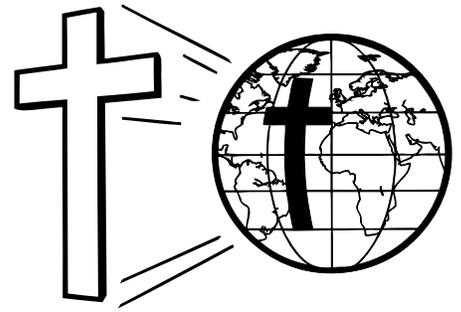


Foundation of Faith



The G O S P E L

THE ATTRACTION
OF PURE RELIGION

THE PRACTICAL SIDE
OF RELIGION

LIVE OUT
THE GOSPEL

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The Gospel Trumpet, now available in English as the Foundation of Faith, has been distributed since 1895. This was only accomplished with the help and grace of God. Many problems, difficulties, and obstacles needed to be overcome. I had to think of two terrible world wars and the vast amount of grief during various times.

In wonderful ways, our faithful God allowed His precious Gospel to be preached, printed, and sent into your home. We want to continue to proclaim and spread the Gospel. We stand in a long line of faithful servants who dedicated themselves to doing the work of God and spreading the life-giving Gospel. The first to preach this Gospel was our Lord Jesus Christ.

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom . . .” (Matthew 4:24).

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He commanded His disciples: “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

After the apostles were beaten and thrown into prison we read: “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5:41-42).

The first disciples were not the only ones who followed the command of Christ. We read of others: “But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus” (Acts 11:20).

The Gospel Trumpet (Foundation of Faith) needs to maintain a clear tone at all times in accordance to our Lord’s Gospel: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

May we continue to trust our Lord and joyfully proclaim His eternal Gospel!

H. D. Nimz

Peace in the Mountains?

The path up from Poschiavo to the Alp Grüm was steep. The sun's rays were powerful on this side of the Alps.

"It's time to take a break," I thought as I looked for a suitable place. I rounded the corner of the path I was on. The splendor I saw made me stop in awe. It is difficult to describe the beauty of the place that lay before me. In the bright sunlight I saw the steep meadows strewn with wildflowers! The blue gentians shone in the sunlight and the primroses had a golden glow. In the midst of this loveliness was a fountain, splashing with crystal spring water. Next to the fountain was a blossoming tree, with bees buzzing around it. Nearby, a delightful farmhouse nestled against the mountainside.

"A perfect rest stop!" I thought, dropping my backpack. I found a reasonably comfortable seat on the fountain. "This is peace," I thought and listened to the silence around me. Only the gentle babbling of the water and the humming of the bees could be heard. My gaze wandered to the distant green Valley of Puschlav. Behind it were the Bergamo Alps dazzling in the sunlight. "Yes, this is peace," said my heart.

While sitting there I continually had to look at the beauty around me. "Yes, this is peace! This is the right place to do my morning devotions." I took my little Testament out of my backpack. In the quiet, He who is more beautiful than all the splendor of the earth spoke to me – the Lord Jesus.

Suddenly I was jolted from my thoughts. From the farmhouse I heard violent and angry voices. A wild bickering! Then an old man shuffled out of the door. His face was hard and bitter. He sat down next to a shed and began to tinker with something I could not discern.

It was as if a cloud had concealed the sun. The sparkle was gone. Shaken, I realized, "No! This is not peace!"

I was truly sad as I watched the old man. I would have gladly spoken with him. But I cannot speak Italian. So I flipped through my New Testament until I found the place where the Lord Jesus spoke to His disciples shortly before His death on the cross: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you [. . .]" (John 14:27).

I left quickly. It was with mixed emotions that I continued my climb. There was sadness as I thought of the old man who was so wretched in the midst of all that beauty. I thought of the many who carry their miserable hearts through life and remain empty.

Yet I was joyful, because Jesus had given me peace. Now I could take pleasure in all that my eyes beheld.

Wilhelm Busch



On A Treasure Hunt

Many people appear to be on a permanent search for something. Even on vacation that is supposed to be for relaxation they are restless and driven to activity. What treasures will you bring home from your next vacation?

Thousands leave for their vacation full of hope and anticipation. But others begin their vacation depressed, burdened, and without looking forward to their time away. The one group wants to see much, experience much. The others flee from their everyday, their environment, yes, even themselves.

All however, are agreed on one point: when they return, they would like to bring something back from their vacation. What could people be searching for? What “treasures” can be brought back? In this age of surveys I asked several people: “What did you bring back from your vacation?” – Here are some of the answers:

1. **A pensioner** who had been in the Alps for the first time could, in her joy, barely find enough words. Her treasure from the vacation consisted of complete amazement at the Earth, so wonderfully created by God: the snow-covered mountains, the sparkling mountain streams, the mountain passes and crevasses, the rising and setting of the sun behind the mountain peaks, the rolling thunder, the variegated flora, the bells of the herds and the echo of the bells in the nearby mountain chapel.

2. **A career woman**, who had also been to the mountains for the first time, said to me: “How small is man and his problems and his accomplishments when compared to the majestic greatness that we encounter in the world of mountains and valleys, canyons and mountain water.” This woman returned humbly and thankfully to her everyday life and often thought about her vacation. The treasure from her vacation was the realization that God created and sustains the earth and the sea and the mountains. How could He be unable to solve the problems in her life!

3. **Thirdly, I asked a mother** who was able to vacation in a retreat center designed for mothers. Her treasure was the discovery that she could learn a new type of patience: a patience that does not mean inaction, resignation, or procrastination, and that has nothing to do with

hopelessness. This mother had discovered a completely new patience: A living patience full of momentum, a load-bearing patience without reluctance, an awaiting patience without demands.

4. **Fourthly, I asked a man** for his “vacation treasure.” “Yes,” he answered, “when I went on vacation, I was so ‘done,’ that I no longer knew who I even was: whether human or machine; whether I simply ‘functioned’ or if I still ‘lived.’ In this age of technology, the machines nearly kill our ‘humanity.’”

This man first asked himself: “Who am I really?” Then, in the peace and quiet of his resort, he came to the question: “Lord, who am I? How do you see me?” And as the honest enquirer received his answer, he experienced this revelation anew: I do not have to do all that on my own. I do not have the final authority in responsibility. God has not hired me as a “stand-in,” who has to take care of everything unpleasant. No, I can be a “child.” His happy child holding His fatherly hand! Not without work and duties, but led by Him twenty-four hours a day.

And now, to you! It is not important when, where, or even whether you are going on vacation. It is only important that you find time to hunt new treasures or even re-discover old ones. How wonderful would it be if you, like these respondents, would gain treasures like thankful amazement, humble thankfulness, new patience. Yes, a joyful realization and a treasure, whose fullness heaven and earth cannot contain and yet, who means it personally when He says: I love you! The greatest treasure is Jesus Christ, who gave His life for you.

Accept Him as your best treasure! Then you have brought back the most precious treasure from your vacation.

Anni Kaiser

The Good News

For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. (2 Corinthians 4:5)

How clearly the apostle Paul speaks here about the core of his message. He could speak in this way because Jesus, the crucified and risen Savior, had become the center of his life. This miracle occurred in God's presence outside the city of Damascus. Saul, the persecutor, became Paul, an apostle and leader in the Christian community. Today, the Gospel continues to be the saving and transforming power for everyone who surrenders to Christ.

Even now, the power of Jesus is at work. People who have surrendered all to Jesus have experienced miraculous deliverance from bondage. They have exchanged loneliness and disappointment for communion with the Savior, and they have found brothers and sisters in Christ.

On the other hand, we are faced with an increasing indifference to the Gospel. Denying His divine Sonship, people claim that Jesus was human and only human. Anti-Christian forces are on the attack and are spreading into all parts of the world, and not only the world, they are also breaking into the ranks of the Christian church. Here and there, "Christians" are willing to conform to the behavior of the world, abandon biblical principles, and make concessions to the spirit of the age. These are most disturbing and alarming developments!

It is against this dark backdrop that we are commanded to meditate upon the Word of God. Spreading the message of salvation must be our top priority, coming before any other service that we owe our fellow man.

