



Foundation of Faith

GOD

IS ABLE

JESUS SUSTAINS EVERYTHING

GOD IS ABLE

GOD IS ABLE TO PROTECT YOU

YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN THIS WAY BEFORE

FACING OUR FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE

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FOUNDATION OF FAITH

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Editorial

Dear Reader,

At the beginning of the new year, we all stand before an unknown future. Oh, how many questions arise within us! What might all happen?

My dear Reader, much will come. Often we can do little ourselves, or nothing at all. However, for a child of God, for you and for me, the word that King David so clearly and resolutely left behind still applies today: "In You, O Lord, I put my trust . . . For You are my rock and my fortress; therefore, for Your name's sake, lead me and guide me" (Psalm 31:1,3). Yes, how wonderful are God's promises and His eternal assurances!

Whatever may come in this year, God is almighty, He loves us, and He can help us. Yes, He is able, even when everything seems impossible. He is able!

A man with leprosy came to Jesus and pleaded, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (Matthew 8:2-3).

Dear Reader, take God's Word in your hands and read and recognize how often the Lord helped in so many seemingly hopeless situations. Yes, the Lord is able.

How amazing that God can heal, help, bless, and even resurrect the dead. We read of Abraham, "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac . . . concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense" (Hebrews 11:17,19).

Let us trust God and cling to the rock-solid promise that God is able. "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20-21).

H. D. Nimz

Yes, God Is Able

“Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice,
for the Lord has done marvelous things!”
(Joel 2:21).

Thoughts on the New Year

January 2020. A new year has begun. If we stop for a moment and think back to the turn of the millennium, two things become apparent: how quickly the time seems to have passed, and how we—and the whole world—have been transformed by everything that happened and changed in that time.

It is January 2020, and we cannot know what the future will bring. Many will respond to this uncertainty with fear and anxiety. Perhaps you, too, see a difficult path ahead, whether in terms of your personal life; of our society’s political, moral, or spiritual outlook; or of the state of your local congregation or the church of God as a whole. But did you know that this depressive fear paralyzes us and saps our strength, and that fear is one of Satan’s most effective tools for weakening our spiritual power and sowing destructive doubts about God in our hearts?

Let’s meet all these alarming thoughts at the start of this new year in faith, trusting Psalm 73:23 that we are “nevertheless . . . continually” with God. We do not have to overcome all of the challenges and crises the future holds through our own strength and wisdom, because the eternal God, in His immeasurable might and majesty, carries the entire universe with His strong volition. Our lives—yours and mine—are in His hands as well. Under His protection, we can enter this new year in joyful anticipation by entrusting ourselves to Him.

The Power of God

Can you mark the limits of God’s power and might? Is there any problem that He cannot solve or any suf-

fering that He cannot heal? The psalmist tells us, “But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases” (Psalm 115:3). The Bible is brimming with evidence of His immense power. Take the account of Israel’s escape, fleeing Pharaoh and his warriors through the desert—straight toward the Red Sea. We can imagine the fear that these mothers and fathers must have felt, with all earthly hope lost. But then Moses called out to the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace” (Exodus 14:13–14). When their need outstripped the bounds of human help, God stepped in to demonstrate His divine might. Some 725 years later, Jerusalem was suffocating, surrounded by the Assyrians’ superior forces. Facing the alarming threat, King Hezekiah brought the enemies’ mocking message before God in His sanctuary. We read, “Now because of this King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried out to heaven” (2 Chronicles 32:20). They had no doubt, each knowing, “My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:2). God rewarded their faith in spectacular form, sending a single angel to slay 185,000 warriors in one night. God is able. The Word of God proves this for a fact.

Do we sometimes make the mistake of imposing the limits of our own imagination on the might of God? You would not be the first to think, “Not even God can help me this time.” But what does the Son of God say? “With men this is impossible, but with

God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). When God promised Abraham a son, He asked him, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” (Genesis 18:14). Today we know that Isaac was born a year later, exactly as God had promised. Job recognized God’s ability to do anything and that nothing He chooses to do is hard for Him (Job 42:2). Through His prophet Jeremiah, God asked the people of Israel, as He continues to ask us today, “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?” (Jeremiah 32:27)

The virgin Mary was unexpectedly visited by the archangel Gabriel, who announced the birth of Jesus to her. It is easy to understand her bewildered reaction as she asked, “How can this be?” And Gabriel explained, concluding, “For with God nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:37). And Jesus Christ, from His birth to triumphant ascension into heaven, proved through His life, God is able!

The Power of God in My Life

You might think, “Sure, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David, Elijah, Daniel, Paul, and many others experienced the powerful working of God, but my case is different.” It may, in fact, be true that something differentiates you from these heroes of the faith. If your experiences differ significantly from what the Bible reports, what is the cause?

Has God changed, or has His power receded? No. God is unchanging, from eternity to eternity (Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8, James 1:17). Do we live in a time so godless that God’s power is inhibited? If we study the Bible, we see that the fallen world has always been evil. In Noah’s time, things were already so bad that God responded with severe judgment (Genesis 6:5–7). But this fact did not prevent Gideon and Daniel from experiencing God’s great power at work. If the reason can be found neither with God nor in our surroundings, where can the fault lie? Are we perhaps just too weak or too simple? Do we lack insight into God’s promises?

In his old age, James wrote a letter of encouragement to the Jewish Christians, making the point that “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours” (James 5:17). Why did he find this so important? God created us as unique beings, as people with different strengths—and with highly individualized weaknesses. He lets us enter this world as helpless infants and calls us home in our equally helpless, infirm old age. Even in our prime,

we are still weak and dependent on help. We need God’s power in every moment of our lives to nourish and carry us in the fullness of His mercy and grace. Once we have acknowledged this dependency, 2 Corinthians 12:9 yields a promise of encouragement with the words, “My strength is made perfect in weakness.” The more we are aware of our need for help, the better God can let His glory shine in our lives. Our human weakness is therefore not a barrier to God’s glorious manifestation in our lives.

The real obstacle to experiencing God’s power is revealed to the disciples by Jesus Himself: “Because of your unbelief” (Matthew 17:20). The quality of your personal faith opens or closes the door to God’s power in your life. If you believe in God and His Word, if you know His promises, if you accept that they apply to you personally, and if you claim them in child-like faith, you will experience God. Jesus says to us, “All things are possible to him who believes” (Mark 9:23). In other words, if we fully trust in God, even the inconceivable can become reality in our lives.

Looking Ahead

God is unalterably our source of power. Throughout the coming months, God wants to reveal His glory to the people in your life. He wants His omnipotence to become evident in your life, so do not be afraid of storms or disasters. The darker the night, the brighter the beam of the comforting light. Think of the three young heroes in Babylon who had to choose between worshiping an idol and being thrown into the fiery furnace (Daniel 3). Take a moment to truly place yourself in their shoes. See how they looked past the seemingly inevitable torture to the One who holds all power, saying to their earthly king, “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.” And then hear their faith soar triumphantly as they conclude, “But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up” (Daniel 3:17–18). They had surrendered all human protection and given themselves over fully into the hands of the eternal God.

Yes, God is able—and God is willing. He wants us to experience His glory anew every day of our lives. ■

Hermann Vogt

Facing Our Future with Confidence

We find a fascinating story in Acts 27 about Paul, a man of God, on his way to Rome. At times it certainly looked hopeless, and surviving the journey seemed doubtful. As believers, how do we deal with times of hopelessness, despair, depression, doubts, and discouragement?

We believe God has a wonderful plan for our lives and that He will fulfill all His promises and protect us from all evil. But what happens when disaster strikes and we find ourselves in hopeless situations, not knowing if we will be able to make it through another day—or night?

Paul boarded a ship to Italy to go before Caesar. His future did not look very bright and we can say that if anyone would have had reason to be in despair, it would have been Paul. He was facing more persecutions, uncertainties, and even death at the hands of his enemies and the opponents of the Christian faith. Yet, there are lessons we can learn from the apostle.

1. Being Courageous in the Face of Rejection

“Paul advised them, saying, ‘Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives.’ Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul. And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the ma-

majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, and winter there” (Acts 27:10-12). Paul’s advice fell on deaf ears. The centurion would not listen to his counsel and went ahead with the voyage. Yet, Paul remained confident in telling the truth.

We all long to be accepted, respected, and understood. It tends to bother us when a brother or sister in Christ does not understand and even rejects us and our ideas. It can be discouraging when our own family, whom we seek to help, will not accept our advice. We should learn from the apostle and not allow rejection by others to have harmful effects on us. As followers of Christ, we are called to deal with people who will sometimes reject our words and even our biblical worldview and lifestyle.

