



Foundation of Faith

God's Help in Difficult Times

Challenges

Discouragement and
Trusting God

Hidden Turmoil

All Gone Again!

Temptations

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FOUNDATION OF FAITH

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Editorial

Dear Reader,

In the evening and night, we turn on our lights while driving; when we walk in the dark, a flashlight helps us stay on the right path.

But what do we do in dark and dangerous times when tribulation comes upon us? Many passages in God's Word show us what to do.

In Psalms 42 and 43 the sons of Korah tell us their difficult situation and the way out: "My soul is cast down . . . all Your waves and billows have gone over me. . . . I will say to God . . . 'why do I go mourning?'" (Psalm 42:6-9) The help we need and the way forward come from God. The psalmist pleads to God, "Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me" (Psalm 43:3).

How wonderful that we can seek God's face in dark times! Jesus Christ is our great High Priest. We read in Hebrews 4:16, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

How often has the Lord helped us in illnesses and in situations that seemed hopeless, humanly speaking. In our darkest hours, we have experienced the face of God shining on us and comforting us, and we received the help we needed.

Dear Reader, just as after every dark night a new morning dawns and we are gifted a new day of grace, so a very glorious, wonderful day will also dawn for the people of God. Yes, "Your eyes will see the King in His beauty" (Isaiah 33:17).

Then we will experience what John writes about in Revelation 22:3-5: "His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face . . . There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light."

H. D. Nimz



All Gone Again!

Four people sat in a railroad car traveling through the countryside. It was a bright, beautiful spring day. One of the four was an old woman wearing sunglasses to protect her eyes from the bright sunlight. She had been at the eye clinic for cataract surgery. Gazing through the carriage window, she enjoyed her regained vision as she took in as much of the green, sunny spring scene as her weak eyes could tolerate.

Then the train rolled through a tunnel. “Oh dear!” the woman suddenly cried out. “Now it’s all gone again! Oh dear! Oh dear!”

In response to the startled and concerned questions of her fellow passengers about what had happened, she cried out, “Oh my, oh my, I can’t see anything again! Even less than before. My eyesight

is gone again! It’s like pitch-black night, so dark!”

While the woman was still wailing and crying, the light shone through the carriage window again. The train sped out of the tunnel, and soon the bright, beautiful daylight returned. With hands folded, and her sunglasses gone, her gray eyes opened wide, gazing at the bright light in amazement and delight. She thought it must have been a relapse. But her fellow passengers explained the situation. Soon after, the next tunnel no longer frightened her.

I kept thinking of myself as I read of this experience. That’s how we all are, so human, so easily frightened, so lacking in trust. God has taken care of us, has shown us His grace and goodness, and has assured us that He has plans for good in our lives. We accept

it and rejoice until “the train goes through the tunnel.” “It has been in vain, it’s the same as it was! Oh dear, now everything is over again! It was all for nothing. It is worse than ever!” we complain.

That woman did not fuss again in the second tunnel. Likely, she didn’t quite understand the scope of the tunnel, and it may have seemed disconcerting the second time when sudden, pitch darkness devoured the daylight. After all, it was her first train ride with restored vision. But she stayed silent and was grateful for her eyesight, even in the darkness.

What about us? Does the same old story, the same old lament start at every tunnel? Or do we also become calmer and learn to journey quietly through the “dark tunnels,” trusting in God’s help? May God grant us grace! ■

Strength Enough for Today

A mother found her way out of the worries and hardships of everyday life with childlike trust in the Lord's guidance. This is the path we too must take to become joyful and free.

“Hour by Hour with Jesus” was the saying written in beautiful lettering displayed over Hannah’s kitchen table. She had received it as a birthday present from her mother, who knew well of her daughter’s great struggles and many sorrows. Hannah’s eyes would fall on these precious words many times a day, and she managed to chase away the rising spirits of worry. By nature, she was inclined to be melancholy, so it was often difficult for her to be hopeful in her rather meager circumstances.

On her birthday, she reflected on the many blessings of her great God. Time after time, He had carried her through, kindly guiding her from day to day. Was it not His love that strengthened her again and again in her feeble health so she was able to provide for her loved ones? Yes, she knew that as often as she looked up to Him, she was always given new strength, allowing her to continue on her way, encouraged by her Master’s hand.

One afternoon, Hannah sat mending some laundry. As so often, her thoughts were preoccupied with the future. Soon her eldest would graduate from school, and what would become of him? All efforts to find a good apprenticeship for her son had so far been unsuccessful. Furthermore, her husband had already spoken of

the fact that he might soon have to stop working. Then what?

Her worries towered like mountains in her mind, and the pressure on her heart grew ever greater. What would happen? She saw everything covered in gray fog, and her soul became gloomy and sad. Had she forgotten God’s guidance in the past and the many delightful promises in God’s Word? The evil enemy was trying with all his might to crush her.

Then a thought came to her mind. Her mother had sent her a very comforting letter for her birthday. She took it out of the drawer and read it again.

Among other things, it said, “Since I learned the wonderful secret of complete trust in God, my life has become much more delightful and joyful. You know, my dear Hannah, we do not want to worry about tomorrow or even more distant days; no, we want to live together with the Lord today, lean on Him, and confidently leave the future to Him. ‘Today’ is in our hands, and we want to fill this ‘today’ with good thoughts, with diligent and joyful work, surrendering our will completely to our beloved Lord. Do we know whether we will live to see tomorrow, whether it is still in our power to labor for our loved ones and to set the table for them?

“The Lord Jesus admonishes us so kindly, ‘Do not worry about your life.’ He wants to lead His own

in the right way and not let them lack anything they need for life and for a godly walk. Hannah, try it as well and become a joyful woman who trusts in the Lord. I have often tried the secret. But unfortunately, many of God’s children have failed to grasp it. Keep holding on to Jesus hour by hour. Lay all your worries and difficulties before Him and then go confidently into your day, knowing that a wise Father in heaven hears you and has all your affairs in His strong hands. He understands you even better than your faithful, loving mother . . .”

She couldn’t read any further. She knelt to pray. Sorrowfully, she asked her Savior to forgive her for letting herself get caught up in brooding again, and she placed herself and her loved ones completely in the Lord’s hands. From now on, she wanted to serve her Lord without being worn down with worries about earthly life, and entrust herself more faithfully to His guidance, like a child. She now realized that she was dishonoring the Lord through her small faith, and she asked Him for special strength to glorify Him by continually surrendering herself to Him.