Let us not forget that even the modern person experiences guilt and fear. No level of achievement can satisfy people's hunger for peace and security. Nonbelievers cannot answer the all-important questions about the beginning and the end. Behind the glittering facade of modern life, there is emptiness and terrible despair. Here we hear the Lord's command: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature!" (Mark 16:15). We will consider three key points of this command.

We do not promote ourselves.

Paul had much to boast about, both materially and spiritually. Before his conversion, he had accomplished many things: "concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Philippians 3:5b-6). And after his conversion, his service to the Lord Jesus Christ was also praiseworthy. Paul was blessed with much fruit! He worked harder than his colleagues. The extent of his sufferings was impressive. He received special revelations, spiritual gifts, and understanding. These experiences were all reasons for Paul to put himself forward and promote his own name.

Paul met this temptation with determination and self-control. There is no room for selfish ambition in the life and ministry of God's servants: "For we do not preach ourselves" (2 Corinthians 4:5).

We preach Jesus Christ.

We thank God that there is another message, a message not motivated by selfish ambition, for Christians to proclaim: the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Jesus is God's answer for a hopeless world! Although He frustrates those who want to redeem themselves, He is the Savior and Friend to all who surrender their lives to Him.

Paul personally experienced the transforming power of the Gospel: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new!" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Paul also knew that Jesus settled our debt of guilt and that His resurrection left no question about His supreme power. Jesus, the Crucified, is alive! When death comes, believers can put their trust in Jesus and face death because they know that all who believe in Him will have eternal life. In Jesus Christ, we find the way to our goal: He is our guidance, renewal, and protection. In spite of personal failures and relapses, in spite of hostility, hatred, and persecution, we want to say with the apostle Paul: "We . . . preach . . . Christ Jesus the Lord" (2 Corinthians 4:5).



In our present age, and in light of the great fear of coming events, it is especially important for us to raise the Gospel banner of salvation in Jesus Christ. We cannot proclaim the Gospel with clichéd expressions and confessions of faith, nor can we hastily adopt a church's articles of faith. No, Jesus must become and remain the center of our lives!

Let us not ignore the words of Jesus found in John 5:39-40: "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life."

From the preceding passage, we see that people can study the Bible diligently and make a confession of faith without having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Paul depended on Jesus for justification, sanctification, and salvation. For Jesus' sake, Paul was imprisoned and beaten. Paul's mission field was the church and through it the wider community. The proclamation of Christ remained the core of this remarkable man's message.

We confess: Jesus is Lord!

God has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name. His kingdom will be gloriously revealed. Jesus, who sits at the right hand of God, not only wants to be our Savior, Redeemer, Friend, and Brother; but He also wants to be our Lord. He wants to be our Lord at all times – not just on Sundays but every day, through our youth and old age.

“Jesus Himself must remain the center of our lives!”

In John 12, Jesus referred to this complete surrender when He spoke of the grain of wheat. When we surrender all to Jesus, we will receive the fruit of the Spirit and spiritual gifts, according to God's will. We must reach out to receive these gifts.

May God protect us from complacency in spiritual matters. He always has more of His fullness to give than we have experienced thus far. In the words of Jesus to his disciple Nathanael: "You will see greater things than these" (John 1:50). Of course, we must completely die to ourselves before we experience these great things. We must be willing to make Jesus Lord of all. Then we will be guided from strength to strength, from victory unto victory, and from experience to experience with the Lord.

The greatest and most praiseworthy result of Calvary is described in Revelation 12:10: "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come." With this great and glorious end, we understand the words of Paul: "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord." We want to do the same until the day He comes.

The Attraction of the Pure Gospel

Some of us can probably remember a time when it was easy to invite people to a religious gathering. You could expect the meeting place to be full. The presence of God was evident. Unfortunately that often seems to be different today.

Human nature has a certain dissatisfaction that seeks to try one thing or another. People long for entertainment where they can forget themselves for a while. They want something that makes them feel like they have been transported into a different world, if only for a short time. They are not satisfied unless there is something extraordinary for them to devote their attention to.

The underlying cause of this feeling is humanity's separation from God. Only reconciliation with the Creator can bring lasting satisfaction. But because most people do not recognize and understand this, they look for pleasure in the wrong places and in things that do not satisfy. God, who knows the desires of humanity, has appointed His children to shine as lights in the world. Their lives should make it evident that true satisfaction can only be found in God.

The Lord's Church actually complied with this commandment for a time. However, after a while, secularization, pride, and all kinds of things crept their way into congregations, and the Holy Spirit was suppressed. Formality took the place of spiritual life and removed the element of the gatherings that was truly satisfying. Yet this feeling of discontentment remains. If the church cannot fulfill its role, people will look elsewhere. The world has recognized this and profits from it, even though it causes much harm. That is why we have many entertainment places where people can go day and night, during the week and on Sundays. Fewer and fewer are interested in attending a church service on Sunday.

The so-called religious world has tried everything possible to draw people back to the church. But, just like a the doctor who fights poison with poison, they have tried to combat this evil with other evils. Many churchgoers are doing almost everything the world does. The only difference is that they do these things under the guise of religion. When the so-called Christian world does these

things, it contributes to the world's loss of confidence in Christianity as a whole. The result is the same: the church is degraded in the eyes of the world, and the world is not improved. Instead of the world being won over by the church, the world gains a firmer grip on the church that has resorted to such means. It is true that people can be attracted by these amusements for a time, but when they are over, the people are gone again. If we give in to this, people will experience nothing but empty commitment. What is the true mission of the Christian Church?

The mission of the Christian Church is to seek the lost and care for those who have already found peace with the Lord. Its purpose is to teach people to love God with all their heart and strength, and their neighbor as themselves. Our time together should serve for mutual edification in faith. When a church loses sight of this mission, it also loses its influence for good. There may be an initial appearance of progress and success. But soon spiritual loss will result and become evident. Let us widen the gap between us and the world, so that everyone can clearly see what we stand for.

Above all else, let us exalt Christ. He said: "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself" (John 12:32). His Word, the everlasting Gospel, is the divine invitation. And if people come to know Christ and receive peace by His blood, then the Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. A church that is filled with the Holy Spirit and strengthened by the power of God will attract people. Everything else will fail.

We desperately need a faith that is passionate and unwavering. Let us present to the world a Jesus who forgives sins. Let us not be ashamed to boast of the great love and power of our God. If we honor God, He will also honor us. He will not disappoint us when we direct those in need to Him as the great Physician of body and soul. When our gatherings are marked by the presence of the Holy Spirit, and are fervent and filled with love, we will discover that people cannot help but be drawn in. Let us keep God in the forefront and follow Him with all our hearts!

A.E. Jones



Live out the Gospel

Ephesians 4:32: “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.” Here we have a clear description of the results of salvation. It is not vague but is a perfect mirror of self-inspection to determine if we possess the experience of salvation or just have lip service.

Simply explained, the Gospel is the story of God’s reconciling love. The Gospel in action is the reality of this reconciling love in our everyday lives. This salvation must show itself daily.

When we experience salvation, the Spirit of God works the virtues listed in Ephesians 4:32 in our hearts. These characteristics should not be regarded as weak, for they are the strongest powers in this world. They are the dynamic forces in human relationships. They are the tools of a good teacher who forms the life of a child. They move parents to sacrifice themselves for their children. They shape marriage to become an inseparable unity. The Gospel offers everyone these powerful forces that guarantee the most rewarding and finest life that can be led on earth.

“Be kind to one another.” Kindness and goodness are the driving forces in the life of a Christian. We should meet everything and everyone we encounter with kindness.

Surely God has a certain purpose in mind if He wishes for our lives to radiate this kindness. He knew that kindness is something that all people understand. Kindness transcends the boundaries of language, race, and class and speaks from heart to heart. For that reason, Christ distributes goodness and kindness with His salvation so that His followers can pass on these powers everywhere. They are the greatest cure for all human relationships. God made kindness a part of the Christian character because it is so urgently needed in this world. Of everything that the people of the world need from children of God, kindness and goodness are at the top of the list.