2. Avoid Withdrawing and Feeling Sorry for Yourself

Paul, the man of God, a prisoner on the ship sailing to Rome, had no fear of death. Everyone on the ship had lost hope of surviving this ordeal. In this situation, the apostle strove to encourage others.

In verses 21 and 22 we read, “But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, ‘Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be

no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.’”

Instead of cowering and feeling sorry for himself, Paul reached out to those around him, seeking to assure them that all would remain alive. As a child of God, Paul knew the worst thing that could happen to him was to die, but then he would be with the Lord. Fear is very paralyzing and prevents us from standing up boldly for the cause of Christ. However, when our loving relationship in Christ empowers us to overcome even the fear of death, that is a time of demonstrating God’s power in and through us.

We continue to read in Acts 27:23-25: “For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me.” The basis for Paul’s confidence and optimism was grounded in his faith and the promises of God. This was more than positive thinking or will-powered determination. It was true faith and trust in God’s ability and provision. Genuine faith produced courage, hope, and confidence that God was in control and that He was watching over him.

3. Be thankful when you have little.

Paul again demonstrated his love for God by his unselfish and car-

ing actions of faith. As a prisoner, he had no earthly possessions. He could not buy his way out of any hardship, yet he was content in knowing that the Lord was with him. God had also given him all 276 people on board in order to help protect them from perishing. The Lord allowed Paul's influence to increase and the captain began to listen to him. In God's kingdom, even a poor person can gain a positive and life-saving influence on those around them.

In the midst of all the stress and strife for survival, the apostle paused and asked everyone to pay attention while he prayed and thanked God for the food they were about to eat. Financially poor,

away from family and friends, and a prisoner headed for Rome, he seized the moment and gave thanks to God.

No wonder he wrote to the Philippians in chapter 4:10-13, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Praise, thanksgiving, and contentment change our perspective and attitude. It is highly valued before God and brings blessings to ourselves and others.

As we face this New Year with all its uncertainties, let us rise up in faith and confidence that God is in control and that He will provide in every situation according to His wonderful promises. May we all draw encouragement from Isaiah 40:31: "But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint." ■

Martin Kehler
Winnipeg, Manitoba



Can God Lie?

Could it actually be possible for God to lie? Your answer should be “No!” for who would dare answer this question with a “Yes”? Yet if we got directly to the point and asked, “Do you believe all of God’s promises, which are written in His Word?” could you honestly answer with a “Yes!”

In Numbers 23:19, we read, “God is not a man, that He should lie . . . Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” David can tell us from experience, “For the word of the Lord is right and all His work is done in truth” (Psalm 33:4). Unfortunately, even among Christians, there are many who do not entirely believe the Word of God. That’s to their disadvantage, however, for God’s Word tells us that without faith it is impossible to please Him. If someone doubts the Word of God, is he actually a Christian? Wouldn’t it be a sin to say that God is a liar?

In Hebrews 11, the writer lists the heroes of faith from the Old Testament. In all circumstances, they put their trust in God’s promises. But on the other hand, in Revelation 21:8, we read that even “the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.” These words are very serious. Just as certain as His promises are His warnings.

Certainly you believe many things that are promised in God’s Word, but perhaps not quite everything. And even some of the promises you do believe, you might feel they don’t pertain to you. But without fail, God does not lie. Every promise is written for each one of us.

As a father, if you would sincerely make a promise to your children, and they would express disbelief or doubt, you would probably feel hurt. In the same way, we sadden the heart of our heavenly Father if we do not have faith.

Perhaps at this very moment, you are anxious about your salvation and you cannot believe Jesus forgave your sins and accepted you as His child. Do not be of little faith. Trustingly, follow the call of the Savior: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). In John 6:37, Jesus says, “The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.” Isaiah already gave us a promise from

God: “I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you” (Isaiah 44:22). If you repent with a broken and contrite heart, and your heart’s sincere desire is to turn from evil ways, you will be able to lean on the promises of God.

Even a Christian can experience cloudy days and certain times where the nearness of Jesus seems so distant. This is exactly the time when it’s crucial to have a strong faith. Jesus said, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). And in Isaiah 40:29 and 31, we read the promise, “He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. . . . But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”

You have no reason to complain that God doesn’t give you strength in your daily life. Already here on earth, you can live a victorious life. God used the prophets to prophesy regarding this precious time: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them” (Ezekiel 36:26-27). Isn’t this a promise for us, that we are able to follow God’s commandments? And in Ephesians 1:4, we read, “Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” God gave us the Holy Spirit for this reason.

Are you leading a victorious life, or are you opposing the Word of God by saying, “It’s impossible to lead a life without sin”? Don’t you believe there is power in the blood of the Lamb to free you from the smallest bondage, as well as the strongest ropes of Satan?

Perhaps you are one of those who try to put their mind at ease with Scripture. You use verses to support your opinion that no one can live a sin-free life; you use verses as a defensive weapon for a life of “victory-defeat, victory-defeat.” But the Word illuminates the answer: “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace” (Romans 6:14). It is indeed possible for you to live a holy life,

a life of complete obedience to the will of God. Jesus showed you the way by His example.

God's will is also to heal the sick, as He did during the time of the apostles. "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" (James 5:14-15). And in Isaiah 53:4, Isaiah prophesies, "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." If you are sick, confidently let God prove Himself as you avoid doubting

His Word. Have faith in God, and you will not be disappointed.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we are standing in a spiritual battle; nothing other than doubt can hinder God's victory. The apostle John calls out to us: "This is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith" (1 John 5:4). Therefore, let us completely depend on the promises of God, for "faith breaks through steel and stone and touches God's omnipotence!" ■

W. Kunkel

Do Not Be Afraid!

Christmas has just ended. Once again, we heard the angel's message, as if for the first time, which was proclaimed to the shepherds on the fields of Bethlehem: "Do not be afraid."

The Christmas decorations have been put away, and the grayness of everyday life is here again. Has the message of the Savior also been put away? Did it only apply during the holidays? That would be detrimental. His message gives us power during our workdays, and encourages us at the beginning of the year as we step into the dark future.

A dark future?

Yes, certainly. Even in the new year, the media will bring us tragic news: strikes, conspiracies, revolutions among people, and terrible natural disasters. There is the "cold war" that always threatens to break into a "hot war." In the back of our minds exists an anxious notion that powerful nuclear weapons could unexpectedly detonate over mankind and could annihilate our existence. Let's be thankful for the godly affirmation, do not be afraid.

The deepest source of our fear is actually guilt that has not been atoned for. In its spell, we realize how completely lost and helpless we are among this world that is falling apart. Where should we flee when our physical existence is being threatened? Concerning our own sin, where should we go if we are not right with the holy God?

However, if we are reconciled with the eternal God, the darkness of the future loses its grayness for us. You still remain in this threatened world. But when every-

thing falls apart, the fact that you are a child of God does not rest on visible foundations but on the solid rock of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Yes, you need not fear, for Jesus' birth is the evidence that God loves you. He came to atone for our guilt by His sacrificial death. Oh, may you grasp that the God of grace has completely forgiven you in Jesus Christ so that you can be His child! What He now expects of you is that you renounce all attempts to save yourself, without Christ, and that you come to the cross in repentance with your burdens. Thank the Lord He took your place as the sacrifice on the cross; now lay your life in His hands in complete trust and follow Him.

Then you can agree with Psalm 23: "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." God will answer you, "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine" (Isaiah 43:1).

A pastor had a conversation with an older, experienced man about the prospects of the new year. With full confidence, the elder said, "We don't know what the new year will bring us. But what we do know is that it will be a year of the Lord."

That is sufficient. In the new year, God will lead the destinies of your personal life, as well as the destinies of all the nations. If you have been assured of forgiveness and remain close to His hand, trusting Him, then God's affirmation applies to you: "Fear not . . . for I am your God." C. R.



Expect ***Great Things*** From God

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8).

Church history refers to the 19th century as the century of missions. In all parts of the world, there were pioneers of the gospel who were passionate for Jesus Christ.

One who Counted on God’s Possibilities

William Carey (1761-1834) was this kind of person. Until the age of 28, he was an unknown shoemaker, but then the Lord called him into service. God laid a burden on his heart for the millions of people who did not know Jesus.

