



Foundation of Faith

DOES VICTORY ALWAYS
BELONG TO THE STRONG?

DOUBTS

TEMPTATION AND SIN

REFINING SILVER

HE CARES FOR YOU

A bald eagle is shown in flight, wings fully extended, flying from left to right across the middle of the page. The eagle's feathers are detailed, showing shades of brown and white. The background is a dense, dark green forest.

**Victory
in Temptation**

Contents

VICTORY IN TEMPTATION

- 4 An Unforgettable Lesson**
- 4 He Cares For You!**
- 5 Refining Silver**
An ancient craft teaches us one wonderful truth.
- 6 Does Victory Always Belong to the Strong?**
- 8 Incomprehensible**
Many things are too difficult for us to understand—but God can reveal.
- 9 God's Care**
- 10 Someone Who Encourages the Heart**
- 12 Victory in Battle**
- 13 Temptation and Sin**
Do you know the difference?
- RADIO BROADCAST
- 14 How Can We Overcome Temptations?**

3 Editorial

YOUTH PAGE

- 16 Decisions**
Verse of the Month

CHILDREN'S CORNER

- 18 I Will Fear No Evil**

SOMETHING FOR THE FAMILY

- 20 The Foolishness of the Wise**

ON THE ROAD OF SALVATION

- 22 Crossing Jordan (Part 13)**

24 Doubts

The best remedy to overcome doubt is to read God's Word with a prayerful heart.

- 26 How Can I Overcome My Doubts?**

- 27 Announcements**

POEM

- 28 On God Cast All Your Cares**

FOUNDATION OF FAITH

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Editorial

Dear Reader,

On our way to heaven, we face all sorts of trials, temptations, and disappointments, leaving us asking, “What should I do? How should I respond?” If we have sincerely given our hearts to the Lord, and if we read God’s Word and pray every day, we can and shall overcome. The Son of God knows what this means, having become just like us: “For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18). Our own strength is not sufficient, but the apostle Paul reminds us that it is not our strength that counts, writing, “You therefore, my son [my daughter], be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:1).

Yes, with God’s grace and His help, we can courageously march on. Let us look to Jesus, our Lord. How did He react when the devil came to tempt Him? He took hold of the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and said, “It is written”!

1. *“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4).*

2. *“It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God’” (Matthew 4:7).*

3. *“Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve’” (Matthew 4:10).*

It is so important for all of us to not only read the Word of God but to learn it by heart so it is always with us, in our innermost thoughts. This lets us apply it to our daily lives and allows us to face all trials and temptations, knowing “it is written”!

Let us take Paul’s words of encouragement into the new year as well: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. . . . Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:10–13).

H. D. Nimz

An Unforgettable Lesson

Moody recounts, “I met a man who gave me a lesson I will never forget. A friend invited me to visit this man just to have a little chat. He had been bedridden for many years. This sorely-afflicted man consoled me and told me some wonderful things.

“As a boy of 15, he had fallen and injured his spine. Since then, he had been bedridden for forty years and often suffered great pain.

“If someone would have told him that he would be bedridden and in pain for forty years, he probably would have replied that there was no way he could endure it. But from day to day, God gave him the grace to bear his suffering.

“I have to say that standing beside his bed, I felt as if I was in God’s presence. I felt as close to heaven as possible on this earth.

“It is often said that a person’s face reflects that heavenly glory inside him. But I have never seen a face that glowed as brightly as this man’s. It seemed to me that even the angels, who carry out the orders of

the Most High, must descend into his room to refresh themselves from his deep peace and patience. This is how he spent those long years, not just without grumbling, but with overwhelming joy.

“I asked him, ‘My brother, does the devil ever try to make you doubt God and think that He is coldhearted and merciless?’

“‘Absolutely,’ he replied, ‘that is exactly what he does. When I look out of the window and see the people walk by in full health, Satan whispers to me, ‘If God is really good, why has He left you like this all these years? Really, if He loved you, you wouldn’t lie here and be a burden to others but walk around in full health.’”

“What do you do when Satan tempts you like this?” I asked.

“I just lead him to the cross, where he was defeated and he doesn’t want to be reminded of that fact. Soon after, he leaves me alone.”

Dear Reader, maybe Satan is tempting you in one way or another. If so, try the same remedy. You will find it equally effective. ■

He Cares For You!

During a voyage, a pastor started a conversation with a sailor who was rowing the boat looking sad and obviously troubled. He reminded him of the Scripture, “Do not worry about your life” (Matthew 6:25).

“I don’t understand that verse. Am I supposed to laze around and leave it to chance to see if God will look after my wife and child? Or if they have to go hungry and freeze?”

“That’s not what I mean. Watch out! You aren’t paying attention to the rocks on the right and left! You aren’t even looking around!” the minister suddenly called out.

“That’s the helmsman’s job!”

“But who can be so unconcerned and carefree? Any

minute, we could hit something and you’re just rowing along, unconcerned!”

“I’m just doing my job. Would you want me to take the rudder out of the helmsman’s hand? Or would you want me to do both jobs at the same time? I’m rowing so we get ahead, and he has to keep us from crashing. If each of us does our job, it’ll go well and we won’t have to fear a shipwreck.”

“It’s the same with worry. The work, the responsibility, and the duty is our part. The worry that things will work out is left to the Lord. He is the Captain. That’s how He wants it.”

“Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). ■



Refining Silver

Several ladies were reading the third chapter in the prophetic book of Malachi: “Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me.” As they came to the second and third verses, they had several opinions regarding “the launderers’ soap and refiner and purifier of silver.” “He will sit as a refiner”—they could not understand this phrase from God’s Word.

One of the ladies was deeply moved in her heart by this biblical phrase, but she was unable to find clarity. Without hesitation, she decided to visit a silversmith and asked him to describe the process of refining silver. Yet she chose not to reveal the real purpose of her visit.

The silversmith explained that only by fire at high temperatures could precious metals be refined that still contained other base metals or impurities. “And you are constantly sitting and watching this?” the lady asked. “Most definitely,” answered the man. “That is most essential. I must be seated directly beside the melting furnace and constantly keep it in my view. The reason for this is that the silver or gold cannot remain in there one moment too long or too short. If this happens, it becomes unusable, either too hard, or too soft, making it unable to withstand the test.”

The lady was preparing to leave the shop; her heart was deeply moved. She saw herself in the hand of the Savior. Her heart now understood “the launderers’ soap and a purifier of silver.” “He will sit as a refiner.” Her life, with all its troubles, hardships, and disappointments flashed before her. She no longer felt the blaze of the melting furnace; instead, she saw the deep

love of God, and her heart was filled with praise and thankfulness.

The silversmith called her back. He had forgotten to tell her something. He knew that the purification process was complete when he could see and recognize his image in the melted mass. The perfection of this process was called the “gleam of silver.”