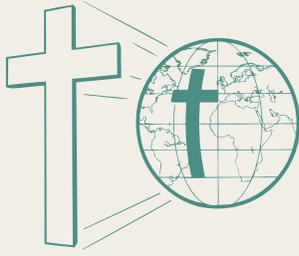
“Be kind” does not just mean to nourish feelings of kindness. It means to do acts of kindness. God does not measure our kindness by our surge of feelings that we experience after a worship service or after hearing testimo-

nies, but by our deeds in everyday life. When the first church sent for Peter to come pray for the recently deceased woman named Tabitha, he didn’t just hear the testimony of her kindness from the lips of her brothers and sisters and friends. He saw the robes and clothing that Tabitha had sewed for the poor.

Our kindness should be practical. The kindness that flows out of the hearts and from the hands of Christians has practical value. A Christian woman prayed for an alcoholic woman, and God healed her. But before that occurred, the Christian woman cleaned the house of the sick woman and cared for her broken body after the social assistance centers had given up on her. I believe that she could not have prayed this prayer of faith for the poor woman if she had not paved the way for this prayer through her winsome, practical help.

Let us put this verse from Ephesians 4:32 into practice in our lives and thereby live out the Gospel of our Lord!

EP



Radio Broadcast

The Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs
Kitchener, Ontario

Our Gospel

“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Corinthians 4:3-5).

“Gospel” means “the good and joyful message”. The gospel is indeed the joyful message of Christ. The word “gospel” appears many times in the New Testament, especially in the Apostle Paul’s letters. In Romans 15:16, Paul calls it the “gospel of God” and then in verse 19, the “gospel of Christ.” In Galatians 1:11, Paul emphatically states: “But I have made known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.” This message is from God to us. God gave us this gospel with the specific intention of transforming our lives and giving us joy.

We have often received happy messages from others. Amid the many sad times in our lives, an encouraging word has often brightened our days. The gospel is not just a passing encouragement. The message of the gospel is powerful, living, and eternal. Nothing can compare with its meaning and content. It is the message of salvation that was manifested through Jesus Christ. It is a message of grace, salvation, and divine happiness.

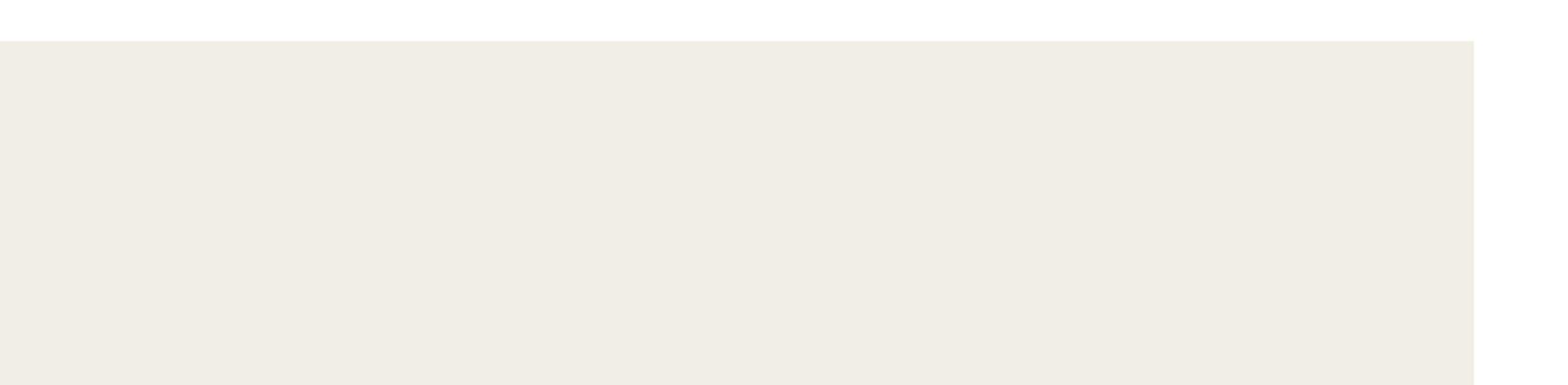
Reflecting on the worldwide dominance of sin and the total hopelessness of humanity, the message of salvation can only be a message of joy. The world was waiting for this joyful, saving message with longing. A new era began with this message of salvation in Christ. Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of God and called people to repentance and faith. Jesus testified: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gos-

pel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18). Natural poverty is not the issue here, since the gospel is for the poor and the rich. Jesus is speaking about spiritual and hidden poverty that few people seem to see and recognize.

He describes the poor as those who have a broken and guilt-ridden heart that needs healing. These people are blind, caught in the chains of sin and need to be set free. People lived in this spiritual poverty then and most still do today.

The message of this gospel broke through the anguish and spiritual poverty. Because of the gospel, the whole world has been offered every spiritual blessing in heavenly places. The gospel shows us the way to God and to the healing spring of grace. It directs us to the riches in God and the overwhelming joy of having peace in our hearts. On the basis of these many blessings, Paul placed great importance on the purity of the gospel and condemned any deviation from the truth.

Every person is responsible for the position they take to the gospel. The gospel is the “word from the cross,” as Paul writes: “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18). What does the gospel



mean to us? What does it mean to you personally? Is it foolishness, an empty, meaningless gospel? Or has this gospel really become the power of God for you?

How sad that this wonderful gospel is still veiled and hidden for so many people. Paul recognized the seriousness of being lost forever. Are you in this danger? May God speak to us and reveal the wonders of His gospel!

The gospel is the last message from God to us. May we take this message to heart since it is the power through which we can be saved!

Friedrich Krebs



Back to the Standard of the Bible

“Then I raised my eyes and looked, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand. So I said, ‘Where are you going?’ And he said to me, ‘To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length.’”

(Zechariah 2:1–2)

This scripture speaks of a measuring line that is clearly used for measuring. At the end of the previous chapter, however, another image is depicted. Here the prophet’s gaze is directed to the “four horns.” Horns are a symbol of power in the Bible. World powers had besieged and scattered God’s people. God allowed this as a punishment for their continuous disobedience, against which the people were repeatedly cautioned. However, now God wanted to again gather His people in Jerusalem and bring them peace. The man with the measuring line in hand was instructed to measure the city and determine what its width and length should be. He is also immediately told that the city shall be inhabited “without walls” due to the multitude of inhabitants and the Lord said: “For I will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst” (v. 5).

Our text therefore conveys a spiritual character and is to be understood in a spiritual sense. Consequently, it is not to determine the dimensions of this city nor the status of its stone walls, but rather its inhabitants’ way of life and the standard of the Word that had been newly established and needed to be clarified. We find a clear parallel image in Amos 7:8: “And the Lord said to me, ‘Amos, what do you see?’ And I said, ‘A plumb line.’ Then the Lord said: ‘Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore.’” The Lord applies the standard of His Word to His people in order to show them their true condition before God.

This standard applies today as well. The godly standard is the standard of the Bible. We should be thankful and rejoice that we are given this standard. Without it we

would have horrendous confusion, absolute disorientation, and insupportable courts and verdicts on the part of people. The standard of the Bible is so good, so just, so unchangeable, and holy as God Himself is. It comes from God’s love and goodwill. It is conceived by God and has a pure and beneficial purpose. Love does not seek its own, but seeks and desires the happiness and well-being of the other. Therefore the prayer of Psalm 119:1: “Blessed are [they], who walk in the law of the Lord!” Every law is at the same time a standard, and because God’s Word is a law, it is also a standard. Jesus says: “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and he who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me” (John 14:23). It is therefore wrong to build a standard from certain parts of the Bible and it is equally as wrong to adapt the Bible to one’s own agenda. Peter calls that a “twisting of the Scriptures to their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16). Whoever argues against God’s Word and whoever uses only certain parts as support for his own agenda does not want to obey. Our God’s holy will is anchored in His Word. Whatever one does with the Word, one also does with God’s will! Anger towards the Word is also rejection of and disdain for God’s will. Non-compliance with God’s Word is also deliberate non-compliance with God’s will.