At a conference in 1792, he preached a sermon on Isaiah 54:2. In his message, he addressed two points: “Expect great things from God” and “Do great things for God.” Carey was an ordinary man, but he understood that we can count on God’s power.

God is Able

We really need to understand this. When Paul told the Corinthians about the financial concerns the Jerusalem church faced, he didn’t tell them to pray earnestly that “our great God” would meet these needs. Rather, he told them we need to be available for God to work through us. We are to be God’s extended arms. We need to create the possibilities to allow God to reveal His power through us.

Learning to See Through God’s Eyes

In order for God’s blessings to flow, we need to learn to see from God’s perspective.

A counselor, dealing with a young man addicted to drugs, is faced with integrating him back into society. If he only considers his inherent disposition, he

will quickly concede defeat. However, if he looks at the young man through God's eyes, he will be encouraged to have faith in God's power.

We can look to God with confidence because He is able. When we become aware of God's goodness and abundance, as expressed in a song by Paul Gerhardt, "You always make a way, You never lack the means," then we are fully aware of our helplessness. This drives us to our Lord, who is mighty and able to help.

Do we still expect great things from God?

A teacher expects a student's achievement to align with his stage of growth and development. A good teacher will always strive to broaden the learning horizon of his student.

In the same way, God also wants to expand our awareness of His power in our lives, to show us more opportunities for spreading the gospel of His kingdom in this world.

Do we still expect great things from God, or do we depend only on our capabilities? We read about Abraham: "By faith Abraham . . . offered up Isaac . . . concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead" (Hebrews 11:17–19). Abraham released his expectations; he didn't have to offer Isaac, but he depended on God's omnipotence.

When God says "But"

In 2 Corinthians 9:8, there's a little, important word that is easily overlooked: "And [the original Greek word also means 'but'] God is able to make . . ." This means God's power and mercy has no limits. We find this "but" in several places in God's Word. In Ephesians 2, we read, "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins . . . But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ" (see verses 1-5). When God

says "but," it opens up possibilities that are impossible from our human perspective.

The Bible Refers to Various Types of Grace

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you." The amplified Bible says, "And God is able to make all grace [every favor and earthly blessing] come in abundance to you."

God's Word does not refer to grace in the singular but rather in the plural form. It refers not just to the saving grace of God, as in Ephesians 2:5: "By grace you have been saved" (cf Titus 3:7). It tells us of sanctifying grace (2 Corinthians 1:12; 6:1), grace in suffering (Philippians 1:29; 2 Corinthians 12:9; 1 Peter 2:19), grace to labor (1 Corinthians 15:10), grace for giving (2 Corinthians 8:1), and of the many gifts of grace (Galatians 1:6; 1 Peter 5:10).

We would minimize God's grace and its effect and hinder "grow[ing] in grace" in 2 Peter 3:18 if we restricted God's grace to salvation alone. Grace, as evident in its various, positive effects, is the vital element in the life of a Christian. John testifies, "And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16).

Dear Reader, join in the ranks of the soldiers of the faith and rest assured, God is mighty. He is able. Expect great things from God. He can use you as His useful servant, and you can receive grace upon grace from His superabundance, as a songwriter shares:

Jesus is waiting with gifts beyond measure—
Waiting with gifts from His storehouse above.
You were unworthy, He made you His treasure.
Grace upon grace through His mercy and love.

Jesus will make a way when you are hopeless,
He calms the waves of the wild, foaming sea.
He can revive and yes, He heals the lifeless.
Seek Him in faith, touch His hem, and believe. ■

Jesus Sustains Everything

The world as we know it has become very insecure. Economic crises, dramatic political situations in various parts of the world, and great fear of repercussions of climatic changes have destabilized society. People are reacting with great apprehension. Jesus said that people would faint in anticipation of things to come. This simply raises the important question, who rules or controls the world and its affairs? The answer to this question would be as different as the people themselves. Some maintain that the 5 richest families in the world control everything. Others that the Jewish community controls the financial affairs of the world; yet others would say the Catholic Church controls the affairs of the world. Then there are those who say the media, including TV, radio, the press, and the internet control our world. That this group exerts a certain influence on many people goes without saying, but after all is said and done the Hebrew writer boldly says, “The Son . . . sustain[s] all things by his powerful Word” (Hebrews 1:2-3 NIV). We realize the Middle East is very unstable at this time. It is no secret that there is a very strong push for a “One World Religion,” known as the Ecumenical Movement. The Bible tells us that these things would come, but it also tells us that Jesus sustains all things.

Our text says Jesus sustains “all things by His powerful word.” He sustains you and me. He has watched over us from the time we were conceived. He knew of Samson in his mother’s womb. He knew that Elizabeth was pregnant and how long (Luke 1:36). He knows all about us, our children, and grandchildren. When someone is taken from our side and we feel it was premature, it isn’t coincidence but providence, because the Bible tells us He has determined how long each of us should live. He carries us through childhood, youth, middle age, and old age. He has promised to be with us to the very end of our lives, so we have no reason to fear. Because He knows all about us, He would love to help us with all our decisions, such as what vocation we should choose, who our marriage partner should be, and where we should live. He simply knows what is best for us.

He also sustains the family. The family as we know it is being threatened. Many people today are more concerned about the animals than the family. An article in *Time* magazine stated, “that the era of the nuclear family, . . . has declined to the point of no return.” Today, there are so many perspectives as to what constitutes a family and they all want to be correct. But the Bible states that a marriage is made up of one woman and one man. Today we don’t find too many 50th

or 60th anniversaries in the world, but thank God, among His children these still exist and they will exist until He returns, because He will sustain the family in spite of all opposition. So if certain social groups, political parties, and Satan himself oppose this marriage bond, God will sustain it, because marriage is ordained by Him.

He also sustains the church. Another article in *Time* magazine stated that, theology, the teaching of God, will die. We agree that for many it has. Many children are growing up without any knowledge of an almighty God Who can do all things. But on the other hand, there are revivals in many countries while many here feel they are overfed. God will always have a people that loves and serves Him. The words of our Lord and Master are still relevant today: “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). My friend, be encouraged because He will build His church even if certain groups, organizations, and governments may oppose it.

He also sustains the government. He not only sustains them but also has them do His bidding. Caesar Augustus may never really have known why he issued that decree. Matthew 2:5-6 tell us that Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem. God could use Cyrus, king of Persia, to rebuild the temple at

Jerusalem (Ezra 3:7). Therefore Paul, who was often put into prison, simply states, “[T]here is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God” (Romans 13:1-5). We may not be happy with certain election results, but Paul says we should pray for those who are in office because God sustains them. After all is said and done, He knows how to exalt and bring down those who are beyond our reach (see Psalm 75:7).

He simply sustains all things. He is above every catastrophe, be it an earthquake, tornado, out-of-control fire, or tsunami. He is still the same as when He rebuked the wind and waves, and everything was calm. If there is a storm in your life right now, He can calm that storm. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Just call on Him and ask for His help; He is only a prayer away.

As we face another New Year and don't know what it will bring us, we simply need to trust Him, Who created all things visible and invisible and will sustain them until He returns to make an end of all things. He will not allow His inheritance to deteriorate until He is finished with it. He promised there would be summer and winter, seedtime and harvest till the very end, and then this earth, as we know it will disappear with a “great noise.” Perhaps that is where the big bang theory finds its fulfillment. Not at creation but at the destruction of this earth. May you be encouraged to keep your eyes focused on Him who sustains all things, because He will bring us safely to the other side. ■

Harvey Elke
Kelowna, British Columbia

All is in God's Hands

*Lord, You can change all things for better,
For victory is in Your hand!
What I don't know, what does it matter?
Your love for me has all things planned.*

*Though overwhelmed by dread and sorrow,
I feel disheartened unto death.
Should Satan make me fear tomorrow,
I know my soul You will refresh.*

*Can dismal days negate Your goodness
And bring Your promises to naught?
Your love will always keep its sureness
To give the help that I have sought.*

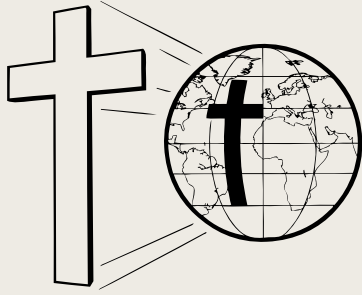
*When I remember how Your people
Were led by You in days gone by,
Then I am confident that even
Today You hear my faintest sigh.*

*O Savior, let me sing Your praises,
Sing even when my heart is sore;
For eternal life through Your grace is
My part in You forevermore.*

*Your way is holy, leading upwards;
O, let me nevermore forget.
Let me walk in Your ways, so precious;
O, let Your humble child not fret.*

*Lord, You can change all things for better;
Be still my heart, oh, rest and see.
God's ways are best, yea, none are better;
I'll see this in eternity.*

Edeltraut Nimz



Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs
Kitchener, ON

Guidance for the Whole New Year

Many people try to master their own lives and exclude God from all areas of life. If they need help, they look for it in “broken cisterns that can hold no water” (Jeremiah 2:13). But “happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God” (Psalm 146:5).