This is exactly how Jesus, our Master, sometimes brings His children into the “melting furnace” in order to remove all the impurities and slag and to make them more prepared for His kingdom work. He is sitting next to them with His eyes full of love, wisdom and compassion, watching the purification process. He is right beside us waiting, until His purpose in us has been achieved, so He can remove us from the oven of adversity, completely ready and mature for His service.

Dear Friends, let us learn from this example. Jesus keeps us in the melting furnace until His image is revealed in us. When this happens, His purpose for us has been achieved.

The sooner you give room to the Lord Jesus in your heart, the sooner you obey the Holy Spirit and yield to His Word and leading, the sooner He will remove you from the melting furnace. You must allow Jesus to help you. All of your own desires and inclinations must be burned in the fire of God’s loving discipline.

Look up to the Lord Jesus, and learn to understand what He is trying to teach you so He can remove you from the melting furnace into an intimate relationship with Him, a blessed life. He is sitting and waiting for the exact moment, for the gleam of silver! ■

G. F.

Does Victory Always Belong to the Strong?

Generally, we believe the world belongs to the talented. We obviously assume the fastest runner will win the race. The war is usually won by the strongest army. The smartest earns the most money. The intelligent have riches, and garner favor.

Nevertheless, the victory does not always belong to the strong. In Ecclesiastes 9:11 we read, “I returned and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favor to men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all.” Of course, Solomon’s assertion was correct.

Barak defeated Sisera even though all the circumstances were in Sisera’s favor. Wellington and Blücher defeated Napoleon at Waterloo, which astounded the whole world. In the past, many wars were won even though, according to the strategies employed, they should have been lost. Victory does not always belong to the strong.

It is not the skilled who earn the most bread. The wise man Solomon said, “Nor bread to the wise.” During economic crises or times of unemployment, many smart people were without bread. Many of the rich lost everything they possessed.

Then Solomon continues, “Nor favor to men of skill.” Many a statesman possessed great talents and was wise in carrying out his tasks but was hated by thousands. The wise king closes his speech,

“But time and chance happen to them all.”

In Psalm 37:23 we read, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way.” In Proverbs 3:6 we read, “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

Do you believe in luck?

Do you believe in such a thing as “luck”? I do not. Most people engineer their own luck. We usually provide our own opportunities, or we encounter them by way of our conduct. I do not believe in luck, but I believe in the leading of God and His Holy Spirit.

I believe that godly eyes, a godly heart, and a godly hand reign in our world among believers. Christians may experience things not understandable with the mind.

God allows such things to happen.

I believe in godly wisdom which directs a pure heart, which orders its works, but also brings evil to fall.

A few years ago, my wife was in the hospital hovering between life and death because a drunk driver had rammed her vehicle at high speed. This happened about 500 kilometers (300 mi) from where we live. Do you believe it was “luck” or “chance” that Mr. and Mrs. F. G. Smith were visiting relatives on that day one kilometer away from the accident site of my wife? When Mr. and Mrs. Smith stood beside

her bed, she looked up and said, “Did God send you here?” How would you have answered such a question?

When our first child was being born, we waited in vain for his first cry. We never heard him cry. Our broken hearts failed to understand why this had happened to us. However, later we realized that God used this incident to change our lives in a wonderful way. We continued in a different pathway after that.

A Life Organized by God

I firmly believe that a totally “surrendered” life is a life “organized” by the Lord. He makes this possible through our love for Him so that pains, worries, and suffering become spiritual blessings.

Looking at this from another perspective, every joy, every blessing, every acknowledgement, and every privilege will be accepted with deep humility by a Christian, knowing that God has lent us our abilities and capabilities. All the praise that comes our way through the proper use of these abilities belongs to God and not to us.

We should not honor a person because of his capabilities. Respect him only if he uses his God-given gifts properly.

The victory is not always due to strength or talent. It is frequently observed that the most talented person in our circle of known individuals is not necessarily the most successful in his career. The successful persons are generally



the average ones who possess the ability to work hard, even without praise, and who do their daily work diligently and intentionally.

Many inventors do not owe their fame to their unusual intelligence but due to the diligence employed to reach their goal. The smartest speakers are not in the largest churches. The most fruitful missionaries are not always the most talented.

The fact is that people with many talents often let themselves go and become self-centered and self-assured. They depend too much on their own abilities.

Do not feel that you are disadvantaged

The victory does not always belong to the strong. It belongs to those who can trust God.

Do not let yourself be held back from doing your best for God by feelings of inferiority. Do not say, “I can’t testify openly for Christ if I am unable to say what is in my heart when people are watching me.” To the young man whom God would like to call into His service,

do not say, “I could not be a pastor because I could never speak like this person or that person.”

That could be true, but what does it matter? You can be true to yourself and give your best. You can love the people, be attentive to their needs, show understanding, and extend sympathy to them. After a few years, they will not want to trade you for a more powerful speaker.

Hard Worker

The victory does not always belong to the strong. No one would ever have called D. L. Moody a genius. He was a salesman in a shoe store. However, he gave God the first place in his heart and became a blessing to thousands. William Carey, a simple shoemaker, had an outstanding love for the lost. Look at his list of accomplishments: a scholar of the Orient; a missionary; helped establish a missionary society; one of the first missionaries in India; built churches, schools, and printing facilities in Serampore; professor of Sanskrit at the college of Fort William near Calcutta;

translated parts of the Bible into nearly 40 languages and dialects; wrote grammar books and dictionaries in numerous languages, including Marathi, Sanskrit, and Punjabi; wrote and distributed the newsletter “Ramayana” from 1806-1810.

Carey was no genius. He was a diligent shoemaker with a great love for the lost. He was willing to work hard throughout his life for his God.

Do not become discouraged if you are only an average person. The victory does not always belong to the strong. Work diligently wherever you are, with whatever you have available. Let no machinery get cold. Keep your heart warm, your eyes open, your hands available, and you can do more for God and humanity than some genius who squanders his capabilities.

So whether you have one talent or ten, give everything you have to God. Let Him lead you, and He will make you a messenger of blessings in His kingdom. ■

D. O.

Incomprehensible

There are countless things in the lives of each person which they cannot understand, and because of this, many battles, difficulties, and immeasurable damages may result. The psalmist Asaph wrote, “When I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me—until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end” (Psalm 73:16-17).

Doubts of God’s justice clawed the soul of the psalmist like the claws of a raptor when he saw how the wicked man prospered, whose riches increased without effort, who lived at ease and had all he wished for. Asaph saw how the godless man had everything at his disposal that served to advance his well-being and his family’s and how others looked up to him, while Asaph’s life consisted of a chain of never-ending burdens, worries, and difficulties. And God in Whom he believed remained silent to all the injustices, scoffings and wicked speeches of the godless. Asaph thought about all this, but it was too painful for him. The old serpent raised its head and whispered, “What does it help you to wash your hands in innocence?”

What a terrifying rock in the ocean of life, and how many millions of people have run into it, turned the rudder, and gone a different course! Thousands who once learned to believe in a help-

ful, loving God have lost their faith because of such bitter experiences in life. It was too hard for them to understand.