Likewise, the love, faith, reverence, and obedience towards the Word is equal to love, faith, reverence and obedience to God’s will! Whatever occurs with the standard of the Word, occurs with God’s will. If we sidestep His standard, we also sidestep His will; if we comply with it, we also comply with God’s will.

The standard serves to measure. Let us bear in mind how necessary and beneficial a standard is in our occupational life. One cannot simply dispense with it. Similarly, Paul says: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16 – 17). Who may and should measure us? Primarily the Lord, for He says: "I am setting a plumb line in the midst of My people!" (Amos 7:8) John, however, writes in Revelation 11:1: "Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, 'Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there.'" The message that comes from the Word, which is God's Word, is the standard by which we should allow ourselves to be measured. Whoever is honest and loves God's Word will gladly let himself be measured by it. If he is found to be 'under- or oversized,' he will allow himself to be corrected and will say with the poet:

**"Thy will alone, dear Lord,
is all I care to do:
in all I act, or speak, or think
while I remain below."**

And what happens when someone does not allow himself to be measured? He will lose his spiritual orientation and inner footing. He will forfeit peace in his heart and a calm conscience. He will soon suffer under guilt and accusations and determine that he no longer belongs to the fellowship of the church. He will blunder into foolishness, and the most distressing part is that he, in the final judgment, cannot stand before the righteous Judge in such a condition. Jesus emphatically tells us: "The word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

Each one of us must therefore return to the biblical standard, if we have abandoned it, and newly recognize how important it is to take God's standard as our personal standard of living. May it be and remain our resolution to adhere to the standard of the Bible and reach the eternal goal.

Gustav Sonnenberg

Where is your treasure?

*Where is the treasure, grand, true and supernal
That thrills the heart and makes a person whole?
Where is that treasure, pure, sweet and eternal
That satisfies the longing of the soul?*

*It can't be found in worldly pomp and glory
In riches, money, talent, power or might.
Nor in the fame of castles and their stories
In pleasures of this world or their delight.*

*Don't seek it in the halls of mighty nations
In palaces where jewels and art abound.
Don't look for it in gala celebrations
Or where the sounds of frivolity are found.*

*But let me take you high into the mountains
With flowers, trees, and nature all around
There from the height we look o'er field and fountains
Enjoy the sunrise and hear nature's sounds.*

*There we can breathe the fresh air in the stillness
And see the deep clear waters of a lake
This is a treasure, we enjoy in fullness
And forget the cares and stress that worry makes.*

*Go and enjoy God's treasure in creation
Experience the calm and peace of night
Your longing may be stirred by deep sensations
Beneath the countless stars that shine so bright.*

*Yet there's a greater treasure than creation
My mind is focussed on a distant hill
For there the Lord fulfilled it for all nations
The cross of Calvary has power still.*

*The Christ of Calvary has wrought salvation
And by His blood He washes sin away
He heals the soul in blessed transformation
And by His love he changes night to day.*

E. Jost

That Practical Side of Religion

The sun was slowly sinking toward the western horizon while I wended my way up the rugged hillside. As I ascended the winding path ever higher and higher, my horizon broadened. When at length I reached the summit and turned to gaze back over the valley, the city spread out like a great picture at my feet. The winding river, with a steamer slowly moving along on its bosom, shimmered in the evening sunlight. The sounds from the city were softened and blended until they rose to me like the musical strain of far-away melodies. The low-hanging sun glorified the drifting clouds with the hues of the autumn mountainside. Crimson and orange and gold, they burned in that western expanse.

I gazed upon the scene, and its influence seemed to exalt and enrapture my spirit. There stole into my being a sense of rest and peace and joy that lifted me out of the monotony of ordinary things. I sat there and drank in the beauties of the scene until the sun sank out of sight behind the hills and the stars began to twinkle overhead. The lights flashed out in the city beneath. The quiet hush of the evening seemed to settle down over me, and it seemed good to be alive and to be there.

The mountaintop is a delightful place. There the soul reaches heights and depths as it reaches at no other time. Preachers love to preach and poets love to sing of the mountaintop of life. How delightful are these times in our spiritual life, and how naturally we long for these seasons! How often they are pictured up till one would suppose that they are the principal things in the Christian life! Some people have fancied that when they became Christians the mountain-top experience would be their constant portion. They may have been led to expect this from hearing preaching that exalted the emotional side of religion. It may be that when they were converted their newborn joys seemed to be unending. They thought

that this exaltation of spirit was the normal state of Christian. They gloried in it as the days passed by. The time came, however, when this emotional glow subsided. As the barometer of their feelings fell, they began to question themselves thus: "What is the matter with me? Have I done something wrong? Am I mistaken in thinking that I was saved?" Thus, their faith fell with their emotions. After a while their emotions rose again, and their faith rose with their emotions. Now they knew that they were all right.

There are times when we seem to draw near to God in prayer, when the sight and sound of the world is shut out. An inexpressible sweetness and joy and satisfaction come into the heart. How near God seems! How calm and precious is the hour! How our spirits drink in of the water of life! How we seem to talk face to face with our Lord, and how the curtain seems drawn back till our eyes behold the secrets of the Eternal! We give ourselves over to the supreme enjoyment of the hour. But alas! In a short time we find ourselves no longer on the mountain, but out in the broad plain of life, and how tame and monotonous is the plain when we think of the mountain!

In this the natural and the spiritual are alike. What would you think of the man who would build a store upon the mountaintop, away from the throng of purchasers whose business he desired? Would you think that wisdom was displayed? Do businessmen go this way? No, they seek the busy street that is trodden by a multitude, where the constant stream of traffic flows; and there, amid the noise and dust and hurry, they ply their trade with little thought of the mountaintop.

The mountaintop is a very good place to which to make an excursion now and then. It is the place to spend our holidays, but it is not the place for the real accomplishments of life. When we wish to make a living, we



“Learn to find the beauty in the common things of life, for some of the most common things are among the most beautiful when our eyes are taught to see their beauty.”

must leave the mountaintop with its far-flung panorama of beauty. We must roll up our sleeves and take up the rugged toil and, amid sweat and grime and noise and discord, produce the real results that feed and clothe and shelter us. The real accomplishments of life are not on the mountaintop, but in the monotonous, soul-trying daily grind of business. If you imagine that you are to live in the idealism of a mountaintop experience, you will find yourself coming short of it most of the time. You will be continually lamenting over your failure to make your experience measure to your ideal. So long as you are reaching toward this ideal and are conscious of your failure to reach it, your attention will be absorbed in this, and you will be of little use to God. The sooner you come down to the place where you stop condemning yourself because your emotions are not always joyous or because you can not always pray with that full outpouring of soul, the better it will be for you. You will never become a practical Christian till you learn that the Christian life, like the natural life, is largely made up of a monotonous round of duties.

There is little of glamour or brilliancy in labor or ordinary things. That is reserved for the special things in life. It is true that there is joy in the toil and in the hardness, yes, even in the bitterness, if there is a consciousness of duty well done. It is the daily grind that tests the faithfulness. God wants people who will be true in the daily toil of life, who will do well the little, uninteresting things. He wants practical Christians, people who are willing to do the work even if it means weariness, even if it means little of emotion, even if it means sacrifice.

It is the daily grind that tests the faithfulness.

If you lived on the mountaintop always, the scene would soon lose its beauty, and you would soon forget its loveliness. When, after the days of toil, after the months of the prosaic, you lay aside your tools and turn from your labors, it is then that you can go out and enjoy the beauties of nature. It is then that you can enter into her moods and be her comrade. You can enjoy her then and be refreshed as you could not be without those weary days of toil. Many people are willing to enjoy, but they shun the work. In natural things we call such persons lazy.

Idealism has its place in life, but it must not close our eyes to the practical side of life. Enjoy what of the mountaintop God may give to you, but do not count this the ordinary, usual thing of Christian life. Learn to enjoy the toil. Learn to find the sweetness that is in it. Learn to find the beauty in the common things of life, for some of the most common things are among the most beautiful when our eyes are taught to see their beauty. The Christian life is preeminently a life of service. That is its highest and broadest purpose. To try to be a Christian merely for the joy that is to be found in it often renders us miserable. To seek happiness, as the chief end of life, is a very unworthy purpose, and is one that can end in disappointment.