A new year has begun again for all of us. In the truest sense it is “God’s year,” since every year is a gift from God. Therefore, we should make sure that God really is part of this new year. We must not exclude Him. We agree with the Psalmist who said, “I will lift up my eyes to the hills—from whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.” (Psalm 121:1-2).

Have we seriously thought about needing help and the source of that help? One might assume that the writer of this Psalm was pondering his path but saw the threatening, dangerous mountains around him. He might have experienced some very anxious moments and thoughts. He realized he needed help. But where was this help going to come from? He had to look way beyond the mountaintops, up to the Almighty God, where we can always find help. And this help was enough for the whole way, the whole year, and for a lifetime.

What are we looking for during the beginning of this new year? We need to be aware of our focus. We can look at the threatening cliffs and mountains, as well as the dangerous paths, or we can look to our Almighty God, Who is above everything.

Certainly, we all require help at some point, but we need to be very clear about where this help is coming

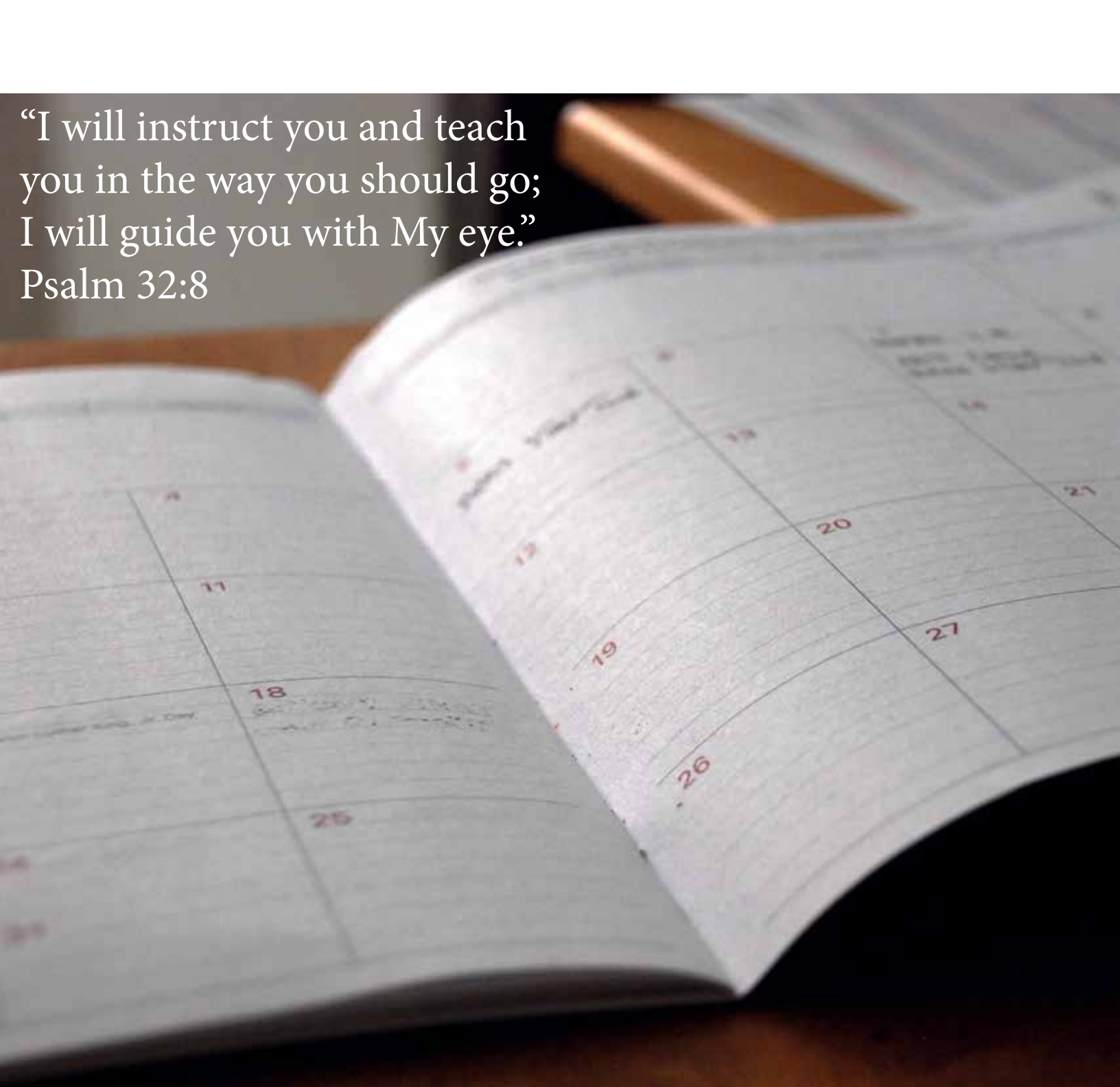
from. If we only count on humanitarian aid or self-help, there will be situations of complete helplessness. We may encounter problems, hardships, burdens, and difficulties that seem insurmountable. We may become afflicted with illness and tribulations. We could face serious challenges and bitter heartbreak. And in those situations, we need help. But from where?

We can make no wiser decision or better resolution at the beginning of this year than to say with the writer of Psalm 121, “My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.”

The writers of Hebrews wrote to the long-suffering believers, “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:1-2). Here, the Christian life is depicted as a race in the battlefield of faith. In order to maintain the victory, we must keep our eyes on Christ.

David testified about his turbulent, storm-filled life: “They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed” (Psalm 34:5). Many of us have experienced this as well. Quietly looking to Jesus strengthens and raises us up, because a wonderful power emanates from Him.

There is such blessing in looking to Jesus with childlike faith, and doing so will make this coming

An open calendar with a pencil resting on it. The calendar pages are white with a grid layout. The numbers 11, 18, 25, 12, 19, 26, 20, and 27 are visible in red ink. The pencil is orange and lies diagonally across the top right of the calendar pages.

“I will instruct you and teach
you in the way you should go;
I will guide you with My eye.”
Psalm 32:8

year a truly blessed one. We live in serious and dangerous times, in great uncertainty, in increasing turmoil and tensions, in the midst of imminent violence and confusion.

It's easy to become weary and despondent. But listen, “He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utter-

ly fall, but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint” (Isaiah 40:29-31).

This God also wants to stand by us, so we can take courage and raise our eyes to the Lord who helps and sustains us. Therefore, be confident. God's help is available for all of us for the entire new year and beyond. ■

An Established Heart

“For it is good that the heart be established.” (Hebrews 13:9)

An established heart. Children of God have needed an established heart throughout the ages. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews knew this and emphasized how important, indeed how “good” it is, to have an established heart.

The apostle says in our text, “Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines.” Doctrine includes not only teachings, but also a variety of offerings, worldviews, attitudes, and temptations. In other words, the apostle is saying, “Do not allow yourself to be driven back and forth by various things, but be firmly established in God, for that is ‘good!’”

Especially in adolescence, it is extremely important for our heart to be established. If we learn this in our youth, we will remain established as we continue in life. The Bible shows us many people whose hearts were established whom we can take as good role models:

1. Joseph

What a role model Joseph is, principally for us young people! Throughout his life, he proved to have an established heart. He was grounded in God. He proved this especially in the greatest temptation of his life. When Potiphar’s wife tempted him, he remained steadfast and firm: “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9).

2. Abraham

Abraham believed in God. He walked with God. He was with God his whole life—through thick and thin. But then God wanted to test the strength and love of Abraham: “Offer Isaac to Me!” How hard it must have been for Abraham to take this step. He did not understand for what purpose or reason God asked him to do so, but he took even that step. He proved his steadfastness in the greatest test of his life, and God blessed him abundantly. Abraham is called the “Father of Faith.”

3. Paul

Paul is one of the best examples in the Bible of faithful and established service. In all the struggles and sufferings he endured for Jesus’ sake, Paul had an established

heart. Nothing could shake him to the extent that he would separate himself from God. Rather, he said, “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors” (Romans 8:35-39).