Soon after, when her husband came home from work and her happy little daughter came in from playing, they found a comforted and joyful wife and mother who could sing the praises of God with all her heart.

W. W.

Challenges

Challenges are nothing unusual in the life of a Christian, even though we may not like them. Therefore, do not be surprised or frightened by them. With the armor of our God, we can always be victorious.

The Bible compares the life of a Christian to a battle. Every faithful child of God lined up under the banner of the great King is more or less aware of entering this holy war. But spiritual battle is very different from the wars here on earth. In a battle between hostile powers of the world, there are usually casualties on both sides. But in the spiritual battle, we can remain victorious. If we obediently and faithfully follow our Great Commander, He always gives us victory. This war waged with invisible powers, of which the world is unaware, is often an intense and serious battle.

God's Word tells us in Ephesians 6:12, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Satan employs his methods with great skill and tries to influence souls. Often, he uses emotions to make us doubt. If we aren't ready to fight, and forget to raise the shield of faith, our enemy can easily succeed in inflicting a wound.

The Word of God tells us, "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). When by faith we walk in obedience, we can rely firmly and securely on God's Word and claim

victory. Feelings come and go like the ebb and flow of the tide, like day and night. Sometimes we feel like we're on cloud nine, and at other times it feels like God has abandoned us. Generally, we prefer the former, where it is impossible for the enemy to make us doubt. But when the tide recedes and we feel "down in the dumps," then we need to walk by faith and not pay heed to our feelings.

Temptations and trials are not sin, but giving in to temptation is sin. Jesus was tempted in all things as we are, but was without sin. He was tempted with pride by the devil who offered Him all the kingdoms of the world if He would worship him. But Jesus stood firm and victorious. He remained steadfast in the greatest temptation of His life, and surrendered to the will of His heavenly Father. When He wrestled with death in the Garden of Gethsemane, He said in silent surrender, "Nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will" (Mark 14:36). And when He laid down His life for us on the cross, it seemed as if even God had forsaken Him in that darkest hour, and He cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Mark 15:34).

Just as the holy Son of God was tempted and went through sufferings and tribulations, so must His

faithful followers go through similar trials, though not as severe. "Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind" (1 Peter 4:1)—namely, for the Lord's sake, to suffer for Him. As true soldiers of Christ, if we are resolute and determined to march forward, keeping our eyes fixed on the Lord without paying attention to feelings, it is certain that we will remain victorious.

Jesus did not suffer defeat; therefore, all His faithful followers can remain victorious. The stronger the temptation, the greater the grace, if we cling to the Lord and obey Him in all things. No temptation will defeat the soul that trusts in the Lord. Thanks be to the Lord, He never allows more to come upon His own than we can bear. If we give in to temptation, we cannot blame God, for God has ways and means for each of His children to gain victory.

Temptations come in many forms. There are trials of faith, where our faith is tested; tests of patience, where our patience is tried; challenges to our faith in God; humiliation that takes us down a notch in the eyes of others. These and others may affect any child of God. But nothing is able to cause the soul, trusting and wholly

devoted to the Lord, to turn away from the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Believers fight for their faith and remain victorious.

God has prepared armor for His people (Ephesians 6). These divine weapons leave no area unprotected. Every arrow of the enemy, no matter how sharp, is repelled without causing harm.

The Word of God is the first piece of armor we are told to be girded with. Only a portion of the Word of God? No, the whole Word of God is to surround us like a belt. Only the whole truth of the Word can shield us from all enemies. Further, Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:16, “Above all, taking the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.” Oh, that every child of God would learn to use the shield of faith properly! As long as we believe and obey, we will never lack victory.

The exhortation to pray continually is also of great importance. We must place ourselves totally in God’s care, become wholly dependent on Him, and be completely secure in Him. Then no enemy can touch us. Yes, we must watch and pray at all times. “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” (Ephesians 6:10). ■

***“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.***

***For we do not wrestle
against flesh and blood,
but against principalities,
against powers, against the rulers
of the darkness of this age,
against spiritual hosts of wickedness
in the heavenly places.***

***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.***

***Stand therefore,
having girded your waist with truth,
having put on the
breastplate of righteousness,
and having shod your feet
with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
above all, taking the shield of faith
with which you will be able to quench
all the fiery darts of the wicked one.***

***And take the helmet of salvation,
and the sword of the Spirit,
which is the word of God;
praying always with all prayer
and supplication in the Spirit,
being watchful to this end
with all perseverance and supplication
for all the saints”
(Ephesians 6:10–18).***

Jesus, the Light of the World

“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12).

With these words, Jesus Christ concisely expressed how important He is for humanity. Like the bright sun flooding the Earth, Christ wants to envelop all of us in His spiritual light.

When people remain distant from God, they remain in the night of sin, which can be dark indeed! Many people’s inner pain progresses into desperation as they see no way out of their situation. Hopelessness weighs on them like lead. It holds them in its grasp, and they give up and are lost.

It is into this dark night that Christ calls out, “I am the light of the world.” Can you not hear His call? Listen closely. He is calling to you and every single one of us! Without Christ bringing light into our world, the darkness remains in us, but everyone who turns to Him will receive the light of life, causing the shackles of sin to fall away and a new life to take root.

The Holy Scriptures say, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). By coming to Earth, Jesus sparked a major change, not only in individuals but also in entire nations. The proud and arrogant became humble children of God, who despised sin and loved God above all. They followed Christ and had the light of life. The light had revealed the damage in their lives, but it also transformed them, making them into new people. The life of sin had been dealt a death blow, giving way to a new life. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The wonderful effect of this spiritual light penetrated even further, transforming circumstances, customs, and habits among the nations. Isaiah gives us a metaphor for this transformation, writing, “The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and

the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing” (Isaiah 35:1–2). The gospel of Christ truly did bring new life into the desert of the pagan world. The wonderful radiance of God’s light broke through the night of paganism, and a new spiritual creation came into being.

“The Sun of Righteousness . . . with healing in His wings” has not yet set (Malachi 4:2). Christ, the light of the world, still shines. Jesus’ followers walk in His light and are thankful to enjoy salvation in Christ. They know the difference between light and darkness because they have been touched by the light—they have experienced it personally. God’s grace permeates their lives. Knowing their blessings, they praise the virtues of the God Who called them out of darkness and into His wonderful light.