See that you do your part in life in the everyday things, and God will permit you to live on the mountain as He sees best. Appreciate the mountain experiences when they come, but do not let them make you despise the common things.

Guard your Heart

Lately I have been contemplating on the one hand the love, wonderful devotion, and provision of God towards us, and on the other hand the seriousness of judgment and the punishment of God. God, in all His love, inclines Himself to us, to show us how much He loves us and how much we are worth to Him. “Since you were precious in My sight,” “therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you” (Isaiah 43:4 and Jeremiah 31:3).

On the other hand, God shows us His judgment and lets us realize that He hates and punishes sin. God’s Word also shows us that anyone who does not accept His offer of grace, or rejects it consciously, is lost forever. By His word and the Holy Spirit He sets both before our eyes, that we may see His love and understand the earnestness of our salvation, because it is about eternity.

Let’s imagine we would go to a doctor, and he would make a terrible diagnosis, for example a heart condition, but in order not to frighten us, the doctor would tell us nothing about it and send us home in peace. Or, he would downplay everything and then dismiss us. Would it not be foolish of this doctor? Surely we would not want to have such a physician. He would even make himself punishable and put the patient’s life at risk. It is only because the doctor informs us of the seriousness of our disease that we know he values us and cares about our well-being.

Each of us is concerned about our life and maintains it carefully, because it is the highest thing we have. In essence, the perception of well-being in our lives depends on our health. One of the key aspects of health is our heart. Our heart is the central, life-giving organ of our body and therefore the most important. It is naturally of great importance for our health and well-being to have a healthy heart. But God’s Word also speaks a lot about our heart, and puts it at the center of our spiritual life. Solomon says, “For out of it spring the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

God’s Word differentiates our natural heart from the spiritual and gives us this comparison: just as our natural heart is the life-giving organ of our body, so the spiritual heart is the central focus and the seat of our soul.

The whole Word of God and the Holy Spirit are designed to address our heart. God makes every effort to win our hearts in order to be the center of our lives and to govern us from the heart. Jesus meant this heart when He said this to His listeners: “These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:8-9).

The heart of man is tainted by sin. Every human being is born in sin, and with every additional evil deed, a person accumulates more intentional sins upon himself so that his heart is polluted, requiring a renewal, conversion, and cleansing. Through sin, man is separated from God and there is no heart connection between God and man. Therefore, man absolutely needs a renewal of the heart. Precisely for this reason God promises that those who turn to Him will be given a new heart, replacing the old heart which is damaged and stained by sin (Ezekiel 36:26).

In the heart, pure and impure thoughts can be cultivated, along with various desires, stimuli, and cravings. Jesus said, “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man” (Matthew 15:18). Our hearts can also be bound by certain things, because Jesus also said, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21).

The new heart that God gives us should be protected with all diligence. It must be preserved from sin, impurity, and every evil influence and action. How can we do this?

We are not in the position to maintain our spiritual lives by ourselves, for God is the Giver of life, and He alone can maintain our spiritual life. But we can do our part with all diligence. Satan wants our heart, the seat of the soul,



in order to conquer and destroy it. But since he cannot have direct access to our heart, he uses certain channels by which he reaches our hearts.

One of these channels is “what we see.” What we see, of course, affects us the most, so we should definitely pay attention to it. Much of what we see can influence us positively or negatively. Now, more than ever, our eyes are offered all kinds of things in order to entice us and awaken a desire in us, affecting our heart. In most cases, the purpose is to entice those by what is shown them. A minister once visited a juvenile prison and to his question why one or another young person acted so brutally, so terribly in his deed, most of them answered: “I saw in a movie . . .” What they saw influenced them. They traded reality for fiction, and acted out what they had seen.

What we should first look to, however, is Jesus Christ. We should look up to “the author and finisher of our faith” – Jesus Christ. Jesus is the best example for us in every conceivable respect. Furthermore, we should look up to the spiritual role models in the Bible and follow their example. These models will influence us positively.

Another way to our heart is “what we hear.” What we hear also greatly influences our heart. Some of what we hear may discourage us, provoke us, or arouse in us thoughts of anger or revenge. That which should not be repeated is happily shared with the request not to repeat it further. Because we are greatly influenced in this way, it is an ideal method for Satan to reach our heart. But God’s

word also shows us what we should be hearing. When the voice of God came down from heaven, God said: “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” (Luke 9:35). A child of God can learn to hear and know the voice of God in the midst of all the clamor of this world. And Jesus calls those who hear His voice, and do it, His brothers and mother: “For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:50).

What we feel can also be like a channel to our hearts. It may happen that certain bad or negative emotions heavily impact our hearts. For example, we strongly feel insults, indignities, humiliation, contempt, and this greatly influences our heart. It inhibits our inner joy and dulls our gratitude and joy in serving God. Another serious damper for us may be disappointment of some sort. How it hurts when you are sorely disappointed! But despite all this, God’s word encourages us and says, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; your rod and Your staff, they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4).

“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23). May God give us the strength and the grace to do this.

Alexander Gross,
Eppingen (Germany)

Something Better

It was a beautiful day in early spring, and during recess some of the boys decided that it was just the time for a hike. School was out at 2 pm on Friday and that would leave plenty of time for it.

"We'll hike down to the spring, then build a fire and roast some potatoes," said Bob Lewis.

All the boys watched the clock until it was time to rush home for lunch. Ted was so happy that he ran all the way home. Only between gasps for breath did he manage to ask his father if he could go with the boys.

"Who is going?" asked his father. – "Just a bunch of us fellows, Father," said Ted, knowing that all the boys might not meet his father's approval.

"But just who?" – "Well, there's George Gibson, Bob Lewis, the two Stetson boys and Tom Harris," Ted said. His voice faded out until the name Tom Harris was almost a whisper.

Ted's father looked thoughtfully at him. Ted knew what that meant.

"I'm sorry, Ted, I can't let you go," he said. – Ted almost asked "why?" but did not, because when Father said no, he meant just what he said. Not only that, but Ted knew why. Downcast, Ted turned away and started back to school.

"Well, we're going anyway. We're going to have fun, too. Ah, why don't you come anyway; your father won't know. If he does, what's the difference?" said Tom Harris.

Ted walked home so slowly that even the dog did not run to meet him. In the house he smelled the scent of baking cookies. Olga was in the kitchen baking, and singing at her work. She was even then taking a piping hot pan from the oven.

"Have a cookie, Ted," Olga said, singing all the while. The cookie was hot and Ted had to toss it from one hand to the other in order to keep from burning himself. Olga set a glass of cold milk before him and there was a feast for a king! When Ted had finished three or four cookies and the glass of milk, he almost felt like living again.

Olga was still singing, though she was hot and covered with perspiration. – "Olga," Ted said, "what makes you sing so much? You always seem so happy and you work hard. Don't you ever get tired of working for us? You

must always get what you want, that must be it."

"Oh, no," answered Olga, "not at all. Sometimes things work out just the opposite. I don't always get what I want. But I know my heavenly Father gives me what's best for me, and sometimes it's something better than I wanted."

"That's never happened to me. But tell me about when you got something better than you wanted," Ted said.

"Maybe you haven't noticed, that's all, Ted. I could tell you about many times in my life when the Lord has worked things out just that way. Now take this time. All summer I wanted more than anything to go to see my sister. But no matter how hard I tried I couldn't make it. But near the close of the summer my sister wrote that she was coming to see me! To top it all off she decided to stay here and work. Now we can spend our Thursday afternoons off together, and go to church together on Sunday, too. Now, wasn't that a lot better than all my planning could have ever done?"

"Here's hoping the Lord has something better for me than taking the hike. I surely wanted to go on it," Ted said.

All day long Ted waited for something better to happen, but went to bed disappointed. He was turning off his light when his father opened the door and came into the room. Sitting beside him on his bed, he said: "You know I'm sorry I had to break up your plans for this afternoon, don't you, Ted? But you understand why, too, don't you?"