“I can no longer believe in a God of love, because I see so many suffering people who have such miserable lives,” said a young woman who worked in the office of a psychiatric clinic. Sometimes you hear people ask, “Why does God allow millions of people to lose their lives in wars or in various accidents when they’re not at fault? Or why does God cause so many women and innocent children to become widows and orphans?” People often think about these things that are too hard for them to understand.

Many children of God suffer harm to their souls because they struggle to understand things that are incomprehensible. Take the example of someone who has been sick for many years. How much prayer, fasting, and faith have been applied on his behalf, but nothing seems to change. Or take the example of a soul that has been struggling to be loosened from certain bonds of sin. The heavens seem to be impenetrable. The serpent, Satan, throws doubt into countless hearts.

Oh dear Soul, watch out! It is a dangerous cliff to the edge of which many have run, and changed their course. They thought about it, but it was too hard to grasp. Look at

Asaph. What did he do when it became too hard for him? He went into the sanctuary, and there he found such clarity that his soul burned with love for God, Whom he saw in the sanctuary. By writing the word “then,” he placed a strong dam against the swelling tides of doubts.

“Then” is a wonderful word. It shows us the firm resolution in Asaph’s heart to cling to God despite the many incomprehensible things. Furthermore, it shows us that God became so big and glorious in the sanctuary that his soul let go of everything earthly and desired only God, by offering his body and soul. What a wonderful victory! What a wonderful place, this sanctuary!

This place that Asaph went to was a place where godly wisdom reigned over human reasoning. This is where you too should go with everything that you cannot understand, so that God can reveal Himself to you. Don’t search for this place in Jerusalem or in a specific building. No, wherever there is a quiet place to speak with God is where God’s miracles and His laws will become visible to your spiritual eyes. There, God will appear great and glorious in His majesty, in His wisdom and all-encompassing love. You will become small and leave hard-to-understand things to Him Who is infinitely greater than you. You will realize that our God

of love is also a God of wrath and judgment and that He knows why He does or allows such things. The parable of poor Lazarus and the rich man, who only lived for himself, sheds wonderful light with the end result: “But now he is comforted and you are tormented.”

Note how Moses went into the sanctuary (Numbers 7:89) not to

speak with God but to allow God to speak to Him. Don’t allow your heart to air grievances by setting a string of “why’s” between you and God, often in an accusing or unbelieving manner, or by trying to force your opinion on God. Like Abraham, look up to heaven and count the stars. Remind yourself of the miracles you’ve experienced in

your life, and then you will come to the point where you can agree with David: “Truly my soul silently waits for God” (Psalm 62:1). That is the time when God speaks to us and reveals Himself to us. That is why the Lord says, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). ■

Gottfried Zuber

God’s Care

“Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you” (Isaiah 49:15).

With what tenderness a mother watches over her sick child! She counts every breath, she notices every movement, she anticipates every wish. His cries cut deep into her heart. She does everything she can to provide him relief. A sick child is not reassured and satisfied until he can put his feverish hand into the hand of his mother. And the mother can’t help but keep vigil day and night at her sick child’s bedside. No effort is too big for her and no sacrifice too hard.

A mother cannot forget her little child.

Even if she may forget, if the inhumane happens, “I will never forget you,” says the Lord, the One Who has pity on us. This promise of God should be our consolation. In all our hardships, sufferings, and struggles, we want to remember that we have our Helper in heaven Who is more powerful, tender, and wise than a mother. He said it Himself, and He cannot lie.

If we are sick and miserable, if temptation threatens to crush us,

if we do not know where to look for rest and comfort, we can flee to Him with all our woe and misery, Who said, “As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you” (Isaiah 66:13). Pour your heart out to Him. Cast your care on Him. “The LORD is near to all who call upon Him” (Psalm 145:18). He heals battered hearts and raises up the miserable and oppressed. If He has to move heaven and earth to help one of His children, He will. He promised. “I will never forget you,” says the Lord. ■

Someone Who Encourages the Heart

Aren't there situations in our lives when it sometimes seems that nobody understands us or can help us? Where do we find comfort then? Jesus so lovingly invites us to bring our burdens to Him; He wants to refresh us. No friend can love like Jesus.

At some point in life, everyone has the need to share their problems with someone, to simply pour out their heart. Perhaps we have a close friend we can go to, or it could be our mother or our father, a sibling, or our pastor. But there are times when even our dearest friend would not understand our difficulties and burdens. The worries seem so great sometimes that we want to call out like David, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. Indeed, I would wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. . . . I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest” (Psalm 55:6-8). But even a change in location will not necessarily take away our worries and will not provide a shelter in the storm.

When people travel great distances, as many do, to escape their pain and sorrows, their troubles are often multiplied. David left the capital city and traveled to Mahanaim because of his son Absalom's revolt. But there, we find him voicing his deep woe, lamenting, “O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!” (2 Samuel 18:33). And not only did his son go astray and leave

him, but his beloved advisor deserted him and joined those who were against him. David considered Ahithophel as one of his most trustworthy friends, and yet he failed him. “For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; then I could hide from him. But it was you, a man my equal, my companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng” (Psalm 55:12-14). Even your best friend may desert you in a time of need.

To whom can we go? There are times when there is no other place to go but to Jesus to find real comfort. The disciples of John did so when their Leader was taken from them and deep sorrow weighed them down. John had been brutally murdered to satisfy the passion of a morally decrepit person. “Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus” (Matthew 14:12). They went and told Jesus. They did what millions of others have done since then and many still do today.

They knew He would understand and comfort them. Without a doubt, some of them would have been in the crowd by the Jor-

dan where John the Baptist was baptizing the people. They would have noticed the unknown prophet from the north enter the scene as John made them aware, saying, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me’” (John 1: 29-30). Some of them may have been among those whom John sent from his prison in Machaarus (as per Josephus, John was imprisoned in the castle of Machaarus, where he was subsequently put to death) to ask Jesus if He was the Coming One or if they should look for someone else.

On this occasion, they recognized His power and compassion, for “that very hour He cured many infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight. Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them’” (Luke 7:21-22). Then they hurried to Him with their concerns.

There is One with Whom we can find refuge from all that pursues and punishes, from every-

thing that torments and depresses us in all the fears, storms, and upheavals we face. In all these troubles, we will find a haven, a safe shelter in Jesus.

When we don't understand, and when troubles, worries, and disappointments seem so dark, we can always enter God's holy presence and seek His counsel. When we can't understand the why's, when's, and wherefore's of God's plan—since God's thoughts are not like human thoughts and His ways

are higher than our ways—we can ask Him to help us understand.

Trouble and worry, suffering and disappointment drive us to this sanctuary. Isaiah, whose tragic life is known to us, calls out, "The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. He will be as a sanctuary" (Isaiah 8:13-14a). Jeremiah, who is called the "weeping prophet" because of his difficulties, found this sanctuary and stated, "A glorious high throne from the be-

ginning is the place of our sanctuary" (see Jeremiah 17:12).