“I am the light of the world.” Christ calls out to you. He wants to be to you what He is to others. Come to Him, open your heart, and you will be filled by radiant light.

G. Sonnenberg



Trust in God

| In Hebrews 10:35, we read, “Therefore do not cast away your trust, which has great reward.”

Trust in God presupposes faith. Without faith in God, there can be no talk of trusting God. But should it be difficult to have faith in God? When we look at the marvelous creation, and consider how everything has been brought into existence by an omnipotent word from God, and how God sustains everything by His power and omnipotent word, surely it will not be difficult for us to have faith in such a great and powerful God.

If we further examine the faithfulness of God, our trust in Him will be strengthened. Consistently and faithfully He fulfilled His promises and wonderfully led His people, who trusted and obeyed Him. For example, He proved Himself faithful to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Let us think of King David and the experiences he had. Even as a boy, he had learned to trust in God. When he stood opposite Saul, David could say he had fought with a lion and bear and had overcome them by trusting in God. Therefore, he was not afraid of the godless giant who had made a mockery of the God of Israel. Trusting in God, he took up the fight with the godless giant, and the God in Whom he trusted did not let him be put to shame, but gave him victory. He emerged victorious from the many years of persecution by Saul. And what was the cause of all his glorious victories? We can say it in a single phrase: “Trust in God.”

Asaph felt as if it was all over for him, but God remained faithful. He did not abandon him, just as He does not abandon anyone who trusts in Him. His distress was at its highest, but the psalmist’s mind was made up, and he cried out, “Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand” (Psalm 73:23).

What a rock-solid and, at the same time, childlike trust David also makes known in Psalm, 23: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” Even in the valley of darkness, David was not afraid, for he knew that the Lord was with him and would not leave him nor fail

him. His trust in God did not waver, and God revealed Himself to him. He has not yet put to shame anyone who has trusted in Him.

Are you also going through difficult trials, dear Soul? Does it seem that all your hoping, praying, and longing is in vain? Be of good cheer; the Lord loves you. Do not throw away your trust; He sees and knows your situation. He even knows it much better than you do, and He does not want to leave you nor forsake you.

How clearly and determinedly the prophet Isaiah expresses this: “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). Again, Isaiah 43:2 states, “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.” Oh, what a strong and mighty God we have! This strong and mighty God loves us and is interested in us. Should we not trust Him? How can we hesitate to rely on His promises? Believe with confidence that God is near you even in the darkest hours and that He will not abandon you. When things become gloomy and dark around you, cling all the more tightly to the glorious promises of God, which are all Yes and Amen in our Lord Jesus Christ.

If only our eyes were open, we would constantly see everywhere that God does not allow anyone who trusts in Him, and who believes, obeys, and trusts in His Word to become disgraced. Even when God inflicts a wound, He has balm for it and also heals it again. In everything He does, He has only intentions of love, and He wants to work everything for our good. Therefore, let us have childlike trust in Him, be confident and steadfast, and always in all situations wait on the Lord. He will lead everything gloriously and make everything well if we trust and obey Him.

C. E. Orr

Discouragement and Trusting God

| *“The soul of the people became very discouraged on the way” (Numbers 21:4).*

Many people are discouraged. Everything seems to go wrong. There are either unfortunate circumstances that cause calamities in life, or psychological setbacks, or both, and there seems to be no way out. So the soul becomes very discouraged. There is nothing as debilitating as discouragement, which easily leads to failure. The secret of failure or success often depends more on our inner attitude than on the outward circumstances.

Nowhere can we see this clearer than in spiritual matters. Throughout the Bible, we are told that faith is the strength of the soul. True faith and discouragement cannot co-exist. Discouragement is the enemy of faith. Therefore, if discouragement gains the upper hand, the reverse side of that principle will also apply: It will happen to us—not according to our faith, but according to our lack of faith.

Just like optimism causes us to believe that things will turn out well, so discouragement gives us a negative picture. Optimism opens the door for good outcomes, and discouragement opens the way for failure.

Discouragement is from the evil one, not from God. The teaching of Jesus is one of faith, joy, courage, and hope that does not disappoint. Our human inclination tells us, “Fear because the world is full of temptation and sin.” But Jesus says, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). In a world Jesus has overcome, discouragement should not be allowed the upper hand.

No doubt there are many things that can cause discouragement. Because we are short-sighted, we think we have reason to be discouraged. The first and main cause lies in our ineptitude, which, in our minds, must bring us down.

Moses is a good example of this. The Lord called him and appointed him to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. Yet Moses looked at his deficiencies and weaknesses and lost courage. He tried to make excuses. He said to God, “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue” (Exodus 4:10). He also says, “But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice” (Exodus 4:1).

We might think that Moses had good reason to be discouraged, similar to how we recoil from the tasks the Lord calls us to, because we lack the abilities we think we need. But look at the answer God gave Moses and gives us as well. He did not try to convince Moses. He merely held up to Moses the fact that He Himself, Who created man’s mouth, would enable him to speak. The Lord spoke to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? . . . Have not I, the Lord? Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say” (Exodus 4:11–12).

When the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah and he was called to be a prophet, he felt he was too young



and not able to handle so great a task. He said, “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth” (Jeremiah 1:6). God answered him, “Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you” (Jeremiah 1:7–8).

The story of Gideon is another example. The Lord called Gideon to deliver His people from the Midianites. He said, “Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?” (Judges 6:14). That should have been enough for Gideon, but he came from an impoverished background. His family did not come from the elite, and he felt he was not skilled enough to undertake such a great task. Looking at himself and his weakness, it was only natural that he was discouraged and asked, “How can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house” (Judges 6:15). But what was God’s answer? “I will be with you” (Judges 6:16).

God wants to encourage us as well. “I am your Creator, your Savior, and your God. I will be with you. No enemy shall harm you. You will be safe, because I, Myself, will be your refuge and security.” Should such a promise not be good enough for us? If we let the Lord take care of our battles, then our inability becomes an advantage and not a detriment.

We can only be strong in the Lord when we recognize how weak we are.

The example of the children of Israel serves us as a warning. The Lord had led them out of Egypt and brought them to the border of the Promised Land. Moses told the people, “Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged” (Deuteronomy 1:21). Yet the circumstances seemed so discouraging, and the Israelites felt so helpless, that they could not believe God would keep His promise.