"I guess I do, Father," Ted answered. "Tom Harris has a pretty bad reputation and I'm not saying it's not the truth, so I guess you were right. Of course I did want to go."

"I know it, Ted, and because you didn't, I have a better plan. I have some business to talk over with your Uncle Phil and I've decided to drive out there tomorrow. Now if you can get your sister and Aunt Annie to want to go, we'll start early tomorrow. How about it?"

Ted was out of bed like a flash, and almost out the door when he remembered to stop long enough to say to his father, "Say, Father, that's great! It just goes to show that Olga was right when she said, 'If the Lord doesn't give you what you want, He often gives you something better.'"

The Beautiful Way

Experiences with God

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

To the glory of God, I would like to testify of the great healing power of Jesus Christ. A while ago, at my doctor, during a routine check, they did a blood test. A few days later, I received a call and was told I urgently needed to come to the office, as my blood work showed something was wrong. When I came to my appointment on Friday, the doctor shared with me that he suspected I had leukemia. She called the hospital immediately and arranged an appointment for me.

When I received this diagnosis, I felt as though everything was falling apart. Fearful thoughts stormed around me. What was to happen now? How would my wife be able to care for our handicapped son without me? These thoughts swirled continually through my head that entire day and the following night. I cried to God for help again and again. The next day around noon, while I was earnestly praying to God, I suddenly felt something pulsate through my entire body.

Immediately all fear was gone, and a deep peace and joy filled my heart. I started to sing quietly. This joy lasted for the next few days. On Tuesday, my wife and I drove to the hospital. At reception, they immediately did another blood test. When I came to the ward, they told me that there was no free bed. I could lie on a bed in the hallway, or, if I preferred, I could lie down in the oncology ward. I however

said, "I'd rather wait and not take any bed right now. Maybe I won't even need a bed." So my wife and I sat in the waiting room and continued to pray to the Lord.

After several hours, the ward's nurse came with the head doctor and he asked, "Mr. Schmelzle, why exactly is it that you have come to see us?" I answered, "Because of my blood work – they suspect leukemia." The head doctor said, "Please show me the blood work results from your family doctor." After comparing the two results, he said, "This is very rare. I do not understand. Your blood work that we have just tested is completely in order. Your family doctor was mistaken. You can go home now. You don't have leukemia."

Our hearts rejoiced and we praised God, for we knew that the family doctor had not erred, but that the Lord Jesus had healed me. All honor, praise, and thanks be to the heavenly Father in Jesus' name! I call out to all the sick, "Trust in the Lord; believe in His promises, for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrew 13:8). When we study the work of Christ and the apostles, we acknowledge that healing is for all people who come to Him in faith. "The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up" (James 5:15).

Bruno Schmelzle,
Pforzheim, Germany

Psalm 30:2 says: "O Lord my God, I cried out to You, and You healed me." I would like to testify of God's wonderful healing recently in my life.

Last year, before summer came, I went to my doctor for an annual check-up. The results showed some issues with my blood, so further tests were done. I was sent to a hematologist and later I got the diagnosis that I had a type of CML, which is a rare blood cancer.

This news came as a real shock. I cried out to God in my hour of need and sought out His promises for His children in His Word. We believe in divine healing, so I prayed for God's intervention in my life, and our congregation and many others also prayed for me, which I really appreciated. In moments like that it is truly a great privilege to have the family of God standing with us in our hour of need.

A few weeks after my diagnosis we went to the August

Chilliwack Fest. That Saturday morning while driving in the mountains, I somehow felt really strange physically. The thought came to me that maybe I should just go home because the disease was finally showing symptoms. I did not even tell my wife how I felt that morning, but as we drove I realized that it was Satan who was trying to hinder my desire for healing. I simply stood against him and continued on and started feeling normal again. When we then arrived for the church convention, I asked the pastors to pray with me for divine healing. I just kept standing on God's promises and believed that He could heal me of my condition. When the pastors prayed, I thought it would be so incredible if I would feel God's healing touch at that specific moment, but I felt nothing out of the ordinary. God, however, has His own timing and we just need to have faith and trust.

(Continued on pg. 26)

Mothers-in-law

Even though family ties have weakened in our modern times, and young married couples live independently, the addition of a new son or daughter into the family is still a huge change. Everyone wins, but must also sacrifice; everyone is given something, yet must also learn to do without. Wisdom and grace are especially important in the relationship between the mothers and daughters-in-law, so that a loving relationship of trust and mutual esteem can develop.

In despair she sat before me. I did not know her at all. At least I hadn't seen her in our church services. My first impression of her was rather negative, as it seemed that her flow of words would never stop.

"So? Your daughter is on the wrong path? What did she do?"

"Oh, you have to confront her! Every evening she stands by the front door with a young man."

I had to laugh: "That is a rather normal thing in this world. One day she will let the young man into the house and . . ."

I didn't get any further. She jumped up as if something had bitten her and yelled: "Never will that man be allowed to come into the house! I'm glad that I have gotten rid of him!"

I was surprised: "You know the young man?" "Certainly! My daughter was married to him."

"Your daughter was married to him? And now she stands with him by the front door in the evening? I'm sorry—I simply cannot understand!"

"Yes, my daughter is divorced from him. I told my daughter right away when she first brought him home: 'He is not for you!'" "And so she married him anyway?" "Unfortunately!" complained the lady. "I always warned her." "But if your daughter is married to him then she doesn't have to stand with him at the front entrance." "You've got to understand! Afterwards she filed for divorce." "Oh I get it! She got a divorce because you wanted her to get one. Now they realize that they actually still love each other. And now the divorced couple meets like secret lovers? Is that how it is?" The woman nodded.

That was certainly a strange story! I needed to see things a little more clearly. So I asked: "Why did you not like the young man? Is he lazy? Does he drink? Is he abu-

sive? Does he overspend?" She shook her head. "No, that's not the problem. Actually, he's fairly decent in those aspects. I just didn't want him. He is just a miner. And my daughter is beautiful. She could have gotten something better."

I couldn't believe what I was hearing! I gave the woman a good piece of my mind, until she had been put in her place. And then I went with her to her daughter. I found a sweet young lady. Then I learned how deeply she loved her husband, but due to her mother's influence she had filed for divorce. Yet now it came to light that they regretted the divorce and did not know what to do about it.

Immediately I took action and made sure that the two of them found their own apartment and were removed from the mother's realm of influence. They got married again and are indeed happy together. Whoever studies the underlying factors of many divorces will be surprised at how often Satan uses the closest relatives to drive couples apart. They push and nitpick until the poor young wife believes that she has been cheated or the poor man is led to believe that he found the wrong partner.

For this reason I applaud the brave woman of whom I now want to tell you.

In Frankfurt on the river Main there lived a widow that struggled to keep the family together as her children were growing up. One day they received a telegram that caused a great stir in their home. The eldest son, who was far from home, stated: "Got engaged. Coming the day after tomorrow with my bride."

The first reaction was silence. Shouldn't this son have first provided for his mother and siblings? And what was

his bride like? No one knew her. With much apprehension everyone left the dinner table that night.

Their mother, however, was a true Christian. That night she poured out her heart to the Lord. And the next morning she gathered everyone together and said: "I want everyone to listen carefully! You must be happy for your brother and welcome your new sister with love. And most importantly, I want us to only find the good in the young lady. If anyone happens to find fault with her, you may not speak with anyone else about it. You may only tell God about it." Meanwhile the young couple was sitting in the train. The young lady was very worried: Would she be able to bear the critical looks from her sisters-in-law for whom her beloved had such high regard?

But after the warm welcome she received all worries vanished and she wholeheartedly learned to trust the mother of her groom.

Love and peace reigned. And they remained, even after more than thirty years.

How can I not share this story? The widow that showed such love and wisdom? She was my mother.

Wilhelm Busch

The Power of Grace

Many years ago, as a young lad, I had the duty of delivering a magazine to an important lady in our neighborhood each month. One time, my mischievous side got the best of me. In addition to making my regular delivery, I also threw a piece of paper with an ugly face and derogatory comments into her mailbox. Shortly before the New Year, I again stood before her glass door. She welcomed me as always and even gave me a bag full of delicious cookies. But then this sophisticated woman stooped down to my level.