Anguished, tired, and with a heart broken by worries and sorrow, surrounded by storms, we hasten to Jesus in prayer. We hurry to Him who is merciful, like a loving father cares for his children. A conversation with Him will help us. We will find that He shares our troubles and trials and wants to carry our load, because He cares for us.

■
E. Martin



Victory in Battle

It is clearly stated in the Bible that we will endure adversity—adversity in the form of temptations and persecution. “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). Likewise, we read how people were persecuted in the past. Among these, we find many who endured cruel mockery and scourging.

The prophets also spoke of being tempted: “Many shall be purified, made white, and refined” (Daniel 12:10). “I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested” (Zechariah 13:9). “I will . . . make a mortal more rare than fine gold, a man more than the golden wedge of Ophir” (Isaiah 13:11-12).

These Scriptures help us to understand why we endure so many fiery trials. We are very precious and worthy in God’s eyes, and He has promised to never leave us nor forsake us. Are you presently enduring relentless temptations? If yes, then listen to God’s promise: “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10). Remember how content your child was as he was walking beside you and holding your hand. He couldn’t trip and fall; he was happy. This is exactly what we will experience when God leads us through rough terrain, all the while smiling down at us with encouragement.

Perhaps you are saying, “But there are so many severe temptations!” Yes, but let’s realize God’s promises are so much stronger and that they will carry us through. “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you” (Isaiah 43:2). Thanks be to God, temptations will not conquer us. Storms may rage fiercely, storms of affliction may flow over our soul, persecutions may flood us, fiery darts from non-believers may attack our soul; but God is greater than all of these adversities. “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

“But,” you might be saying, “I have so many temptations and at the same time such bad thoughts. I really think there’s something wrong with me. Maybe I’m not right with God.” Dear Soul, don’t be discouraged, even if you do not feel the presence of God while you are praying. He is with you; He will not leave you. Others have had the same experience. Remember Job. “Look, I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; when He works on the left hand, I cannot behold Him; when He turns to the right hand, I cannot see Him. But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:8-10). Was Job the only person for whom God cared? “My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful” (James 5:10-11). Praise God that He took care of Job, even though he did not sense God’s presence. God, who is full of compassion, was near to him.

You may be saying, “I can’t understand the strange things that come over me.” All things work together for good. The Everlasting Father who is full of love wants to lead you to victory, eternal glory, and everlasting life. “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy” (1 Peter 4:12-13).

Yes, joy and delight. You will consider it joy that you remained faithful and were able to suffer somewhat for Jesus. Don’t ever think you are the only one who has to suffer these trials. Know “that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world” (1 Peter 5:9). Does the road you are travelling seem too long and too hard? Or do you think God doesn’t care about you any longer? “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” (Romans 8:35). Is this disturbing you? Be encouraged; nothing can separate you from the love of God. Jesus loves you. He will not forsake you. It’s up to you to remain faithful to Him.

C. P.

Temptation and Sin

We are exposed to many temptations in our lives. We've all experienced it. Temptations often bring us difficult hours. It is understandable that some dear souls long for a state in which all temptations and battles end. Some think this state is achieved through salvation. Others think that entire sanctification will free us of all temptations. There is no place in the Holy Bible that gives us reason to believe that we can go through life without temptations. Our practical experience also teaches us that we will be tempted throughout our entire lives.

Adam and Eve were tempted in the Garden of Eden. Jesus was tempted in the desert and throughout His whole life and "was in all points tempted as we are" (Hebrews 4:15). Paul had to fight against many difficulties. Yes, all are tempted.

However, it is important that we clearly discern that temptations are not sin. Temptations can lead to sin. Adam and Eve were defeated, but Jesus had victory. Through temptation, an inward battle takes place, and this battle often induces bad feelings. Our thoughts go back and forth. The devil tempts us to sin, but the Spirit of God admonishes us to be holy. It is often as in combat. We move forward a little, then the enemy counter-attacks, and we retreat a little. The Holy Spirit encourages us, and we step toward the enemy again. In this confusion, you can't speak of victory yet, but not of defeat either. The end will determine that. Whoever holds their ground is the victor, and that is what we should be, according to God's will (Ephesians 6:13).

After such a battle, we are often sad, even though victorious. We feel we should have fought better. It was our fault the battle was so long. We should have stood more decisively against the enemy. We feel regret because we feel as if we've grieved God. Then we desire to ask God for forgiveness and promise Him to fight better in the next battle, with His help.

We are not always tempted strongly. There are times when the waters barely touch our soul. We have days when we have less to fight. There may also be times where much sunshine floods our lives. Jesus was strongly tempted in the desert, but then the devil departed from Him for a while (Luke 4:13).

You are not a "bad" Christian if you are tempted. All holy people are tempted. The devil especially exerts great effort specifically against children of God. Therefore, do

not be discouraged after a hot battle. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Some temptations disappear completely, while others remain. Whatever the case, we want to submit to God in big and small battles. We do not want to be afraid of the roaring of the lion, but we want to have victory over sin with the Lord's help.

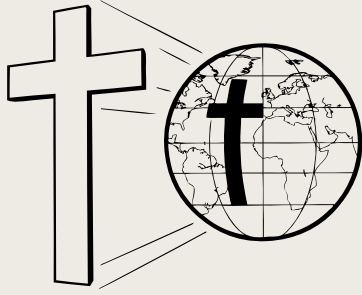
In order to be victorious in all battles, we need the power of God (Ephesians 6:10-13). We must wear the spiritual armor daily so we can always be prepared to resist the enemy. We want to lead a continual life of prayer with our Lord. Only through an inner bond with our Savior can our soul be strengthened. If we seek His help daily, we will also have the power of God, which we will especially need in a battle (Hebrews 4:16).

However, we don't want to forget to do our part in contributing to a life of victory. The Lord will always help. But a proverb says, "Whoever finds himself in danger will succumb." Therefore, we want to avoid places of temptation. We should give up friendships with people who tempt us to sin. "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly" (Psalm 1:1).

We all have temptations and battles. But do we all know a life of victory? The psalmist says, "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous" (Psalm 118:15). God's Word tells us of the first Christians who knew this life of victory. Victory encourages us for the future. What joy lives in our hearts when we have fought righteously! Joy revives us so we can confidently continue to live for God.

You can have victory. If you sorrow over your sins and truly repent of them, then you will receive forgiveness of your sins and will come into contact with the power of God. Then you can withstand all temptations through faith. We have such a wonderful promise in Scripture: "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Temptation will come to an end so you can have victory. God may let you sink, but not drown. "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations" (2 Peter 2:9).

Believe the Word of God, make use of God's power that is available to you, and the Lord will give you victory over all sins. ■



Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs
Kitchener, ON

How Can We Overcome Temptations?