These are all shining examples, but how can we become established in God today?

Our text also gives us the answer to this question: “For it is good that the heart be established by grace.” We cannot become established in God in our own power. It must be grace, and grace alone.

And where do we receive this grace to become established? John says, “And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace” (John 1:16). So from the fullness of Jesus, we receive grace. We need Jesus. Jesus also emphasized that “without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

One thing must be made clear. While we can only become established by the grace of God, that doesn’t mean we don’t have to do anything. We must draw grace from the fullness of God. And we know how that works—we draw the grace of God when we are in communion with God.

C. H. Spurgeon once told of a boy who had become accustomed to spending some time each day in private prayer. As he could not find another place for a while, he climbed up into the hayloft, and once he was up there, he pulled up the ladder behind him. Someone who had observed this several times asked him why he did that. He replied, “Since I have no door here that I can close, I pull up the ladder!”

Oh, that we may always sever the connection between our soul and other intrusive things that lurk below us, so our soul can commune with God. In this communion, we draw grace upon grace from the fullness of God. And that grace makes our hearts become established. This simple principle applies when, the more fellowship with God we maintain, the more grace we receive and the more established we become in God.

Let’s pursue a heart well established in Christ, so our running and striving are not in vain. ■

*Eduard Albrecht
Eppingen, Germany*

. . . Notes from School (11)

A Side Job

I was in my seventh semester, and as I had established a good routine, I thought it was time to look for a side job. Many students are financially dependent on a job, but thankfully, because of my parents' help, I was able to take my time looking for something suitable. In the past, I never struggled to find work. At 15, I worked for a dermatologist; later, through the recommendation of a neighbor, I got a position at the post office answering the phone; and for my education, I filled out two applications. But now, things seemed more difficult as I couldn't find anything that fit my schedule. Either I had courses at the university, or I had obligations in the congregation. Disheartened, I said to a colleague, "Either a job falls into my lap, or things will stay as they are." Then I did my practicum, just like every previous semester, which was in the emergency department this time with trauma cases. When I was almost done, one of the senior physicians told me that it would be good if I took a student position in their department. I answered evasively. The work schedule

was probably inappropriate again. But he would not be deterred. When I was in the department again picking up some papers, he reprovingly asked me, "Did you check out the job yet?" I said no. On the spot, he telephoned one of the doctors to arrange everything. I explained that I could only work on Saturdays, never on Sundays; but that didn't seem to bother anyone. Now I work every Saturday from 9-3 and can even make it to orchestra practice. Other students were hired as well, and I thought for sure they would also like to work an occasional Saturday and I shouldn't claim every Saturday for myself. Recently, when I mentioned this to my supervisor, she said, "No, the others prefer to work on Sundays!" God worked it out that no one wanted my work schedule. Once again, it shows us how God knows exactly what is best for us, and for that, the honor is all His. ■

*Corinna Kowalski
Hamm, Germany*

A Question

One of the most useful functions of my smartphone is actually the little LED flashlight. It has often rescued me when I needed a light and didn't have a "real" flashlight nearby. In the meantime, I don't even need a real flashlight anymore since I have my smartphone on me much more often.

The Bible tells us that God's Word is a light to our path. This word has often saved me. You as well? Can you remember situations in which God lit your path with a Bible verse?

Simply write us and tell us which Bible verse has recently especially touched you. Why does this verse resonate with you? Or tell us which verse currently occupies your mind the most, what it tells you, or which questions it brings up for you. We would be very happy to hear from you. Write to us at foundationoffaithteam@gmail.com. ■

*Niko Ernst
Germany*



Contact: foundationoffaithteam@gmail.com

What the *Grace of God* Is Able to Do

Valentine Burke was a well-known criminal in St. Louis, USA. This strong man, with his austere facial expressions, who swore and blasphemed ferociously, had already done 20 years in prison. Now he found himself behind lock and key once again as the evangelist Moody visited St. Louis.

One of the newspapers had decided to publish Moody's daily sermons word for word. And so it happened that one day a copy of the newspaper was tossed into Burke's cell. His eyes fell on the boldly printed headline: "How the Jailer of Philippi Got Caught." Having captured his attention, he began to read with fervency. He had once been to a city called Philippi, in the state of Illinois. He was expecting to read about an uprising in that prison in which the prisoners had captured the prison guard.

However, he read about something very different. This article was about sin, repentance, and the redemption of a lost sinner through the blood of Jesus. It was the story of the jailer who narrowly escaped an eternity in hell as he was about to commit suicide. It was Paul and Silas who called out to him, and he in turn questioned them, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30).

This account from God's Word had such an immense impact on Valentine Burke that this huge, strong, stubborn man broke down in his cell, sobbing before God. He found grace and forgiveness through the blood of Christ Jesus.

By the next morning, he was a new person. This feared criminal alternated between crying and cheering with overflowing joy. The prison officers could hardly believe their eyes and ears as they experienced this inconceivable transformation. However, Burke's

behavior, humility, and gentleness proved his experience was genuine. By the grace of God, he was soon thereafter pardoned at his court hearing and dismissed.

There stood the unsightly jailbird now, without a job and without food, on the street. He was adamant, though, to rather die of starvation on the street than to stretch out his hand to steal others' property. When he noticed that his appearance caused others to mistrust him and to intimidate them, he cried out to God, "Lord, people don't like me, and they don't know what You have done for me. Please give me a friendlier appearance!" God answered his prayer, and his facial features were transformed so that inner peace shone from within.

After searching in vain for a permanent job in St. Louis and New York for months on end, he was placed under sharp scrutiny by law enforcement. His behavior, however, was so impeccable that the chief of police in St. Louis offered him a job. God had suddenly answered Burke's prayer. His life glorified Jesus so faithfully that he gained the complete trust of his authorities.

Years later when Moody visited St. Louis again, he heard of Burke's conversion. He sought him out at the police headquarters. There, Moody found the former criminal guarding a sack of jewels during a court proceeding. The irony of the situation was immense. The once scandal-ridden criminal had experienced such a complete transformation, that he became a most trusted official, selected for such a significant position.

That is what the grace of God is able to do! It can convert a lion to a lamb, a criminal to a child of God. Yes, even you can be changed. ■

The Straight Track

Adrian, Mark, and Lawrence were excited. It was snowing! Although it was not quite enough for skiing, it would do for a snowy hike. They arrived at a large field and came up with a challenge. The winner of the challenge would be the one who crossed the field in the straightest line.

They started off without looking back. They did not look back until they made it across to the edge of the forest on the other side. Everyone had exerted themselves to leave a straight track. However, they were not thrilled with the results. Lawrence and Mark looked enviously from their zigzag lines to Adrian's track, which was ramrod straight, as if drawn with a ruler.

"But we walked in a straight line too," Lawrence protested.

