and testify of You!” Were we successful in keeping our word? Did something come up to hinder us, or did we lose our courage? I have often said, “Lord, I want to praise you in the congregation and thank you for helping me or my loved ones!”

With this testimony I want to praise my Lord and Savior with all my heart, because He has done great things for me!

First of all, He pulled me out of the pit of sin! He made me new and has led me in a wonderful way.

My parents lived in the world and did not know the way to the Savior. However, they had a fear of God and a longing to please Him. With prayer they sought Him and Jesus saw their longing to find Him.

We lived in Germany at the time, and God sent believers who lived in Nürnberg to show us the way to Him. A minister visited us two or three times and my parents and their friends were soon converted. They began to hold church meetings in their home. These men and women who showed us the way were from the Church of God.

Our lifestyle as a family changed completely. The brother preached and taught the Word of God. He also taught us a number of songs from the hymnal *Zions Loblieder*.

I was 16 years old at the time and displeased about the change in our home. My discontent brought trouble for myself and the rest of my family. I was in the world and enjoyed my worldly lifestyle. I had lived just like all the other young people did. Now I was no longer permitted to participate in their activities. How could I not?! I was very unhappy and always had a guilty conscience. The lifestyle and prayers of my loved ones showed me that they were happier than I was. God’s Spirit was working on me and gave me a longing for Him. I thought to myself: “I want to be saved, but not yet. Later, when I’m older I will change. If I get saved now, what will my friends say? They’ll turn their backs on me and then I’ll be all alone!”

God’s leading was wonderful. By His grace, we received permission to emigrate to Canada. I firmly decided that I would not have any more worldly friends in the new country. I would also repent and be saved.

In 1953 we arrived in Wetaskiwin, Alberta and short-

ly thereafter we moved to Edmonton. Here too was a Church of God where Brother and Sister Sonnenberg were pastors. I attended the services. The youth group was kind and welcoming. I immediately saw the difference between these young people and my friends in Germany. There was a significant difference between the world and the children of God, even among the youth.

The Holy Spirit worked in me and it did not take long until I was saved. A new and glorious life began for me. The Lord continually increased my knowledge of Him and led me deeper into His truth. I was also able to fully consecrate myself to Him. The Lord blessed me and I could serve Him with a joyful heart.

When I look back on my life, I have to say that it was not without worries and struggles. I journeyed through some valleys and heights. In everything, His grace and goodness brought me through. Oh, what a Savior! He never let me despair! To Him be glory and honor!

About a half a year ago I found myself in a very difficult situation. My husband became very ill and was just moments away from entering eternity. My family and I pleaded to God for mercy to extend his life a little longer. Again I petitioned God in prayer, “Lord, please spare his life for a little while yet!” The Church of God in Edmonton, as well as many others, joined us in prayer. After two and a half weeks he was able to leave the hospital.

During this time I prayed and vowed, “Lord, I will testify in the *Foundation of Faith* what you have done for us!” Since his recovery was slow, I wanted to wait a little while longer. A few days ago, the Bible verse came to my mind, “Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High.” What had I vowed?

With this testimony I want to praise and thank our Lord Jesus Christ for His help thus far. My husband is still not fully healthy, but we thank God daily for His help. We want to continue to trust Him.

I want to glorify God as long as I live and “sing praises to Your name, O Most High” (Psalm 92:2). May He grant me this!

Your sister in the Lord,
Lilly Hohenstein
Edmonton, AB

Conditions for Salvation

The mission of Christ was "to save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Through the fall into sin, mankind is universally separated from God and therefore lost. Man was not lost unconditionally; therefore redemption is not unconditional. As man was created as a responsible being under the law, which he voluntarily transgressed, so also the plan of restoration is one which must be voluntarily chosen. He must of his own free will accept the law of Christ if he desires to receive the benefits of the atonement.

It is the uniform testimony of the New Testament that salvation is a matter of individual choice. We all decide for ourselves whether to accept or reject God's invitation. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," are the words of the Savior (Matthew 11:28). "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink" (John 7:37). "Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

It is all too often that Jesus regretfully mourns: "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life" (John 5:40). "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [...] how often I wanted to gather your children together, [...] but you were not willing" (Matthew 23:37). "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3).

Salvation is the most important subject in the world. It should concern every one of us, for without it our soul will be lost through a never-ending eternity.

A Spiritual Awakening

Sin causes spiritual death of the soul. "Your iniquities have separated you from your God" (Isaiah 59:2), and this separation is represented as death (Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13; 1 Timothy 5:6). People become "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13). "Even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Titus 1:15). They sink into the darkness of a sinful night, until, in many

cases, there seems to be "no fear of God before their eyes," or until they appear to lose all consciousness of "the exceeding sinfulness of sin." How sad! Such people must become awakened now from their sleep of sin, or else before long the thunders of judgment will arouse the sleepy soul when it is too late. "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light" (Ephesians 5:14). "Awake to righteousness, and do not sin" (1 Corinthians 15:34).