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul goes back to the Israelites’ wandering in the wilderness. God had brought them out of Egyptian slavery with a mighty hand and wanted to lead them to Canaan, the Promised Land. Travelling through the brutal wilderness, they encountered many hardships, struggles, conflicts, and tribulations, and in the midst of unexpected encounters, there were disappointments, discouragements, discontentment, reluctance, and criticism, which was a fertile ground for the tempter to sow his seed. Satan tempted the people to rebel against Moses and Aaron and to be disobedient, resentful, and indignant against God. The cunning enemy used the situation and external circumstances to his advantage, and they did not fail to have an effect. Instead of resisting the devil, the Israelites allowed his influence to flourish until they had sinned heavily against God. They allowed themselves to be drawn into idolatry and fornication with foreign nations and continually grumbled against God and His laws. Finally, the Lord said, “It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways” (Psalm 95:10).

In 1 Corinthians 10:5, the apostle writes, “But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.” At the same

time, he explains that this was written as an admonishment for future times and as a warning for us. We are to learn a lesson from this as we will also go through rough and stormy times and be tempted in various ways. The clever tempter knows our predispositions and how to take advantage of good opportunities to invade our lives with his well-thought-out temptations.

Peter, who himself had been severely tempted, warned his readers, saying, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world” (1 Peter 5:8-9). In one of the last warnings Jesus relayed to His disciples, He said, “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation” (Matthew 26:41a). Satan will use any method to plunge people into sin. He purposefully comes with veiled intentions to get people to succumb to his will. Through tempting, harmless whispering, he tries to gain our attention and blind us. Then he tries to numb our conscience and remove inner inhibitions and all concerns. If successful, he employs every effort to redirect our will to approve sin that is beautifully-disguised and harmlessly-portrayed. If ap-



proval has been granted, sin has occurred; the tempter has overpowered us and achieved his goal. This is the usual process for every temptation, and those who do not take a stand against it will face accusations, stress, suffering, and pain.

However, we want to be very clear that a temptation in itself is not yet a sin. In any case, it is a perilous, preliminary step to sin. Many people don't know how to distinguish between temptation and sin and often place them on the same level. Our Lord Jesus was repeatedly tempted. Nevertheless, the Bible tells us that no sin was found in Him. Peter confirmed it when he said, "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). Those who equate temptation with sin must also believe that Jesus sinned, which would be a total contradiction to the Word of God. Jesus had prepared His disciples for inevitable temptations, but just as temptations were not sin for Him, they needn't be for us either. However, they can

quickly become sin if we do not resist the tempter or if we give consent to sin.

We can compare temptation to an open door where we are lured to enter a sinful room. In this scenario, each of us is faced with a decision left entirely up to us. How will we behave, or what we will do? Every temptation involves an inner struggle, and it will determine whether we have victory or failure. The end result of this struggle is important, and it is up to us to decide whether we want to be faithful to the Lord or to be subject to the will of Satan. Our temptations can sometimes be severe and difficult, but 1 Corinthians 10:13 gives us the wonderful promise: "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." You can only be victorious with Christ; therefore, in His name and with firm belief, dare to resist the tempter, and you will maintain victory. ■

Decisions

Years ago, in an online forum, I came across a discussion about what we would do differently if we could start our lives over. The answers were very interesting, revealing remarkable insight. For example, somebody said, “I would pay more attention in school and improve my grades,” wanting better qualifications and a higher income down the line. Someone else said, “I would learn a different trade.” A third respondent wrote, “I would go to university instead of trade school.” There were also people who were happy with their careers but burdened with other worries. One of them, for example, would have liked to talk things through with his parents before they divorced. A frequent reply was also, “I would marry someone else,” or “I would not give up on my first love.”

Have you noticed what these answers have in common? Most of the things we would like to change now can be traced back to decisions made in our youth.

Why would so many people live their lives differently if they had the chance? You’re probably familiar with the principle of cause and effect. This principle governs our decisions too, and their consequences can greatly impact the “quality” of our lives. How good, correct, and wise a decision is can often not be seen immediately, becoming apparent only after a certain amount of time has passed.

For example, although I was drawn toward a technical profession early on, I chose not to study physics and chemistry in my final years of school. I would have had to work significantly harder to get good grades in these subjects than in biology and Russian, which were much easier for me. I ended up taking the easy route until I graduated, wanting good results with minimal effort. Looking back, this decision was not at all wise, and some four years later, I often regretted it. For two

semesters, I had to spend nearly every Saturday with a physics tutor in order to pass the physics component of my studies. In this way, the rather frivolous decision I made while in school directly affected my later life at university—Saturday upon Saturday, for two whole semesters.

The Bible tells us about someone who made a much better decision. In Hebrews 11:24–26, we read, “By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.” Have you ever really noticed the last part of verse 26? “For he looked to the reward.” Moses had taken the potential effects of his decision into consideration ahead of time and made his decision accordingly. In other words, in the first third of his life, Moses made a decision based primarily on how it would affect him at the end of his life and for eternity. What a valuable concept!

Is there something we can learn from him? Can we make our decisions the same way now, in 2020? Theoretically, yes. However, it will probably not take long for us to hit a roadblock; we have no real way of predicting the long-term consequences of our decisions. Who can say what the effects of my career choice will be? Granted, some things are obvious. There are certain professions that would make it difficult or even impossible to regularly attend worship services or prayer meetings. That would be an important aspect to consider when choosing a career. But what about the many other details that are harder to predict? How can I take them into consideration? The same goes for nearly all major decisions, does it not? For example, are all marriages happy? Unfortunately not.



So how did Moses do it? Was he able to look into the future and see what would happen? What did the “reproach of Christ” mean to him, born some 1525 years before Christ? What did he know about it? Did he have books to refer to? No, we know he didn’t. That leaves just one plausible conclusion: it was his personal relationship with God. Moses, who grew up in the palaces of Pharaoh, must have lived in personal communion with God. That is the key.

If you have made the most important of all decisions the right way, there is nothing for you to fear. If Christ is at the center of your life, you can be absolutely certain He will help you in all your decisions, just as He once helped Moses.

Let me show you what the Bible says about this: “My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly; He guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of His saints. Then you will understand righteousness and justice, equity and every good path” (Proverbs 2:1–9; the entire chapter is worth reading).

In all honesty—do we need anything else? Just take half an hour to think about these nine verses. Talk them over with God. Write down what goes through your mind. Write out the causes and effects. What, specifically, can you do, and how? Then, start putting it all into action. That will be a decision you will never regret!

Niko Ernst (DE)

Verse of the Month

“For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard” (Isaiah 52:12).

Unfortunately, I have repeatedly experienced what happens when I’ve made hasty comments or decisions or have hastily drawn conclusions. In hindsight, they have not turned out well and have sometimes even ended up having negative results. Often they were done with good intentions. However, because of my hasty actions, my shallow consideration, or my lack of detailed planning for certain events, I failed.

The introductory verse specifically once caused me to pause and deliberate. Since that time it accompanies me time and time again. It should not hinder our enthusiasm for God, but it should protect us from overhasty actions, imprudent missteps, and resulting negative consequences. We do not want it said of us, “that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge” (Romans 10:2).