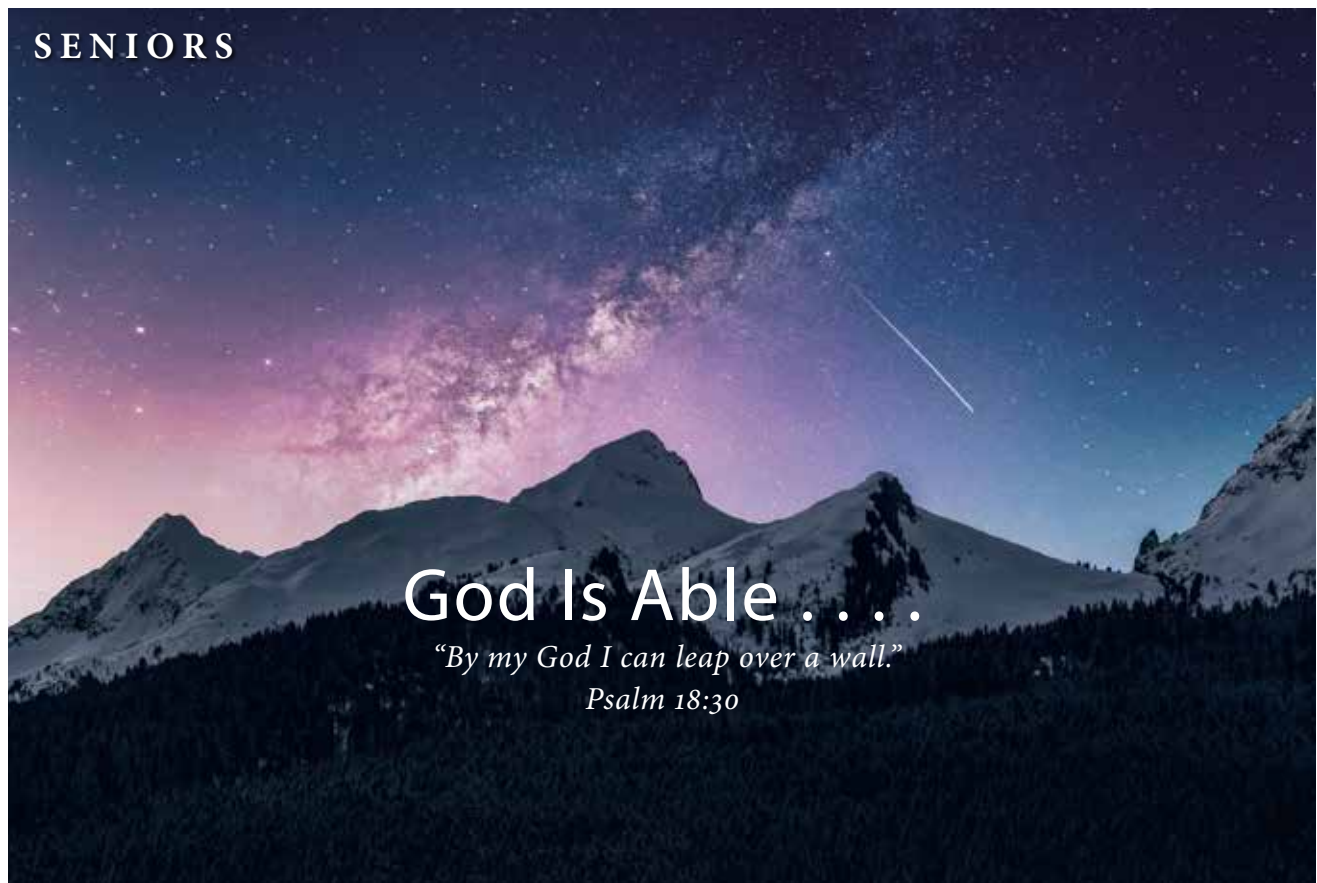
Adrian smiled mysteriously. "Should I tell you what worked for me? I kept my eyes fixed on a certain tree

and never allowed my eyes to leave that target." So that was it!

Was our life not somewhat like a zigzag trail this past year? Maybe some parts were downright crooked. Think about it. Were you always obedient to your parents? How was it that one time with your excuse? Was that maybe a lie? Or when you were tempted to put the candy in your pocket in the store without paying for it. What did you do when you didn't know the answer on your math assignment? Maybe you copied from your friend's work?—All this left a crooked trail.

If we're to do better in the new year, we have to keep our eye on the right goal. That means we have to keep Jesus Christ in sight. Tell Him today what has been crooked in your life. He will forgive you and help you in the new year to make your track true and straight. ■





God Is Able

“By my God I can leap over a wall.”

Psalm 18:30

“God is Able” is a fitting title for me, for the first edition of the *Foundation of Faith* in the new year. These words stand majestically over the year-end and the unknown future. How many unknowns, numerous questions, and fears are there in this world? “Future worries” are spoken of. These make our life difficult. We do not want them, but they are there nonetheless. It is good that you opened the *Foundation of Faith* to this page. Just three words are what I would like to give you on your life journey: “God is able.” They could change and enlighten your life.

Abraham is faced with the humanly unfathomable demand to sacrifice his son Isaac. All of God’s promises were to be fulfilled through Isaac. And now? At that moment, Abraham looks at the altar he has constructed himself, on which lies his promised son Isaac. Abraham has made his decision. He is ready for everything, even to give his son. Would he carry all the promises to his grave with the death of his son? Look at the situation carefully. Does Abraham look like a desperate and hopeless man? Abraham is secure in his God. He trusts Him. With full conviction, he grabs the knife, but here is the origin of these three words. In Hebrews

11:17-19, we read, “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, in Isaac your seed shall be called, concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.”

“God is able” are words that encourage us during the passing of time and of world occurrences. They are encouraging words. They were said with conviction but also with trust in God. During troubled times, they have given new courage so we wouldn’t give up nor falter in despair. May I remind you of two examples in the Scriptures?

- You will likely know the son’s name before you do those of his parents, Amram and Jochebed (Exodus 6:20). Moses was born during the time when the law was issued demanding all Hebrew boys be drowned at birth in the Nile River. The parents opposed this law of Pharaoh and hid Moses for three months in their home. After that, they built a small basket, and we read that they “placed the child in it and laid it in the reeds by the river’s bank.” I am convinced that these three

hopeful words, “God is able,” presided over this whole situation.

•The book of Joshua describes the capture of the land of Canaan. God had promised this land as the future place for His people. This land had to be conquered and freed from its occupants. In Joshua 6, we meet the children of Israel in front of Jericho. The words from the spies expressed discoveries of great consequence as they reported, “the cities are great and fortified up to heaven” (Deuteronomy 1:28). According to God’s command, the soldiers went around Jericho once daily and seven times on the seventh day. That must have been a most curious sight; but nevertheless, they did it! They probably thought of the three words, “God is able,” knowing that He truly was able. In Joshua 6:20, we read, “the wall fell flat, then the people went up into the city.”

We could write an extensive book of all the Scriptural examples when people trusted these three words, “God is able.” Men and women of all age groups were convinced of the greatness and the might of their God. We are most certainly convinced ourselves. Since our early childhood, we have become familiar with this phrase. Our reading of biblical stories has confirmed this. However, we mustn’t stop at just knowing; our actions must also confirm our belief that “God is able.”

How great must God be that the term “God is able” is ascribed to Him. Interestingly, God had confronted Abraham with the question, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” (Genesis 18:14). Therefore, in their old age, Abraham and Sara received their promised son Isaac. In this manner and from this occurrence, they learned what “God is able” meant. The Israelite nation was well acquainted with the history of their ancestors and how God had dealt with them. This history was passed down from generation to generation so that each new generation would trust Israel’s God.

When you read the Bible, you will notice how important the idea that “God is able” was for people. They were not only convinced of the knowledge that “God is able,” but they accessed these promises for themselves. They found themselves in hopeless situations, stood before armies much larger than theirs, heard the curses of Goliath, and were aware of their helplessness. Never would they have attempted to go ahead alone. However, because they had a God who was able, they went

ahead and called out, “I cannot do this alone, but with You I am able to defeat soldiers and ‘by my God I can leap over a wall.’” They depended on God’s greatness and approached every situation with this knowledge.

We are standing at the beginning of a new year. Unchangingly, the three words “God is able” stand over the year 2020 and in front of every situation we may encounter this year. The journey before us is getting shorter, and soon we too will cross over to our goal. What we are still to encounter is in God’s hands. One thing is certain. God is able to bring us through. I want to claim this for myself and for my life and chime in with David, “with You I am able.” So we want to begin each new day “with God,” as we go to each doctor’s appointment, accept each loss, accept help from others, accept each change in our situation, etc. “With God” gives us access to His mercy and power, His help, and His support. “With God” speaks of a blessed journey. My God and I journey together. ■

Harry Semenjuk

My God and I

My God and I go in the field together,
We walk and talk as good friends should and do,
We clasp our hands, our voices ring in laughter;
My God and I walk through the meadow’s hue.
We clasp our hands, our voices ring in laughter,
My God and I walk through the meadow’s hue.

He tells me of the years that went before me,
When heavenly plans were made for me to be,
When all was but a dream of dim reflection,
To come to life, earth’s verdant glory see.
When all was but a dream of dim reflection,
To come to life, earth’s verdant glory see.

My God and I will go for aye together,
We’ll walk and talk just as good friends do,
This earth will pass, and with it common trifles,
But God and I will go unendingly.
This earth will pass, and with it common trifles,
But God and I will go unendingly.

A. A. Whithol



On the Road of Salvation

Part 12

Israel, Who Is Like You?

Ron Taron

God's Plan of Salvation in the History of Israel

With his last words to Israel, Moses blesses them with a very moving benediction. He points them to their faithful God and reminds them that blessings and success come only from Him. Then he reminds them of God's wondrous works which He performed among them. As Moses ponders what God had all done for Israel and how He had transformed them, he can't help himself but to cry out, "O Israel! Who is like you."