Even though we were alone, she whispered into my ear as if she were sharing a secret with a classmate and said: "The thing you put in my mailbox did not impress me. Take it home and throw it in your wood-burning stove." With that said, she slipped it into my pocket, stood and motioned me to go. In her normal voice, she sent greetings along for my parents.

I have never forgotten this incident. Although I was thoroughly ashamed of my actions, I had just experienced the incredibly encouraging power of grace.



Comforting Encouragement

It was during a time of inner temptation. The enemy wanted to rob me of assurance of being a child of God. He did not allow me to have peace in the Lord. Again and again he focused on my weaknesses and failures so that my view of the saving cross and Jesus' victory on Golgotha dimmed. I sighed in my distress and discouragement and forgot that I had a strong Savior.

Then something wonderful happened. During a quiet evening, it seemed as though suddenly someone right in front of me spoke: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2. Corinthians 12:9). How often I had heard and read this verse! But it had never been spoken to me so personally. Over and over I had to repeat it. It followed me wherever I went. And it began to become real to me and spoke to me continually. Every single word spoke its special language.

"My grace"

What treasure is contained in the word "grace!" It is the erasing of every debt, no matter how big. When a criminal condemned to die experiences human grace, it is the greatest thing that can happen to him in his earthly life. It is a turn from death to life. The heavenly King offers us His godly grace, grace of a totally different standard, that wants to bring about a complete revolution of our spiritual life. Should we refuse it, because by accepting it our desire to do things on our own would have to be turned off? Oh, we need to be content and surrender to this grace so that Christ, through His Holy Spirit, can take shape in us. And this grace will then work in us what we were not previously able to do in our own strength. "My grace is sufficient for you," says the Lord!

"Sufficient for you"

Oh how difficult it is for a person to feel content. The flesh desires this and that. Even as children of God, we often focus too much on the earthly things and on their many advantages. The energy we spend on our own development of strength is something we'd like to apply to the spiritual realm as well. We would like more gifts, more love, more understanding, more visible fruit, more growth of our inner person, and more knowledge. But

suddenly we see that it's not happening, and we become discouraged. In everything, the "I" is in the way. And personal ambitions prove to only be a hindrance. The Lord says, "My grace is sufficient for you!" To want to climb the ladder and focus on success is ungodly. Neither is it beneficial for us to count how fruitful we are, especially because then our focus is on ourselves. No, look up and listen to what the Lord still has to say! – What should we be content with?

"My strength"

Now follows the wonderful promise: "For My strength is made perfect in weakness." – "My strength!" – It does not say: "I will give you strength" but "My strength is in you" – undivided, and it is powerful in you. Yes, it is a strength that everything must yield to. We must make it clear Who is speaking to us like this. We must also clarify what kind of strength it is that wants to develop itself within us if we give it room. It is the strength of Him Who came down from heaven to complete the great work of salvation for us and Who accomplished it. It is the strength of Him Who had complete victory on Golgotha over sin, death, and Satan and Who is willing to produce this complete victory in us. It is the strength of the Holy Spirit, Who made fearless witnesses of Christ Jesus out of fearful disciples. But the Lord has one condition:

"Made perfect in weakness"

"For my strength is made perfect in weakness." Only in the weak. Whoever considers himself strong, whoever wants to reach the goal in his own strength or who thinks God is dependent on his collaboration, for such a person this strength cannot be had. We stand here before an "either – or." This all-conquering strength is available to us in its entirety or not at all. It all depends on laying ourselves fully in God's hands, not hoping that our life amounts to something but to rest in the will of God. This is the "rest" that is available for the people of God (Hebrews 4:9). Then we will rest from our own (ambitious) works. Are you ready to take this step?

So this Word became a great encouragement to me. And it can be a precious encouragement for all who still sigh under their weaknesses. Then we are able to understand when it says that the apostle Paul could boast about his future weaknesses because the strength of Christ had won a place in his life. That which had at first become a reason to sigh will become a reason to praise and thank God to His glory, Who has accomplished this wonderful work in us.

My dear reader, send your “I” into retirement, even better, to the cross, so that God can work in you and through you. We want to trust that the Master will reach His goal with us. Let us have faith in His Word, that He can reveal to

us “the exceeding greatness of His power” (Ephesians 1:19). Then we can call out with Paul: “Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2. Corinthians 12:9-10). – Thanks be to God for this comforting encouragement!

E.F.W.

Vacation

For many it goes like this: ... A day such as this should never end! – Vacation, holiday, away from the everyday grind – it may even be a series of such beautiful days that should never end, that you want to cherish.

But there are also people who come back from vacation heartbroken because as they thought about the meaning of all their toil, money grubbing, hustling and rushing about, their howling misery rose in their eyes. Because suddenly they feel emptiness in the time of peace, an emptiness one certainly notices when the noise of everyday life falls away and one silently ponders, when one has time to question one’s own world view about the meaning of life.

Vacation! This is a redemptive, magical word for many. Once a year one can leave everything behind and step out of the scope of tedious everyday duties in order to be completely alone, to take a deep breath, to forget all the vexations of business. For many, vacation is the lost paradise that one may enter once a year for a short time. But vacation does not mean escape from reality.

Vacation would be better and more meaningfully defined as an opportunity to be able to be human, to be able to contemplate and to gain new hope, new strength, new confidence and new joy for the future of everyday life. Whoever looks at vacation as a chance at happiness at any cost, who completely lets himself go on vacation, who wastes the opportunity, should not be surprised if there is a strong worldly pang the moment one must re-enter the daily grind.

Many freely admit that they do not know what to do with

their free time. Some try moonlighting and other time-fillers that ultimately also hinder people to truly be human in their free time.

Vacations are the glorious respite of the year, when one can come to one’s senses, in which one can allowedly step out of all obligations, in which one can be still and also relax from all internal stiffness. Those who fall into the claws of organized entertainment and the leisure industry have been betrayed and sold out.

They exchange the business grind for the entertainment and distraction grind. They fall into new dependency. They rush from event to tour, from beach party to tour party, from city tour to island tour. They do not even get around to thinking, but all the more to paying and becoming intoxicated and afterwards urgently needing a holiday from vacation to be halfway fit for use. Here, of course, is not a prescription for a holiday routine. But perhaps we may offer two verses to meditate on, to think on for silent holiday hours:

Jochen Klepper wrote the following poem:

Without God I am a fish on the beach;
Without God, a drop in the embers,
Without God I am a grass in the sand
And a bird whose wing rests ...

Ernst Lange translated the 28th verse of the 11th chapter of Matthew as follows: “Jesus Christ says: Come to me all you who are weary and worn, I will provide rest.”

Helmut Ludwig

Powerful Prayers

Prayers—how they differ in their effectiveness. One prayer results in the powerful intervention of God, miracles happen, the circumstances surrounding the person of prayer are changed. The next prayer fades away—without the smallest result. What could be the difference?

Prayer is a necessity for the serious Christian. In Matthew 6:7, Jesus states: “and when you pray,” not “in case you pray.” Jesus gave us an important promise to encourage us when He said: “And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do” (John 14:13). What an amazing guarantee! It is almost impossible to comprehend. Prayer should be a natural reaching-out to God. Jesus said that our prayers should not be unnecessary repetitions. Many repeat the same phrases over and over, and they begin to lose their meaning. Others use the name of “God” so often that the listeners get annoyed. Why not choose different names for God? It would make prayer so much more meaningful.

Prayer has to become more than just a ritual of praying before meals, in the morning and at bedtime. The Pharisees, who condemned Jesus to death, did this and more. We usually speak with our friends longer and more often than just five minutes. God is with us, in us, over us and beside us at all times. Why do we not treat God as we do our friends? Why do we not commune with Him more often? The spiritually sensitive soul looks up to God in prayer and praise.