Even after our conversion, we retain our character with its strengths and weaknesses, but God uses His Word to mold our character. For that, I am thankful.

I Will Fear No Evil

Pedro had been a Christian only a short time. He had believed in ghosts and spirits more years than he had believed in the one living God. It was hard to forget the stories he had always heard about the evil spirits that lived in trees, rocks, and flowing water. It was hard to always remember that he was now a Christian.

Pedro had gone to the new church, been baptized, and learned to recite many verses from the Bible. He was glad to be a Christian but sometimes he forgot.

At the time of our story he found himself thinking of ghosts and spirits instead of God Who loved him. It was the darkest of dark nights when Pedro had to go on an errand from his own mountain village to another.

If you live among street lights, house lamps, and automobile headlights, you have no idea how dark the world can be where none of these lights are shining. There was no moon that night. There was nothing but the small flame of Pedro's lantern as he walked slowly, feeling his way along the trail.

Every frightful story he had ever heard popped into his mind. The soft hooting of the owl seemed eerie to him. The hoarse "gek-ko" of the big green liz-



ards seemed like the shrieks of wicked demons. The scratching of one tree limb upon another seemed like wails from another world. The big fruit bat swished close to him, making him jump.

Pedro would have turned about and run for home, but he had gone too far. It would be as bad to turn back as to go on.

"I wish I had the charm I used to carry before I was baptized," thought Pedro. "It was supposed to keep away evil spirits. My new Christian faith has no charms."

Pedro stumbled on, thinking now of the new faith which was supposed to make him strong and brave. He tried to pray, but couldn't think of the right words. He didn't know that God hears prayers without words.

Then Pedro began to recite Bible verses. He remembered one about "the valley of the shadow of death." He felt certain he was in such a valley now.

"The Lord is my Shepherd," Pedro recited aloud. He wondered what made that clump of tree ferns sway so hard.

"I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures." He hoped that noise was a big lizard rustling off through the leaves—not a ghost.

"He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul," recited Pedro. This was the time of night when poisonous snakes were about, but he would rather meet one of them than a spirit.

"He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me." That "You" meant God, didn't it? Didn't it mean that God was really with Pedro on the dark mountain trail?

"Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." It was good to think of God walking beside him, taking care of him.

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies." Enemies? That would mean ghosts or spirits. No, not really. There weren't



any ghosts. It would mean the fear of ghosts or spirits. Fear was Pedro's enemy.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Pedro walked with a lighter step. Suddenly, he was not afraid. The psalm was like a prayer! It made him feel that God was with him. He looked at the clumps of trees and laughed. He knew wind, shadows, owls,

and big green lizards for what they were. There was nothing on that trail at night more frightful than when he ran along it during the day.

"The Lord is my Shepherd," he began again. He could not tell how many times he recited that psalm before he came to the neighboring village. But he could tell you that it put courage into his heart and a spring into his walk. ■

The Beautiful Way

The Foolishness of the Wise

An important figure in the Old Testament was King Solomon. He began life under the very best conditions, with rich talent. And yet, his life is a serious warning for us.

In his youth, Solomon displayed a deep piety and zealous love for justice. When he became king, he was faced with a great task, and he went to work with a happy heart. It was a pleasure for him to build a temple for God, and he put all his strength into it. On the day of the temple's inauguration, his prayer revealed a deep reverence and subservient spirit. Over the years, his wealth and honor increased. His name became the byword for wisdom and reason. Many nations brought him gifts. Despite all these privileges, his heart remained true to God. During these years, he must have believed that he would go on living his life as a faithful servant to God until the end. But it turned out differently. Those who know his story know of the dark shadow that later came upon his life. We know how his luster vanished. It will serve us well to realize the causes that led to his decline.

God had not changed. The change that led to this decline lay with Solomon himself. For political reasons, he married princesses from the royal houses of the surrounding countries. These wives were idolaters. They only regarded

God as the national god of the Hebrews. They still followed their old religions and worshiped the gods of their people. Solomon resisted these influences for a long time. His heart was still faithful to God. But these influences continued. He was in daily contact with them, and little by little they gained a hold on him. Thus we read, "For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David" (1 Kings 11:4). The result was that the man whom God so honored became an idolater and publicly disgraced his Lord, drawing many of his people into the same web of idolatry.

What a lesson and warning we have for ourselves in this example! If young Christians today marry people who embrace the sins of the world, the result is usually the same as Solomon's. But it's not only through these connections that hearts are turned away from the Lord; there are many other things that will also affect us if we are not vigilant. We are strongly influenced by the actions of others. Such influences continue to work, whether we are aware of it or not.

We also have an example of influence in the life of Jehoshaphat (2 Kings 12). Jehoshaphat was brought up by Jehoiada, the high priest, who was a godly man. As a result of this influence, Jehoshaphat also became a man who feared the Lord. He was a pious king as long as he had a pious teacher and was under his positive influence. When Jehoiada died, other influences affected the king. He gave in, and instead of continuing to be a man of God, he became wicked. Thus, his life experiences run parallel to Solomon's. In their youth, these men were virtuous and honorable, but in their later years of life, they dishonored God and themselves. That is why their sun turned into darkness and their way of life was defiled.

Given these two examples, it will do us good to pay attention to the Scripture passage: "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). When we serve the Lord, it is natural for us to believe we will stay on the right path until the end. We do not think we are going to give in to any influences that take us away from the Lord. But like Solomon, how many have turned their hearts away from the

Lord because of the influences to which they are exposed. Solomon himself says, "Keep your heart with all diligence" (Proverbs 4:23), but he failed to act accordingly. The silent, hidden work of those evil influences alienated his heart from the Lord without him truly realizing it. His love soon cooled, and his zeal declined. The God of Israel became only a god among the other gods.

Dear Brother, dear Sister, there are influences that surround you every day and every hour. Do you know what they are? Do you know what effect they have? Are you already aware of the consequences they have in your heart and life, in your thoughts, and in the attitude of your soul toward God? Do you

defend yourself against every evil influence? Look into your life and see if there are any evil influences that you are gradually and subconsciously giving in to. Has the world inched closer to you during the past years? Is it more attractive to you than in past times? Does its pride and vanity, its light-heartedness, and its ungodly nature seem less offensive to you than before? Is sin more of a flippant matter for you than in the past? Does the Word of God have less of a hold on your conscience than before? Does the voice of duty in your soul still speak in the same clear tone, and does it find you just as willing to listen and follow? Are worship and prayer just as dear and satisfying to you as before? Is it a pleasure for

you to sacrifice some of your goods to spread the gospel? Or has greed gradually crept into your heart until it took root? Do you love material things more or less than before? Is your consecration still as real and complete as in the past?

If you are lacking in any of these things, which influences are to blame? Examine your condition carefully. If you have wandered, turn back so your heart does not turn completely from the Lord. See what influences are at work. Wake up and overcome these evil influences. Stand before God. Only in this way can you serve Him faithfully to the end and someday stand among the victors when the call will come for you to face Him. ■

C. N.





On the Road of Salvation

Part 13

Crossing Jordan

Ron Taron

God's Plan of Salvation in the History of Israel

“And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap. . . . Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan” (Joshua 3:13,17).