How glorious was this people of God in the Old Testament, and how magnificent is the New Testament fulfillment, the church of God! It is majestic, grand, and incomparable! Christ's church is glorious and beautiful because it is His bride, His family, His body, His very own, planned and called into being by His great plan of salvation.

What Makes the Church of God Incomparable?

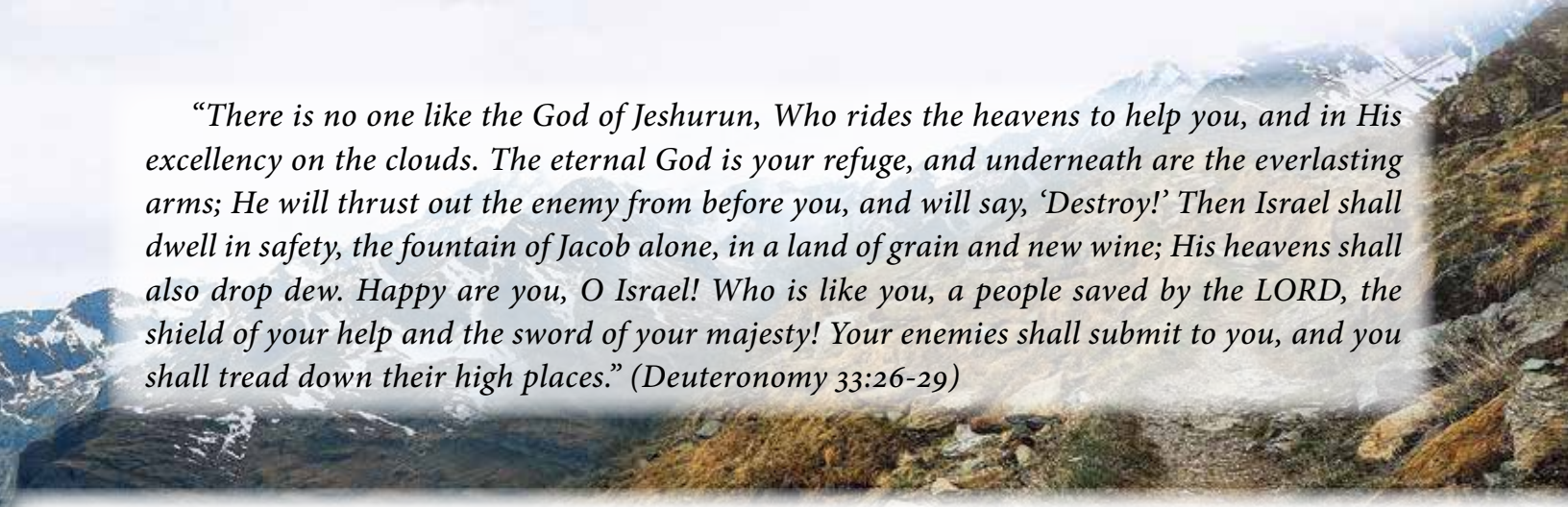
1. God Himself chose it. No humans thought of it or founded it. It comes from God and is a work of God. "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 7:6). "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

2. God purchased His people, His church for Himself. This was foreshadowed to Israel by the paschal lamb and fulfilled by God Himself in Jesus Christ on

the cross at Calvary. "And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation'" (Revelation 5:9). How very much God loves His people! At such great price He redeemed them from the world, from sin, and from eternal damnation. There aren't many such chosen people; the Bible speaks exclusively of one chosen nation that has this status in the eyes of God.

3. Membership in the church of God is by salvation alone. No other church can make this claim. This means that all truly born-again children of God belong to this incomparable church. All other methods to effect membership in a church separate God's people from one another, even though Jesus cried so entreatingly to the Father in John 17 that His people should be one. How glorious and incomparable is this element of the church of God! Have you been born into the church of God? Do you allow a human membership process to separate you from other born-again children of God who are not members of the same group? According to the Bible, this can never be God's will.

4. The membership book or church register of the church of God is maintained by God Himself. "The LORD will record when He registers the peoples: 'This one was born there'" (Psalm 87:6). We read in Acts 2:47, "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." To the disciples, Jesus said, "rejoice because your names are written in heaven." The



“There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides the heavens to help you, and in His excellency on the clouds. The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; He will thrust out the enemy from before you, and will say, ‘Destroy!’ Then Israel shall dwell in safety, the fountain of Jacob alone, in a land of grain and new wine; His heavens shall also drop dew. Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, the shield of your help and the sword of your majesty! Your enemies shall submit to you, and you shall tread down their high places.” (Deuteronomy 33:26-29)

membership book of the church of God is called the Book of Life. Is your name written there? “O Israel, Who is like you?”

5. God named His church with His own name, just as every family is normally named after the father. “You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD will name” (Isaiah 62:2). God did not forget to give His church a name. People have given their churches a multitude of names, but in the New Testament we read only of the church of God. God Himself gave it this name. And what else could God’s own family, His people, be called? He planned and founded the church. He instituted it, redeemed it, and the church belongs to Him. And so, He gave it the incomparable name, church of God.

6. We have already seen that all truly redeemed children of God belong to the church of God. But all members of the church of God also possess salvation. No unredeemed, no sinners belong to God’s church. Isaiah saw this in advance as he proclaimed, “Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; but you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise” (Isaiah 60:18). And in verse 21 he adds, “Also your people shall all be righteous.” We see that God’s people, His church, are encompassed by salvation and it consists exclusively of those made righteous by the blood of Christ, i.e. those who have been redeemed. Because of this, it is impossible for humans to determine who are members of the church, for they can never ascertain the true spiritual condition of another person’s heart. Dear Friend, if you have assurance of salvation before God, then you are a member of the glorious church of our God.

7. God’s people are unconquerable. “O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, the shield of

your help and the sword of your majesty! Your enemies shall submit to you, and you shall tread down their high places” (Deuteronomy 33:29). God Himself fights for His people, and He will never suffer defeat. Jesus said, “on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

8. God’s pleasure rests on His people. “The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob” (Psalm 87:2); “for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye” (Zechariah 2:8). God loves His people and cares for them. They belong to Him.

9. The church of God exists in eternity. No other church will be found in heaven, only the one Shepherd with His one flock. In what kind of church do you want to secure your future? On the Day of Judgment, the membership book of the church of God, the Book of Life, will be opened, and only if your name is found there will you enter Glory.

10. The church of God is incomparable because Jesus is its One and All. Not laws, articles of faith, traditions of the fathers, church leaders, etc., but only Jesus. He stands at the center of all the church is and does. As His bride, she loves Him more than anything and everything. She is willing to suffer and die for Him, and ultimately spend eternity with her Savior.

Do you know this incomparable church of the living God? Have you seen and experienced it? Are you a member by salvation in the blood of Jesus? As God’s dear child, this is your privilege and inheritance. Consider joining in proclaiming with the man of God, “O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, the shield of your help and the sword of your majesty! Your enemies shall submit to you, and you shall tread down their high places” (Deuteronomy 33:29). ■

God Is Able to Protect You!

“For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways” (Psalm 91:11).

The Lord is able to protect His children in wonderful ways. When the King of Syria was looking for the prophet Elisha, God dispatched a

company of angels. During the night, the Syrians had sent soldiers with horses and chariots to capture the prophet, and the invisible heavenly host stood silently by. We read, “And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, ‘Alas, my master! What shall we do?’ So he answered, ‘Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’ And Elisha prayed, and said, ‘Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.’ Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha” (2 Kings 6:15-17).

God has often sent out his angels to minister “to those who will inherit salvation” (Hebrews 1:14).

Jesus too was frequently in the company of angels. He said to His disciples, “Hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” (John 1:51).

Not only for protection were the angels sent by the heavenly Father. At Jesus’ birth, the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem heard an angel declare, “Do not be

afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy . . . there is born to you this day . . . a Savior” (Luke 2:10-11).

“Are they not
all ministering
spirits sent
forth to
minister for
those who
will inherit
salvation?”
Hebrews 1:14

Dear Reader, do you know how often God may have protected you through the help of angels? As sure as Jesus said, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20), so it is certain that angels surround and protect us. We will know more when we have entered eternity.

On that dark night long ago in Gethsemane, when Peter took out his sword to protect Jesus when He was to be arrested, “Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that

I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?’” (Matthew 26:52-54).