In vain, Moses tried to remind them that God would fight for them. He reminded them of how God had helped them in the past, and he asked them if they did not remember “how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place” (Deuteronomy 1:31). Despite this, they remained too discouraged to believe him. The consequence was that not one of that unbelieving generation was allowed to see the Promised Land. Only Joshua and Caleb were the exceptions because they believed God could and would give them success.

This story clearly teaches us the consequence of discouragement and the reward of steadfast faith. Do not forsake the rich blessings that follow as a result of trust in God and faith-filled courage.

H. S.



A Shining Face

When Moses ascended Mount Sinai, there was nothing to distinguish him from other Israelites apart from his position as the nation's leader and from his awareness of God's power and presence. But forty days later, when he descended from the mountain, the people noticed that he had undergone a remarkable transformation. "The children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone" (Exodus 34:35).

It seems Moses did not even know his face was shining. What was the secret behind this glow? Simply that he had spent forty days in God's presence. His soul was full of the glory of God, and the glow in his face was only the reflection of this inner glory. Having spent some significant time in communion with God, Moses came back down the mountain to give God's Law to the people and tell them about His blessings.

Moses was not the only one whose face shone and glowed. When Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration, we read that His face shone like the sun, and when Stephen stood before the council, his face shone like an angel's (see Acts 6:15).

Seeing a face shine with this light inspires awe, and I have never forgotten the time I experienced this. I was standing at the bedside of a sister who was nearing her end. She had just experienced a violent hemorrhage, but instead of being scared, she was confident and joyful. Her soul was filled with the peace and glory of God. To the extent that she was able to speak, she praised and worshiped God. I stood by her bed with several others, and all of us were looking at her when her face distinctly began shining. Holy reverence filled us at this sight.

Your own face, dear Reader, or mine may never shine the way this sister's did, but our faces can shine nonetheless—"as lights in the world," like Paul wrote in Philippians 2:15.

There are so many glum faces in the world. Disappointment, discouragement, worries, and complaints can be read in many faces. Not surprisingly, these traits can be found in the faces of sinners, yet God's

children should do better in this regard; they should shine for God.

Let's shine as lights for God in this dark world. The secret is simply for us to draw nearer to God and to spend time in His presence, so our faith can soar above the things that could otherwise discourage us. In this world of sorrow, suffering, and disappointment, it is our privilege to shine as His children. Inexpressible joy can fill out hearts and be reflected on our faces.

"God . . . has shone [light] in our hearts" (2 Corinthians 4:6). If God's glory lives in your heart and sheds a warm glow, it will naturally be visible to others. With faces giving expression to our inner person, God wants us to be a nation of shining faces.

By taking the right approach towards God and life, we will save ourselves many a battle. Jesus said to His disciples, "My peace I give to you" (John 14:27). Perfect peace is the result of utter rest and complete trust in God and of knowing that we all belong to Him and that He will make everything right.

There are so many Christians who constantly accuse and reproach themselves. They destroy their own peace through lack of faith in God. However, we can enjoy the privilege of inner peace. Many rob themselves of all these blessings because they don't fully trust God. They are constantly preoccupied with finding minor mistakes and weaknesses in themselves instead of overcoming them with God's help. As long as this continues, their faces can never shine.

Additionally, our faces are to be filled with the light of joy. In Philippians 4:4, Paul wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord always." We are also called to be thankful at all times, an important aspect in the life of a normal Christian, along with joy, peace, and victory. Love will also cause our faces to shine—love towards God and the people around us.

Let us discard everything that keeps God from shining within and through us. He has done so much for us and given us much to be thankful for. Let's share this light with others! Let us be Christians with glowing and shining faces! ■

When the Sun is Hidden

In my opinion, the most beautiful time of year is springtime. The earth is clothed in a radiant newness, the buds are bursting forth, and all the many birds are singing their lovely songs. With the sun shining down from the blue sky, many a child of God will go out into the beautiful nature to see the marvels of the Creator. Often, on a beautiful morning, I have taken refuge in the quiet forest, far from all noise. How I could refresh myself there in solitude in the glory of our God! It was as if the trees spread their branches over me in blessing and everything cried out to me, “How great is our God!”

But when the sun is hidden, when a dark thunderstorm rises threateningly on the horizon and completely obscures the beautiful, bright sun, life appears very different. When the thunder echoes eerily in our ears and the lightning flashes, our outlook on life is very different. A poet wrote, “Life is like a summer day, both full of light and shadow.”

Have you experienced such a wonderful spring day in your spiritual life, a day when your heart lifted to heaven rejoicing, when your mouth overflowed with praise and thanksgiving to God? But then one day, quite unexpectedly, a heavy thunderstorm came. Jesus, the Sun of grace, suddenly stopped shining. Everything around you was shrouded in deep darkness, discouraging thoughts forced themselves upon your spirit, doubts stormed against you, and you could no longer believe in a time of joy. Then you began to accuse yourself, to the detriment of your own soul. You thought you had done something that was not pleasing to

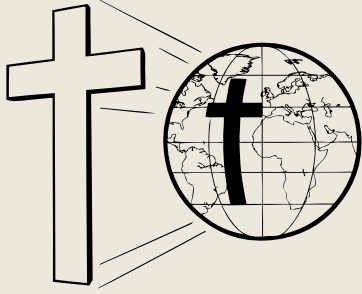
God. Of course, the devil seized the opportunity to gain prey for himself.

In such hours, be very still. Do not accuse yourself, for then only Satan wins. God loves you in this hour just as much as He did in your happiest hours. But God also wants to test your faith, to see whether you will cling to Him, even in the gloomiest hour. Firmly resist all doubts, no matter how they rage. The victory is certain for you; the sun will shine again. Only trust in God.

Soon you will hear the voice of your Friend again: “For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land” (Song of Solomon 2:11–12). God has sent you the gloomy hours to make you want to draw nearer to Him.

I, too, have experienced such hours of gray shadows. They were not pleasant for me either. But I tell you, it is in our power to shorten these hours by faithful waiting. Despite all enemies, let us sing songs of victory. Together with the children of Korah, let us confidently cry out to God, “Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me; let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your tabernacle. Then I will go to the altar of God, to my exceeding joy; and on the harp I will praise You, O God, my God” (Psalm 43:3–4). It will be light again. “But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go and grow fat like stalled calves” (Malachi 4:2).

W. Kunkel



Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs
Kitchener, ON

Hidden Turmoil

Have you at times experienced an inner restlessness, perhaps a guilt that does not let you rest? It is a good sign if our conscience is active, but we need not remain restless. In Jesus Christ, we can find peace for the soul.