“There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience” (Hebrews 4:9-11).

The Israelites had wandered through the desert for 40 years. Besides Joshua and Caleb, everyone of the current congregation had either been born during the trek or had left Egypt as a child. Most of them knew nothing else but the life of nomads in a dry, dusty land. However, they had always kept one goal alive in their mind's eye: Canaan, the Land of Rest. And now, finally, the time had come! They were about to cross the river Jordan and enter the land that God had promised them.

God gave them specific instructions for how the crossing was to take place. They had to sanctify themselves and ensure that nothing ungodly would be found among them. Then, the priests who had been chosen to carry the Ark of the Covenant were to precede the

people into the bed of the Jordan. The account from the Book of Joshua says. “for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest” (Joshua 3:15).

Let's try to picture this: when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, God opened a path before them so they could simply walk on dry ground between walls of water. At the crossing of the Jordan, the priests had to engage in a much greater test of faith. They had God's Ark on their shoulders, which could not be dropped under any circumstances, even if it cost them their lives! And then, in blind faith in God's command to Joshua, they had to march into what seemed like certain death in the torrential current of the flooded Jordan. Certainly, one or the other priest would have asked himself, “Will God really stop the river, or will I be swept away along with the Ark of the Covenant?” But God had said, “Go,” and so they went forward, regardless of cost or consequences. And then it happened. “[As] the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water . . . the waters which came down from upstream stood still” (Joshua 3:15,16).

The priests stood in the center of the river bed and waited until that great mass of humanity had crossed into Canaan and the stones of remembrance had been placed. Only then were they allowed to step into the Land of Promise with the Ark of God. As soon as they reached dry ground, a mighty torrent of water cascaded back into the river bed and flowed off toward the Dead Sea. How wonderful are these spiritual types in the Old Testament! How aptly the crossing of the Jordan symbolizes the experience of entire sanctification in the New Testament.



The writer of Hebrews links Israel's crossing of the Jordan into Canaan with a state of rest that is promised to God's New Testament people. This is not referring to eternal rest with the Lord in the eternal Canaan. Conversely, the writer urges Christians not to doubt, but to seek and experience God's rest, here and now.

What is this Rest for God's People?

As already mentioned, it is the experience of entire sanctification. God's people are to forsake their wandering about in the desert and cross Jordan to find God's promised rest. Our text tells us that "he [the Christian] who has entered His [God's promised] rest has himself [the sanctified Christian] also ceased from his [own self and] works as God did from His [on the seventh day of creation]" (Hebrews 4:10). In order to experience this, man must die to self just as those priests marched into Jordan by faith, in order to enter the promised land of rest. It is a total consecration and full abandonment of self to God and His holy will. God must gain control of every aspect of man's existence.

Paul describes his personal experience with these words: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). In other words, "While I live my life in a physical sense, my life does not belong to me, but only to God." In Romans 12:1-2 he begs God's people, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Entire sanctification also includes a purifying element, which was foreshadowed by the "sanctification"

of the Israelites and the water of the river Jordan. Yet we must clarify that this is symbolic: water can never cleanse a soul. Here it represents the Holy Spirit. It is God's Spirit Who purifies man's nature and fills him with Himself in this experience. When the apostle Peter described how the Christians of gentile background had experienced this, he said, "So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8-9).

These were redeemed Christians who experienced sanctification. Their sins had been cleansed by Jesus' blood and they were born again to new life in God. What in them could be and needed to be purified yet? For a saved and justified child of God only a fallen, depraved nature remains out of sync with God, drawing him repeatedly towards sin and disobedience to God's will. Such a Christian does not yet "rest" from his own works. However, when self and one's own will are consecrated completely on God's altar of sacrifice, God's child will experience the infilling of the Holy Spirit and a purifying of the fallen nature. God has a land of rest, of entire salvation, available for His people!

Do you know it? Dear Christian brother or sister, have you crossed the Jordan already? Have you fully consecrated your self and your all on the altar of sacrifice, and asked God to fill and baptize you with the Holy Spirit? Fully dead to self and resting in God's will is the most wonderful and glorious life imaginable! Have you experienced it, or are you still straggling along in the desert? Don't delay. Cross Jordan and forge ahead into Canaan. "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24). ■

Doubts

Newly-converted Christians are often plagued with doubt. When they feel confused or perturbed, they feel inclined to give up easily and to start over again. What causes this? They have not yet learned to discern that it is Satan's voice zealously trying to discourage them. Dear disheartened and despairing soul, "no temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Therefore, rest assured; you can overcome doubts and discouragement. An older, mature Christian will acknowledge how Satan consistently attempts to discourage and confuse a new Christian, specifically regarding the credibility of their salvation.

Hear this though, young child of God. Why would you so easily give up your redemptive experience and have doubts about your salvation? Before you were pardoned, you were not plagued by Satan by such doubts because you had no reason to doubt. The fact that Satan is trying to discourage you is simple proof that you have been saved. The devil will stalk you and will try to plague and confuse you. God never does that. He loves stillness, peace, and confidence, but hates chaos and confusion. It is Satan who whispers, "Start all over again." He knows how to attack your weakness. If you lend him your ear, he will gladly continue his craftiness until you are completely disheartened. Even if he persuades you to start over again, he will continue to torment you, allowing you to believe that your salvation is not genuine. Will you truly allow him to drag you into such an agonizing tumult? No! Through the power of Christ, confront him sooner rather than later.

It is God's plan and purpose to ground us and to save us for all time. It is never His will nor plan that we should give up our salvation. Through His lovingkindness, our Lord made His sacrifice for us, making it possible for us to be saved forever, each day getting bright-





er and better. Perhaps you are countering, saying, “But I have so many trials, and my mind is bombarded with so many unpleasant thoughts. Why do I have to feel so bad?” We know that everyone who has entered the way of eternal life will have trials and troubles and that their hearts do not always produce the best feelings.

Consider this illustration. Presume you have registered at a music school, signed the contract, and even made a deposit. By following the protocol, having fulfilled the requirements and receiving acceptance by the administration, you have become a student of music even though you may not have any musical knowledge and cannot distinguish between an “A” and a “G.” Imagine now if you said, “I don’t feel like a music student, not being able to recognize the musical notes. I guess it would be better for me to quit.” Or, if after a few lessons you would say, “I don’t feel like a musician, so it’s better that I give it all up and start all over.” Wouldn’t that be ridiculous? Wouldn’t that be a contradiction to the fact that you are, after all, a student of music? Your task is only to diligently and boldly keep learning so that you eventually become an accomplished musician.