The true preaching of the gospel of Christ is designed to produce this desired effect. "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:12–13). When an individual becomes awakened to the fact that he will be held accountable to the law of Christ, he has to make his decision.

Desire and Decision

The person who has begun to grasp the severity of his guilt, and the condemnation that follows, is in a good condition to cry out with the Philippian jailer, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30) He must desire salvation in order to obtain it, and he must decide to pay the Bible price, in the way of meeting the required conditions as set forth in the Bible. Mere knowledge of the nature and extent of sin is not sufficient.

Godly Sorrow

The sinner must give up the love of sin, despise sin because God does, and feel keenly a sense of sorrow for all the sins he has committed, "For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death" (2 Corinthians

7:10). Under certain conditions men guilty of sin feel very sorry, but it is only when they are caught in their sins and are about to suffer the just consequences of their wrong-doing. Thus, the robber sentenced to prison may weep, yet if he were free and knew that he could commit the same deed again without being found out, he would do so. This kind of sorrow does not produce heart repentance. Godly sorrow does not proceed from human exposure of wrong conduct, but is an internal realization of the soul's guilt in the sight of God, and is accompanied by a deep sense of regret for the wrongs committed. This kind of sorrow produces true repentance.

Repentance

The term "repentance" also includes a sense of personal guilt, of grief over sin, hatred toward it, and a resolute turning from it; hence all the conditions of salvation may properly be termed the way of repentance. But the most prominent idea is that of forsaking sin. "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7). This call to renounce sin also includes forsaking evil habits of every description, no matter of how long standing, such as the drinking alcohol, smoking and lustful indulgences of a more secret nature. All unnatural, filthy, and evil habits must be utterly forsaken; then God will deliver the individual from their power.

Confession

But confession is also required. "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). Many people tremble under the Holy Spirit-inspired preaching of the Word and realize their lost condition in sin, but are unwilling to confess their sins as the Bible requires.

But to whom must confession be made? First, to the Lord. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9).

In the second place, confession must be made to people – when our sins involve them. This requirement is like bitter medicine to some who have been wronging others. It is very difficult for them to confess their offenses to their peers.

In any case, sin must be confessed and forsaken. When a certain man who had wronged another saw this requirement of the Word, he stubbornly refused to comply, saying, "I will go to hell first." Such people will certainly go to destruction, for they hope in vain for salvation from God when they are not willing to do straight work with their neighbor.

Restitution

But this is not all. The words of Christ were, "Be reconciled [...]" (Matthew 5:23–24). Now, reconciliation may in some cases require more than a mere confession of wrongdoing. If one man has defrauded another out of 20 dollars, acknowledgment of the wrong deed may need to be accompanied by the return of the money in order to effect a proper reconciliation. This is what the Word teaches. "If the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die" (Ezekiel 33:15). So God requires those who desire life to set right their former wrongs, and then to walk before God "without committing iniquity" any more.

The guilty person must acknowledge his wrong and sincerely repent of it, but this is all he can do. His salvation from sin comes solely through trusting in God's mercy, and his reconciliation with his neighbor is dependent on his neighbor's mercy. Charlotte Elliot wrote:

*Just as I am, and waiting not,
To rid my soul of one dark blot:
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God! I come, I come!*

Forgiveness

Sometimes the matter is reversed. Instead of a person having wrongs to set right with others, others have wronged him, and his heart is full of bitterness and enmity toward his offenders. Hear the words of Christ: "If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"; but "if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (Matthew 6:15, 14). Jesus set an example of the proper attitude toward enemies. While dying on Calvary's cross, he tenderly prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

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Prayer

The way is now open for the seeker to find access to God by asking for the pardon that the soul craves. The Lord has instructed him to ask. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). "The same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:12-13).

Faith

Our prayers for salvation must be accompanied by definite faith. "Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21) is the gospel's instruction for obtaining this desired blessing. When the penitent jailer cried out, "What must I do to be saved?" the answer was quickly given: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:30-31). But if the heart is rebellious and unwilling to measure up to the requirements laid down in the Word, saving faith will be impossible. Obedience to the Word places us on believing-grounds, where prayer and faith become perfectly natural. Then, "if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Special Services Canada

Fest Services in Edmonton: October 12 - 14, 2013

Argentina

Fest Services in Buenos Aires: September 10 - 15, 2013

Fest Services in Misiones: September 17 - 22, 2013

USA

The Fest Services in Swartz Creek, Michigan will not take place this year.

For the Young, for the Old

It's a virtue to be humble,
Precious in reality;
Young and old, they will not stumble,
If they have humility.

It's a virtue to be humble,
Jesus showed us how to be.
Your foundation will not crumble,
Built upon humility.

It's a virtue to be humble,
Sorely needed, when we see,
Old and young ones, as they fumble,
Lacking in humility.

It's a virtue to be humble,
God gives grace to all that be.
Do not be proud, when others stumble;
Practice true humility.

It's a virtue to be humble,
God resists the proud you see.
Earthly treasures fade and crumble,
Never true humility.