The writer of the forty-second Psalm suffered from inner distress. Surely there had to be a reason for this unrest. He wanted to recognize and become free of it, and come to rest. With this request, he turned to God and said, “O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore I will remember You” (verse 6). “Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, for the help of His countenance” (verse 5). He knew God could heal him and give him soothing, inner peace.

Whenever we have turmoil in our lives, there is a reason for it. Perhaps there is a self-inflicted problem in our relationship with God or with our fellow man. Our own conscience may condemn us and cause us to be inwardly anxious. If this is the cause, then we need to ask ourselves, “Is everything really all right with me?”

There was a knock on the door of the pastor’s house. He opened it, and two female students entered. “We have a problem we can’t really deal with,” they began.

“What kind of problem is that?”

They proceeded to present him with questions about historical events for which they couldn’t find

any clarity. The experienced man immediately recognized that behind this “problem” was a far more serious one that his visitors wanted to detour to reach their goal.

Similarly, two of John’s disciples followed Jesus, and when He noticed them, He turned and asked, “What do you seek?” Their answer was, “Rabbi, where are You staying?” (John 1:38). Was that really all they wanted to know, or was there a deeper motivation that prompted them to follow Jesus?

Nevertheless, the pastor got straight to the point: “Now tell me, did you really come to me to hear my explanation on certain historical events, or is it more likely you came because of some inner anxiety?”

Embarrassed, one stammered, “We don’t know how to begin a relationship with Jesus.” The other nodded mutely in response. “So now we have arrived at the real problem,” the servant of the Lord said sympathetically. “You really can’t begin with Jesus until you acknowledge your own self-deception and see your guilt before Him. Is everything all right with you two?”

The answer came quickly: “Everything is all right, Pastor!” He stood up, bowed to them, and said, “With



all due respect, you are the first two I have met where everything is in order. But now we must come before a just and holy God as I ask you both some extremely important questions: Have your mouths always spoken the truth? Are your hands innocent? Have your feet always walked the straight and godly path? Have your ears always heard the Word of God without resistance? Are your motives pure, and do you have clean, innocent hearts?"

Slowly, one of them said, "Nothing is right with me; my whole life is a big lie." The other one looked down in embarrassment. Now the pastor was able to point them to the cross of Jesus, and they were willing to start walking on this path of salvation.

In Psalm 32:1–2, we read, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit." Each one of us needs to experience this in our lives, for this is the only way we can attain inner peace.

Many live in inner turmoil. Anyone who has experienced turmoil in their lives and received inner healing can testify to this. Many don't want to talk about

the causes of their turmoil; they don't want to uncover the real problems. They also don't want to turn in faith to the One who can really heal them.

"We don't know how to begin with Jesus," they say. But without a doubt, He can begin doing the right thing within you. You cannot free yourself from your inner turmoil in your own strength and with your own methods. "I will remember You," the psalmist tells us in the forty-second Psalm. In Proverbs 28:13, we read, "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." No one needs to remain in his tormenting turmoil till the end of his life.

We all have an immortal soul. Is there still turmoil, guilt, and fear in your soul, or is it filled with God's divine light, with true peace, and with blissful rest in God? Our Lord Jesus says, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28–29).

Dear Reader, allow Jesus Christ to give you this peace, because you need it in life and also in death. ■

From the Working World (4)



For weekend travels between Frankfurt and Eppingen, Germany, I use my GPS. Wanting to leave for Frankfurt one day, I noticed that my phone had a low battery. The battery was too low for the GPS to last the entire trip. So I took a closer look on a navigation site at the route and the surroundings of the destination, prayed, asked God to provide special protection and guidance for my trip, and started the journey.

At the last highway junction, I accidentally ended up in the wrong lane, which led me off the highway and towards the city rather than the next highway. In the meantime, my phone was off.

Now what? In the evening, in the dark, in a foreign city, I was totally dependent on God's help. He didn't leave me alone for one moment. God led my sense of direction in a wonderful way and, after a few kilometers, led me miraculously onto the next highway entrance ramp in such a short and easy way, and brought me back on track.

In that moment, I knew it wasn't my own sense of direction that was leading me; it was God's. One wrong turn could have led to a big problem. When I arrived safely and happily at my destination, I thanked God for His incredible help.

This event reminded me how much more important it is to stick to the right route for our

spiritual journey. There are many small side roads and lanes that can lead us from the right path. Some lanes seem to run parallel to the correct route for a long time, and we don't notice how this lane slowly takes us further and further away. This "wrong" lane can include wrong friends, poor habits, waning of our first love towards God, wrong priorities, etc. Just like the GPS directs our journey, so the Bible, God's Word, shows us the right path on our spiritual journey. It is important that we use it daily and align ourselves with it.

Another important aspect is a correct connection. If the GPS or internet connection is interrupted, the route can get messed up or disappear completely. Similarly, it is very important to have a good connection with God and to keep it. If our connection to God is broken, the Holy Spirit can't lead us. He will try to lead you onto the right path, but you will not recognize or understand it.

Are you still on the right path? If not, then pause for a moment, reconnect yourself to God, and let the Word lead you. May God help you stay the course so you get to your destination.

*Dina Grötzinger
Germany*



You Are Wonderfully Made

“For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well” (Psalm 139:14).

David wrote this psalm knowing that God knew him before he was even formed in his mother’s womb and already cared about his well-being. We have been created in the image of our heavenly Father and are precious in His sight. This makes us valuable not only to our Creator, but to ourselves and to those around us.

I have been a counselor/client advocate for over thirteen years at the Pregnancy Care Centre in Edmonton, Alberta. I have counseled many young people over the years, and one thing I have found is that those who have gotten themselves into trouble most often do not realize or appreciate how valuable they really are. Since I speak to more young ladies than young men, one common thread that comes up is a lack of self-esteem and self-worth. Many have come from broken homes and difficult circumstances.

The culture we live in has not helped. There is a lot of peer pressure in the youth culture to go along with whatever seems to be the popular thing. Having good morals is scoffed and ridiculed. And yet, we are fearfully and wonderfully made. God has so much more in mind for us than just going along with the flow. Therefore God has set boundaries for us in His Word. God wants to keep us safe so we don’t look back with regret on our poor decisions.

Many times, I have tried to impress on my clients how valuable they are and that they deserve to be respected and cherished. No one is ever supposed to be manipulated or taken advantage of. So many young people feel pressured into doing things they don’t really want to do. Girls and guys ought to look out for each other. They should defend each other’s honor and show respect for one another.