One form of prayer is a searching of one’s soul to determine shortcomings and inadequacies. Another form is where we submit to God and stop resisting His will. We should read the Bible and Christian literature in the hope that we will be strengthened in our faith. A third form of prayer is being silent. I often sit in the sanctuary of our church and listen to what God says to my soul. We are admonished: “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). Prayer, the longing of our souls for God, is produced by the work of the Holy Spirit on our hearts. “The Spirit Himself makes intercession for us” (Romans 8:26).

The results of prayer are experienced inwardly and outwardly, instantaneously and continuously. True prayer does something for us and also through us. Prayer produces humility. Our bent knees and open hearts set the

position for humility. Prayer produces a thankful heart. When we take the time to think about our many blessings, we will thank God. Prayer is a time of reflection and being grateful. The prayer of many people would be more effective if they would stop complaining, sighing, groaning, and feeling sorry for themselves and instead begin praising and thanking God.

Prayer opens the door of the soul. You cannot display Christ unless you have first sought His will in prayer and have allowed His Spirit to transform you into His image. Prayer opens the heart to allow grace, courage, joy and everything else we need to flow in. When we pray, we invite God to commune with us. Think about it, God and man have a connection with one another! Prayer is not a mystical, mythical experience but something real! We rejoice in it. Prayer produces spiritual growth. As a flower turns its head towards the sun, so the Christian experiences growth when he looks towards the Son of God. The light of God’s presence radiates through our life. It enables us to exemplify Christian virtues and use our God-given talents for His service. When we pray, we are preparing ourselves for service in His kingdom. We read about Jesus in Matthew 26:39: “He went a little farther and fell on His face and prayed.” Prayer can accomplish much around us. God has promised to remove those “mountains” of trying circumstances and burdens when we pray. Prayer also produces healing. When we pray, we are assured of godly guidance and direction. A word for our pastors: a pastor was asked, “When do you find the time to pray, to reflect and to study when the phone is continuously ringing?” He answered: “My phone rarely rings at six in the morning.” Pastors need to find the time to pray if they want to be powerful prophets of the word of God.

Now a word for our church helpers: to be an effective helper, we need to pray effectively. We sing: “Take time to be holy, speak often with God.” Our life can never be so

overburdened that we have no time to pray.

Gipsy Smith once said: “Many of us have just licked off the spoon and received a good dose of religion.” Maybe with regard to prayer, you have just licked off the spoon.

James said: “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16). Before we can be useful, we need to first be conquerors in prayer. For our public service

to be effective, it must be preceded by personal searching and researching of scripture. Lack of prayer or lifeless, artificial prayer is a spiritual obstacle. Diligent, zealous, and effective prayer is a powerful, spiritual force.

The world expects us to at least give our best. The Lord admonishes us not only to pray, but teaches us how to pray.

M. H. Miller

Playing the “second fiddle”

I was enjoying a lovely summer evening recently, pleased that I was able to hear strains of an outdoor concert that was taking place some distance away from my backyard. When the wind was right, the music clearly drifted to our backyard. A violin and viola were playing, the clear high tones of the violin carrying the melody, while the darker, mellower viola took the accompaniment. My admittedly unpracticed ear followed the melody easily. I didn't pay attention to the viola at all until it faltered, stopped playing, and I noticed something was missing.

Some people refer to the viola as the harmony part, or the second fiddle. On that evening, it was the idea of the second fiddle that occupied my thoughts.

There are far more people in life who play the part of the “second fiddle” rather than the first. The number of people holding a supporting or subservient position exceed those who are in a leadership position. There are far more folk at the bottom than the top.

It is much more difficult to play second fiddle. The question: “Why am I not first?” comes to us quickly. Envy is a cold draft that easily brings the strings of our fiddle out of tune, ruining our ability to bring forth a pleasing melody. Even though we might “only” be playing a harmonizing part, a second fiddle that is out of tune can completely ruin the music.

In an orchestra, if one instrument goes out of tune, the conductor will call for the orchestra to re-tune. A tuning fork or another instrument will sound out the

primary tone to which all the other players must tune their instruments.

Our Heavenly Conductor does the same with His musicians. He takes His tuning fork to bring us back in tune. To those whom He has entrusted the first violin He might say: “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6). And to those whom He has assigned the part of the second fiddle He will say, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Those words give us the note that we are to use to bring us back into tune. Sometimes I think that the second fiddles are God's favorites. He has such patience with His new musicians, such grace for those who are still learning their parts.

Not everyone can play second fiddle well. Those who can have learned humility, and that lesson has given them maturity, depth, and strength. That is why the Master Conductor has given them the promise that all things will work for good to those who love Him (Romans 8:38).

If you are part of God's “second fiddle” section, tune your instrument to praise rather than complaining, to patience and humility rather than irritation and pride. One day we will join God's orchestra in heaven. Then we will not have a single thought over whether we are playing first or last violin. Our only thought will be wonder and gratitude that we will be a part of a glorious worship symphony: “Glory to God in the Highest!”

Experiences with God

(continued from pg. 19)

I just kept reminding the Lord of His many promises to us and remained strong in faith. The doctor had ordered a number of appointments, and it often takes months to see the various specialists, but in my case everything went very quickly. Soon after the Fest in Chilliwack, I had to have a bone marrow biopsy and another test.

Throughout this whole ordeal, I actually did not feel sick and I truly thank God for that.

After the results came in, the doctor called me to his office and gave me the news that the results from the blood doctor had clearly shown that I did not have cancer. How I re-

joiced for God's healing touch. The doctor, however, wanted a blood test every 3 months to keep an eye on it. A few weeks before Christmas I went for a blood test again, and the doctor called and said that the blood values were all stable and I need not come back for another 6 months. This was another confirmation to me of the miracle God had done.

I thank God for His wonderful healing touch in my life and I praise Him for His great love for me.

Kurt Pudiel
Edmonton, AB

"I [...] will magnify Him with thanksgiving." - (Psalm 69:31b)

I have experienced wonderful things with the Lord, and I want to give Him the glory for it.

During the time of the pastor's conference this April, Brother Martin Kehler brought a message at a prayer meeting concerning the effective prayer of the righteous. James writes, "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:14-16).

The Brother spoke of the privilege of prayer and what it is capable of accomplishing. He encouraged us to continue on in prayer. He shared a personal testimony of how he had been healed of an ear affliction that he had suffered with for 38 years, even though he had often prayed about it. It was only four years ago (during a pastor's conference) that he had earnestly prayed about it again and God had healed him on the spot. Never again did he have issues with this affliction.

He continued by saying that many people can hardly grasp that God wants to heal them, because they see themselves

as unworthy. And yet, God's promises apply to all of us, even the promise of divine healing! He also said that there is no miraculous formula for divine healing. God heals when and how He wishes. And yet we are commanded to call on the elders of the church that they might pray over us and anoint us in the name of the Lord, and that we should never cease to believe!

I felt spoken to through the message. I had been suffering for a time with very painful knee afflictions that made walking and climbing stairs problematic. Medical help could do no more for me, aside from giving me a walker that I had to carry with me at all times.

During the sermon, I was able to grasp the concept of divine healing in faith. This wonderful promise applied to me as well! As this was happening during the time of the pastor's conference, I decided to ask the pastor Brothers to anoint me, which they did.

How thankful I am to be able to share that God healed me in an instant. I can walk without pain, climb steps, and even walk into town, which was unimaginable before.

Praise God! He is the same today, and is in the position to heal and raise up again.

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The Gospel

Precious Word of God,
Peace, that wavers not,
Is this Word eternal; precious Gospel free!
Hope for our tomorrow
Comfort in all sorrow
Joy for you and me; precious Gospel free!

What the Lord has spoken
Is reality;
Ere the World's foundation
Was his love decreed.
Yes, for our transgressions
Jesus paid the price.
Hold to this confession,
Our's is paradise.

Christ fulfilled, what God willed;
Praise to Him forever!
Oh His love, from above
Is beyond all measure.
Jesus lives, and forgives
All that humbly seek Him;
There's a home, for His own
Where the saints shall meet Him.

The world will pass away
The Word of God will stay: precious Gospel free!
We build upon this rock,
In trust that wavers not, precious Gospel free!

H. K. Hecker
composer R. Schimann