Yes, God is able. What a fantastic promise! It was only for our sake, to give us salvation, that the Son of God did not make use of this angelic deliverance. Oh, how great was His love for you and for me! Nevertheless, He sends angels on our behalf for our protection. ■

Hans Dietrich Nimz

A Fisherman's Angelic Deed

One spring morning, when the Danube River was flooded up to its stone walls, a six-year-old boy was on a stroll with his aunt. She had been visiting his parents and was now returning home. After the little boy had accompanied her a good portion of the way, she suggested he should turn around, and she bid him farewell. However, instead of heading towards home, he walked down to the river and climbed onto a board that was normally situated above water level. But now, the board was awash with water on all sides.

The boy amused himself by throwing a stick into the water and then retrieving it again. As he threw the stick in another time, it floated a little farther, and as he tried to retrieve it, he slipped and tumbled into the river. He sank a few times and bobbed to the surface again. Naturally, he screamed for help, but with no one in the vicinity to hear him, he was swept away by the current. Without a doubt, he would have drowned if God, Who sees and hears all things, hadn't sent help at precisely the right time.

Franz, a fisherman who lived close to the river, had just returned home. He had worked all night but hadn't caught anything. Tired and exhausted, he climbed into bed to sleep. But as soon as he had fallen asleep, he had a vivid dream telling him he should immediately run down to the river, cast out his net, and he would definitely catch a huge fish. The dream was so real, he actually got up and went down to the river. He set out his net and waited. It wasn't long until the unconscious boy was swept into the net, and the fisherman hastily pulled him out.

With dismay, the man recognized his neighbor's young son. With thankful astonishment, he realized he was still alive. He quickly attempted resuscitation and was able to return the revived young boy to his parents. Finally, the boy opened his eyes and started talking.

Fisherman Franz explained to the boy's parents how God had used an extraordinary dream to save

their child. From the bottom of their hearts, the parents thanked and praised God for the amazing rescue of their son.

The boy was named Johannes Henke. After he grew a little older, he learned to love the Savior and decided to dedicate his life to the God Who had saved his life in such a wonderful way. He became a missionary around the year 1841 and worked in the Caucasus region. ■



“You have not passed this way before”

*“That you may know the way by which you must go,
for you have not passed this way before”
(Joshua 3:4).*

Here we are at the threshold of a new year, just as the people of Israel, after 40 years of wandering in the desert, were standing before a new and unknown future.

What will this year bring us—joy or sorrow? Will the road that lies ahead be smooth-sailing or will it be an uphill battle all the way? Just like the Israelites in our text, we have never gone this way before. After 40 years of wandering in the desert, they are now standing on the bank of the Jordan river. The river is deep and wide. How will they get across? Their forefathers spoke of giants in the land they were to inhabit. Would they be able to conquer them? Don't we tend to fear the unknown?

How should we react to this new and unknown path? At the crossing of the Red Sea, God parted the water before they crossed over; this time it required more faith. This time the priests carrying the ark of the Lord were to walk into the water, and then its waters flowing downstream would be cut off and stand up in a heap. Joshua could have interjected, “Lord, that's not how you did it when Moses was leading; You parted the water first, couldn't you do it the same way this time?” Joshua believed the Word of God and was obedient. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6). Even though our path is unknown to us, it is not unknown to the Lord. A song writer puts it this way: “Many things about tomorrow I don't seem to understand, but I know who holds tomorrow and I know He holds my hand.”

Don't let the “giants” scare you. The problem with 10 of the 12 men Moses sent out to spy out the land of Canaan was that they were counting on their own

strength instead of the Lord's. Sure, there are giants awaiting us in the unknown future. Giants like “discouragement,” “worry,” and “doubt.” Satan would like to convince us that there is no way you can overcome those giants. Don't believe him. With God, all things are possible. Romans 8:31-39: “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”

Seek God's guidance for this new uncharted path. Since “you have not passed this way before,” God's admonition to Joshua was this: “Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:6-9).

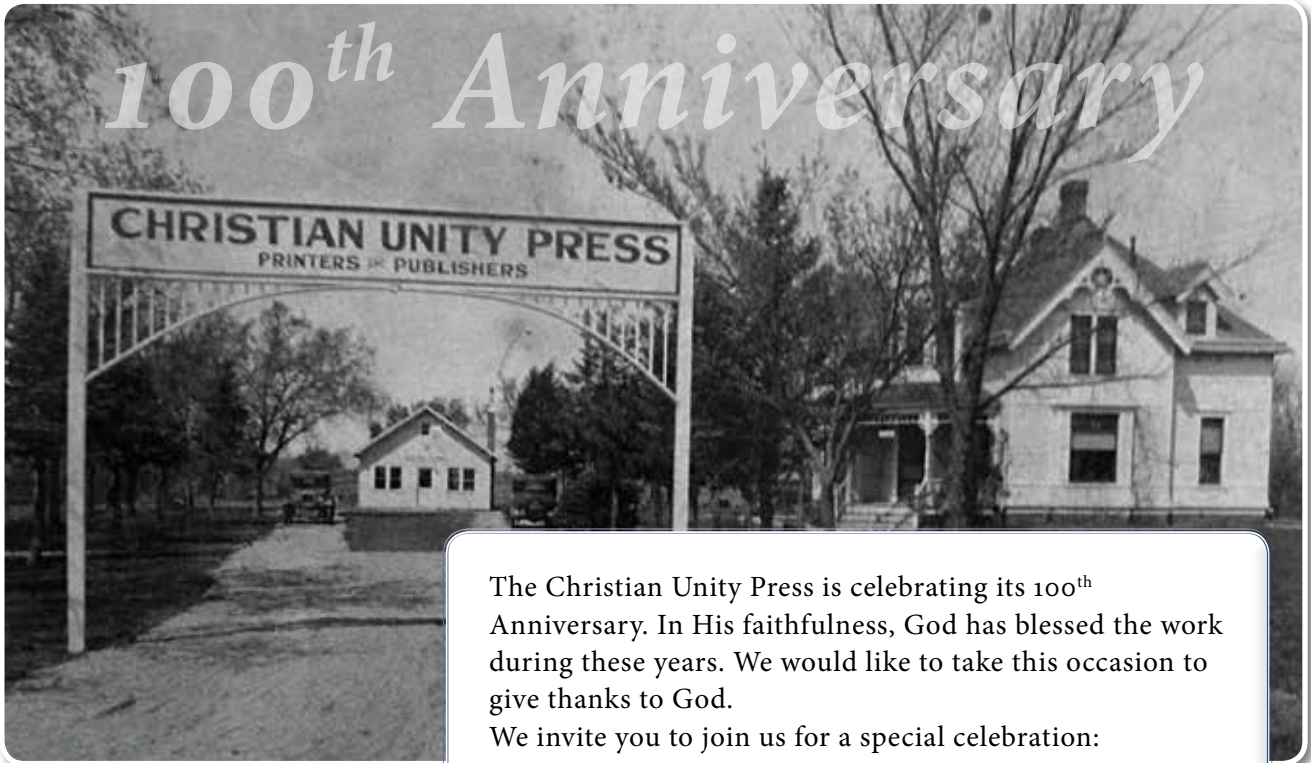
Let God's Word be your road map for your journey throughout this New Year.

New challenges await us. The unknown does not need to terrify us. Be strong and very courageous. With God on our side we can face whatever comes along.

I wish all readers of this periodical a blessed New Year!

■
Art Lange
Vernon, British Columbia

100th Anniversary



Christian Unity Press 1920 - 2020

The Christian Unity Press is celebrating its 100th Anniversary. In His faithfulness, God has blessed the work during these years. We would like to take this occasion to give thanks to God.

We invite you to join us for a special celebration:

When: September 5-6, 2020

Where: Swartz Creek, MI (USA)

On September 4, 2020, there will be an opportunity to receive some historical insight into the early years, with a visit to Grand Junction (250 km/155 mi away) where the first issues of the German “Gospel Trumpet” were printed.

More detailed information can be requested through:



David Goertzen (810) 635-7857



For the New Year

As the new year lies before me,
I look up to God alone:
“Will You lead me safely onwards
Through the year that’s yet unknown?”

May I trust, as did my fathers,
walk the path that they were shown?
With deception all around me,
May I hope in You alone?

Is there more to earth than nature,
Coincidence, chance gone wild?
May I know that God’s my Father,
And I am His loving child.”

And the answer comes from heaven,
Comforting my thirsting soul:
“I created earth and heaven;
I will lead you to your goal.

As I care for flowers and sparrows,
Made the sun and stars on high,
So your life’s path is remembered,
And to you I will be nigh.”

And my heart with joy and comfort
Looks ahead with hopeful cheer;
For I know that God Almighty
Leads me through the coming year.