God wants us to grow and mature to fulfill the special purpose He has for our lives. There is a story of an old violin that was to be auctioned. Maybe it was worth just a couple of dollars but then something amazing happened. An old man got up, dusted off the violin and started to play. The music coming from that violin was beautiful, leaving hardly a dry eye in the room. Needless to say, this violin sold for thousands of dollars. The touch of a master’s hand made all the difference. This is how each one of us can be used by God, no matter our circumstances. He loves us unconditionally, He forgives, He cares and guides us. God gave His Son so we could glorify Him through our lives. You are not insignificant. You are not useless. You are loved. Believe it!

*Elizabeth Seida
Edmonton, Alberta*

Turn Your Sorrows Into Prayers

Someone once called and asked me if we had a hymn book in which the song “Turn Your Sorrows into Prayers” could be found. I wrote down the hymn title and promised to take a look.

Although I had never heard the song and did not know its content, these words did not leave me. The phrase provided a powerful sermon. Many things in life can cause us sorrow, but I believe we have yet to eliminate a single difficulty or trouble by worrying and fretting.

Sometimes we also try to complain about our sorrows to others. We only rarely receive help by doing this, although our heart is sometimes relieved by expressing it.

In Matthew 6:25–34, Jesus speaks of several things in daily life that can cause us worries, but He repeatedly emphasizes, “Do not worry.” In Luke 12:26, He says, “If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest?”

Don’t we catch ourselves with worry trying to overcome us? When our children leave home in the morning to go to school or work, doesn’t an anxious worry creep up on us, and cause us to wonder, “Will they be kept from sin today? Will they remain honest and truthful? Or will the enemy of their souls succeed in wounding and hardening their young hearts?”

Further, our thoughts wander to our spouse, who is working somewhere at his job. He, too, is exposed to temptations and difficulties, and we worry about him and whether he, too, will remain protected. So there are countless things that can worry us. But by worrying, we are not helping anyone. On the contrary, we are only harming ourselves, because worry undermines our health.

In 1 Peter 5:7, we find a wonderful scripture, which says, “Cast all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you.” When we come to the merciful and loving Father and give Him all our burdens, troubles, and worries in childlike faith and trust and offer them in fervent intercession, then we can go about our day comforted and worry-free, knowing that “He cares for you”!

This is also the only way we can be a help and a blessing to people who are in need or in danger physically and spiritually. Therefore, let’s always remember, “Turn Your Sorrows into Prayers”!

E. Boehling

*Are your sorrows hard to bear?
Do you worry? Is peace rare?
Jesus understands and cares;
Turn your sorrows into prayers.*

*Do you long, deep in your heart,
In worldly pleasures to take part?
Look to Jesus, meet Him there,
He will cleanse your heart in prayer.*

*Are you sad and all alone?
Does the spirit in you groan?
He Who suffered knows your cares;
He will comfort you in prayer.*

*Is the devil tempting you?
Flee to Jesus, pray anew;
In Christ’s vict’ry you can share;
Seek your strength from God in prayer.*

*Do you wish to serve your Lord?
Come in prayer and read His Word.
Jesus Christ is always there
When you seek His will in prayer.*

*Whatever may be on your mind,
Joy or sorrow, you will find
That your Master always cares.
You can share all things in prayer.*

Dora Rappard

The Canary

Alfred was playing in the garden. Suddenly, he heard a soft chirping behind him. He turned around and spotted a beautiful bird in the hedge. One leap, and the next moment he had a young canary in his hand. The poor little animal! It trembled and fluttered its wings fearfully. But Alfred would not let him go. Full of joy, he bounded into the house.

"Mother, Mother, look what I found!" Everyone in the house hurried over. Soon, an old cage was brought in to serve as a home for the little bird. Gradually, the little animal seemed to calm down, and all the children were delighted with their new guest.

But soon, a dark shadow clouded Alfred's face, and he was lost in thought. "Mother," he asked at last, "is the bird ours?" "No, my dear, not really." But mother said nothing further.

Several days passed. The children's joy in the tame bird grew and grew. But something disturbed Alfred in all his joy. What could it be? It was the quiet voice of his conscience.

Alfred heeded that quiet voice and one day

said to his mother, "If the little bird doesn't belong to us, then we can't keep it, can we, Mother?" "No," she replied, pleased that Alfred meant to do no wrong.

"You know what? Tomorrow, we'll take the cage with the bird and go to Mr. N., who sells a lot of birds,

and ask him. Maybe the little animal flew away from him."

The following morning, with a heavy heart, but still cheerful, Alfred wandered with the cage and the bird to Mr. N.

It was just as Mother had suspected.

Mr. N. said, "Yes, this is one of my birds that got away from me a few days ago. But because I realize you are an honest boy and also love animals, I want to give you the canary. Take him back with you and be very kind to him."

After Alfred had admired the many birds in the

store, he went home again. "Oh Mom," he cried when he reached home, "I'm so glad I went! Just think, I get to keep the bird!"

"May God always give you grace, Alfred," said Mother, "to always do what's right. That's always best. If we act with integrity, God will take care of the rest!" ■



You Are My Helper

*“Because you are my helper,
I sing for joy in the shadow of your wings.”
(Psalm 63:7 - NLT)*

It happened years ago. A ship had sunk. The cargo was lost, but the crew was saved. The insurance company, which had to pay for the loss, took the captain to court. There, he was presented with a probing question: “Why didn’t you radio SOS? Why didn’t you call for help?” There was dead silence in the courtroom. After thinking about it for a while, the captain replied, “We thought we could help ourselves.”

Many people go through life with the attitude of complete self-sufficiency. Self-confident, they don’t seem to need help.

In David’s circumstances, just the opposite seems to have been the case. Not only did he come to the realization that he needed a helper, he also found a Helper. With a joyful heart, he looked up and exclaimed with full conviction, “You [God] are my helper.” Indeed, a short but very precise statement.

The general consensus is that, as king, David was on the run from his son Absalom. Far from Jerusalem, in the desert, constantly in mortal danger, he was not sure he would come out alive. Yet he did not give up, did not despair, did not perish, but said, “You are my helper.”

David had an intimate relationship with this Helper. He relied on Him. He trusted Him. He experienced Him. Regularly.