This is exactly how it is concerning the lessons and exercises of your Christian experience. When we fulfill the conditions and requirements of God’s Word and our names have been entered into the Book of Life, we are truly God’s children. Satan, however, roams about like a roaring lion. He tries to frighten us and whispers that something may not be quite right with our salvation. But let it be said that even if you cannot distinguish the differ-

ence between an “A” and a “G” in your practical service, do not drop out of God’s school. Rather, continue to research God’s Word, and soon you will discover clarity and one truth after another. Eventually, you will become so skilled that you will become an example for others.

The best remedy to overcome doubt is to read God’s Word with a prayerful heart. Just as Jesus countered Satan with the Word of God,

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you must also resist the devil with God’s Word. Do not run away, but lift up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the fiery darts of the evil one. We walk and live in faith, even when we cannot see or feel anything.

If we wanted to go by our feelings and use them as a guide to measure our salvation, it would be

as foolish as if a precision engineer would use the mercury thread of a thermometer to do his precise measurements. We know it is about as unstable as our feelings are and is regulated by the temperature of its surroundings. We do, however, have something reliable and certain: our faith. “The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17). Our faith makes it possible to remain saved, even in trials and in the darkest hours. If we falter during a trial, it demonstrates that we’re struggling to maintain our faith. ¹ John 5:4 says, “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” And, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes” (Mark 9:23). Therefore, be courageous and believe in Him Who says in His Word, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me” (John 14:1).

H. N.

How Can I Overcome My Doubts?

A young sister once told me that she was unsatisfied and disappointed with her Christian walk. She said, “I do not notice any spiritual growth in my soul, nor do I progress in grace. It seems that my Christian life is full of failures. Sometimes I even doubt if I am really saved and have experienced God at all. I cannot say that I have the joy and peace that others talk about. I would love to say I do, and I would give everything to have assurance of salvation in my heart and to say I am totally committed to God. How can I overcome my doubts? What can I do?”

A Christian can be plagued with doubts. This young Christian woman did not lack faith in God, but she lacked faith in herself. She felt a constant, painful uncertainty about her relationship with God. She is not alone. There are others who struggle with the devastating calamity of self-doubt. God and His Word are clear and definite; therefore, what comes from God is also clear and definite. These doubts and fears do not come from God but stem from a person’s own thoughts and anxiety. A person who thinks realistically will not have such doubts. In order for the doubts to vanish, the emotions and thoughts need to be aligned with reality.

“Let’s look at the cause of your many doubts,” I said to the young sister. I mentioned some of the reasons for her doubts. She felt guilty and therefore started confessing her sins all over again. She looked inward and tried to analyze every thought and feeling that caused her anxiety until she was so hesitant to say anything to anybody lest she cause offense in any way. She wept, prayed, and grieved every short-coming. That still did not give her relief. I counselled her to turn her back on these feel-

ings and doubts. I told her to take control of her thoughts and not to pay attention to her negative emotions but with God’s help to move forward. The feelings of doubt and the anxious emotions were not helpful in gaining assurance in the past, and to keep on harboring them would not help in the future either. “Isn’t it your desire to serve God?” I asked.

“God knows I want to serve Him with all my heart,” she answered.

“Yes, God certainly knows that,” I said. “He knows you and sees the desire of your heart. He knows we are only human. He loves us, and He cares about how we feel. He knows that you want to serve Him with all your heart. He is a loving heavenly Father Who is willing to help and strengthen you. He is not a harsh judge who watches you critically in order to condemn you and to constantly show you your faults.

“In Psalm 103:14, we read, ‘He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.’ He does not expect more of you than you are able to do. He has compassion on you. ‘As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him’ (Psalm 103:13). Keep in mind that He is a good and loving Father. And if you fail, then with His strong and mighty Arm, He is ready to assist you right away, to pick you up and help you along. Psalm 37:24 says, ‘Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholds him with His hand.’ Cling to God and His promises, believe and trust in Him, and you will soon be growing in the grace and power of God.”

I encouraged her to put aside all doubts. “When discouraging thoughts come, then do not let them

get the upper hand, and resolve not to let them influence you and get you down. Concentrate on good, encouraging, and true thoughts. Don't pay attention to negative thoughts and feelings."

"But I make really big mistakes, sometimes," she said fearfully, not seeming to be able to follow my advice.

"Yes, you make mistakes. That is true. So do I, so do all of God's children. But we won't be able to overcome them if we let them get us down. Look at our greatest example, Jesus Christ. Cling to Him and stay close to Him, and you will become more like Him every day." I encouraged her to ignore thoughts of doubt and all depressing, negative emotions. "If you really do something wrong, you will know it. Confess it right away, and clear it up. When you have done so, then forget about it and move on."

"Can I really put those nagging doubts behind me?" she asked.

"Yes, you can, my sister! Trust in the Lord, and you will gain the victory. Doubts are shadows that obscure the sun. Walk in the sunshine, and the doubts will vanish. You know in your own heart that you are honest. Therefore, you can follow God's commands. You can say no to all sinful wishes and desires. In the same way, you can say no to doubts and fears that come from negative thoughts. When you notice doubts and depressing feelings coming on that are not warranted, say no to them. Concentrate on the positive promises of God that give way to feelings of peace and contentment. Then, with God's help you will successfully start to live a life of victory." M. H.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Youth Week in Kirchberg (DE)

March 6th - 8th, 2020

Easter Conference in Hamm (DE)

April 10th - 13th, 2020

59060 Hamm, Langewanneweg 248

Good Friday @ 14:30

www.gghamm.de or Tel. 02381/410124

Fest in Winnipeg (CA)

May 16th - 17th, 2020

Pentecost in Herford (DE)

May 30th - June 1st, 2020

Youth Retreat in Tuningen (DE)

July 31st - August 4th, 2020

Bible Course in

Winnipeg/Steinbach (CA)

August 10th - 21st, 2020

Camp Meeting in Blaubeuren (DE)

August 15th - 20th, 2020

Convention in Swartz Creek, MI (USA)

September 5th - 6th, 2020

Fest in Seminole, TX (USA)

September 26th - 27th, 2020

On God Cast All Your Cares

On God cast all your cares and sorrow,
For He is true and cares for you.
He knows your needs, now and tomorrow,
O, come what may, He'll see you through.
When suff'ring comes to His dear children,
Should He not care and see them through?
He sees the sparrows and the flowers,
And most of all, He cares for you.

On God cast all your cares and sorrow,
And be not one of little faith.
With strength for you on each new morrow,
He grants you His sufficient grace.
And if your path is dark and dreary,
And often you don't understand
Why you must suffer and be weary,
He offers you His helping hand.

On God cast all your cares and sorrow,
He'll turn to blessing every ill.
Stay on the path that's straight and narrow,
And in the dark keep trusting still.
And should your prayers remain unanswered,
Submit yourself to do God's will;
And if your plans need to be cancelled,
Be humble, and in hope be still.

On God cast all your cares and sorrow,
Be patient, with humility.
For Christians there's a bright tomorrow
When from earth's shackles they'll be free.
A farmer, waiting for the harvest,
Will be partaker of the fruit;
Eternal light will pierce the darkness,
In glory we'll behold this truth.

Martha Hausig