Remember his youth. Too young to serve with his brothers in the army of Israel, he was on his way to visit them. In doing so, he overheard a giant, Goliath the

Philistine, scoffing at the God of Israel and challenging the Israelites to a duel. David, who remembered his Helper, volunteered for the duel against Goliath. God was his Helper when he killed a lion that wanted to steal a sheep from his flock. And when a bear approached, the Lord also helped him. Consequently, he was able to say to the astonished Israelites, “The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine” (1 Samuel 17:37). And he did. With God’s help, he defeated the giant. It proved true once again, “You are my Helper.”

Then came a dark hour. Instead of relying on his Helper, he fell completely into temptation. The relationship between him and his Helper was destroyed. Sad and broken, he went his way. Yet even now, he found help once more. After a remorseful confession, he found forgiveness and a restored relationship with God. In Psalm 32:5b, he writes, “And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.” Again he was able to exclaim, “You are my helper!”

Though our deepest heart’s longing is difficult to express in words, we all wish for such a helper. We realize we can’t survive without a helper. That has long since become clear to us, and we don’t wish to be without Him.

In Hebrews 13:5–6 we read, “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never



leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" Tying in to our financial situation, the concern about our savings account balance at the bank, the fear whether it will be enough, the Bible text speaks courage to us and gives us the promise that God will not "leave us nor forsake us." Then, did you notice, he writes, "So we may boldly say: the LORD is my helper." You may appropriate that statement and say it out loud, "The Lord is my helper." In every situation. Always. Everywhere.

This means the Lord, our Helper, is always available and approachable. Again and again, we hear of people in their loneliness, who long for a counterpart, someone they can talk to, someone they can simply tell everything. This is precisely what the Lord calls us to do. "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you" (Psalm 50:15). He formally offers Himself as our Helper.

The principle that God offers Himself as a helper and wants to be with us and help us runs like a common theme through the entire Bible. It is applicable in every situation and can actually be experienced. Draw your helper into your life, start the day with Him, and let Him accompany you through the day. In this way, you are never alone.

If you do not have this personal relationship with God, let me point out that it is in precisely such matters that God can help. Sins, outstanding debts, broken

interpersonal relationships, disordered affairs, etc., He helps us put life in order and to remove life's debris. Psalm 3:8 reads, "Salvation belongs to the LORD." But only for those who want help.

If everything is in order with God and man, we can look up with a joyful heart in any situation and say with confidence, "You are my Helper." This helper, according to Psalm 121, is "the LORD . . ."

- "who made heaven and earth" (2), and further it says,

- "He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber" (3).

- "Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (4).

- "The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night" (5-6).

- "The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul" (7).

- "The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore" (8).

With this Helper, we want to courageously continue our journey through life until our "going out and coming in" becomes reality and we are allowed to see our Helper face to face.

*Harry Semenjuk
Wetaskiwin, Alberta*

Temptations

First Corinthians 10:7–13 speaks of great temptations that came over Israel during their journey through the desert. God had freed these people from the mighty hand of slavery in Egypt and wanted to bring them to Canaan, the Promised Land. On their way through the desert, they had to endure challenges, hardships, discouragement, discontentment, and unfulfilled wishes. That created fertile ground for Satan to tempt the people to disobey God. Instead of withstanding temptation, they made room for it and sinned. God intervened with punishments and expected the people to come to their senses. But lastly, He had to say, “It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways” (Psalm 95:10). Again, it says, “But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness” (1 Corinthians 10:5).

What happened to Israel also has meaning for us today and is written for us as a warning. We should learn from the lives and actions of the Israelites. We also walk through difficult circumstances on our journey and will face various temptations. The tempter will also try to find opportunities to make us stumble. Those who are not vigilant can soon count themselves victims of the devil.

Satan will use all methods of temptation to bring us to sin. One thing is certain: he will veil his intent and not immediately approach us with blatant sins. If he is successful in getting our attention, he will pull us in further, and eventually we will be at the point of carelessly walking into temptation. The conscience is silenced, the inner boundaries are suppressed, and it won't take long until we sin without thinking about it.

What does the word “temptation” mean? Often, people think temptation is already sin,

but it is important to distinguish between the two. They are closely related, but not one and the same.

Temptation is an attack from the devil to get humans to do something against God. Through temptation, he tries to bring someone onto his side and go against God. As long as a person withstands the devil with his many temptations and does not give in to his advice, they have not sinned. It may take a long time until they achieve victory. Yet one day, the devil will leave his battleground for a time. Temptation is like a door we need to walk through to enter enemy territory. What happens then is not hard to describe. It depends on the stand we take in temptation.

Jesus Christ was also tempted, just as we are. He had a battle with the tempter, just as we do. He also experienced the things that give us trouble and grief. However, He remained free from sin. That's why it was said of Him, “For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18). It is He who has stepped on the serpent's head. He made it possible to have victory over temptation.

Temptations test our condition before God. They give us the opportunity for evaluation. Temptation directly or indirectly questions whether we will remain true to God. Each time, we can prove that we will cling to God and stand up for Him. The battle may be hard at times, but we have a 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” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Therefore, watch, pray, take new courage, and stand firm in the name of Jesus to withstand the devil in steadfast faith. God is with you and will give you victory! ■

Cast Thy Burden on the Lord

Words arranged.

B. E. WARREN

*Christian, when thy way
seems darkest and thine eyes
with tears are dim,*

*Straight to God, thy Father, hast'ning,
tell thy sorrows unto Him.*

1. Christian, when thy way seems darkest and thine eyes with tears are dim,
2. Sympathy of friends may cheer thee when the raging storm is past,
3. Think how thy divine Redeemer knows, as thou canst never know,
4. All thy griefs by Him permitted, needful is each one to thee;
5. For, too well thy Savior loves thee to allow thy life to be

*Not to human ear confiding
thy sad tale of grief and care,
But, before thy Father, kneeling,
pour out all thy sorrows there.*

*Sympathy of friends may cheer thee
when the raging storm is past,
But God only can console thee
in the wild, terrific blast.*

*Go with words, or tears, or silence,
only lay them at His feet:*

*Thou shalt prove how great
His pity and His tenderness how sweet.*

*Think how thy divine Redeemer knows,
as thou canst never know,*

*All the deepest depths of suff'ring,
all the weight of human woe.*

*And, though now in glory seated,
He can hear thy feeblest cry,
Even hear the stifled sighings
of the dumb heart's agony.*

*All thy griefs by Him permitted,
needful is each one to thee;*

*All thy tears by Him are counted,
one too much there cannot be.*

*And if, while they fall so quickly,
thou canst own His way is right,
Then each bitter tear of anguish
precious is in Jesus' sight.*

*For too well thy Savior loves
thee to allow thy life to be
One long, calm, unbroken summer,
one unruffled, stormless sea.*

*He would have thee fondly nestle
closer to His loving breast;
He would have that world seem
brighter where alone is perfect rest.*

D. S. Warner

Repeat pp

Temptation And Conscience

Among God's children are dear faithful souls who are very conscientious, or even over-conscientious, and therefore suffer greatly from accusations from the enemy. Are you perhaps one of them? Be confident, because there is help for you.

A special gift every person has received from God is their conscience. It reveals what is good and evil, even in the absence of law (see Romans 2:15). Accordingly, it can be both our best friend and our worst enemy. The former is the case when we can say with the apostle, "I have walked in good conscience before God" (Acts 23:1) and when we practice having a clear conscience at all times before God and man (see Acts 24:16). For that soul, the result is joyfulness and confidence before God (see 1 John 3:21). However in the latter case, the conscience acts as an accuser and judge, relentless and harsh. It can act as a fire, burning continuously when the guilty awareness of fear, anxiety, and torment heavily burden the soul, as we find in the life of King David (see Psalm 32:5). In the case of the unsaved person, it can be called a "slumbering conscience" because its owner has not yet come to the realization of his true stance before God.

Even faithful children of God, who take their spiritual lives very seriously, are sometimes troubled by their conscience when they realize occasional shortcomings towards God and their neighbor. Precisely these people, often deeply troubled in their souls, urgently need help. It is their extreme conscientiousness that hinders them most from truly enjoying a close relationship with God. For example, some of God's children consider temptation to commit a wrong as sinful and believe that since they are tempted, they have sinned.

To start, we must realize that temptation is not sin. We must not disregard the fact that all God's children have struggles to face in this world. In God's Word, we are told we must not take this struggle lightly, for

"we do not struggle with flesh and blood, but with rulers and mighty men" (Ephesians 6:12). When the devil tempts someone, he always seeks to corrupt the soul.

Thus, the evil spirits under heaven, who are under the "rulers of the darkness," seek to influence our eyes, ears, emotions, and thoughts toward wickedness.

Of course, the creator of this struggle is not always easily recognized. He does not come and present himself as the tempter. We must, however, fight against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11). Sometimes he comes as a serpent and cunningly tries to seduce the soul. Other times he prowls around like a "roaring lion" (see 1 Peter 5:8) to frighten and intimidate one or the other. He tries to rob us of our peace and lead us astray from the right path. Dear Child of God, remember that you may be in this battle simply because your conscientiousness is in the way of the evil enemy. Because you are trying to faithfully and sincerely serve God, Satan sees that he would have little success trying to tempt you to evil; therefore, he torments you in all kinds of different ways.

It is important to note that there is much blessing in enduring temptations. God's Word reminds us that "blessed" are those who endure temptations, and it promises the crown of life as the reward of victory after having proved to be steadfast and true in temptation (see James 1:12). Can it then not be said that the conscientious and the faithful are the ones who love the Lord most?

But the tempter can also appear as an angel of light when he sees fit. The "pious" devil is often not recognizable as such. You recognize this trap later, but then

the difficulties are all the greater. The wicked fiend usually uses this method to lead souls away from the truth and to lead them astray.

“Yes,” someone might say, “that is all very well, but my difficulty is quite different. I often have such troublesome thoughts and can’t seem to fend them off. They appear suddenly and torment me so much that my courage completely fails me. Often, these evil thoughts turn against God, against Jesus, the Holy Spirit, or the blood of Christ, although I love the Lord and would never do anything like I am tempted to do. Yes, I would never consider putting such a thought into practice, and yet, it is there.”

This is a terrible state of affairs. Such thoughts don’t easily cease, and should they finally do so, they soon return. Behold, there is One who was also sorely tried “in all points as we are,” the Scriptures tell us (see Hebrews 4:15). It is Jesus Christ, our Savior. Once, the Spirit drove Him out into solitude, into the desert. As He remained there in devout worship before God the Father, the devil also came there to tempt Him in many different ways. Once, when He had become hungry after a long fast, the arch-enemy even sought to place doubts in Him about His kinship with God. Satan wanted to induce Him to use His divine power to perform miracles to make bread out of stones. However, the attack was repulsed, and Jesus retained the victory.

Another temptation followed. Presumably, Jesus never left the desert to climb the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem with the devil. In His mind, however, the enemy led Him there, tempting Him to take a leap from the temple. This would have caused a great sensa-

tion. This could have been a way to gain recognition by the people and possibly escape suffering on the cross as well. In this instance, the devil disguised himself as an angel of light who claimed to know the Holy Scriptures.

Dear afflicted Soul, perhaps you are nearly despairing because evil thoughts torment you. Look to Christ Who came into this world to save us people. He said of Himself, “I and the Father are One.” Yet He was tempted in His thoughts by Satan to turn His back on the Father and worship the devil, to serve him for earthly possessions. We can hardly imagine this, and yet Jesus was tempted in this manner.

With the words, “Get behind Me, Satan!” Jesus rejected the whispers of the enemy. I do not know how long the temptation lasted, but I believe it was very difficult, because it is specifically reported to us among other temptations of His life. In spite of all these attempts of the devil, the Savior was nevertheless found without sin precisely because He never consented to temptation (Hebrews 4:15). In this way, you too can be victorious with God in all temptations if you raise the shield of faith daily with the firm will and resolution, “Nevertheless, I am continually with you.”

But do not fret; worrying will never help you. Remember, you and all other soldiers of Jesus have a battle to fight. Do not expect your spiritual life to prosper without struggles. Also remember that others may have to face much worse temptations and hardships. Thank the Lord for His help. Believe and trust Him. No matter what thoughts may come, remain steadfastly on God’s side. This will bring you victory. ■



TESTIMONIES

We received the following testimonies from our readers:

Dear Brothers and Sisters, through this testimony I want to share with you what once happened to us. Years ago, my husband was diagnosed with cancer on the back of his foot. It was very challenging for us, and we prayed a lot and many helped us pray. My husband had to undergo radiation, and after a certain time it got better without the spot completely disappearing. We are so grateful to God that He carried us through.

Some years ago, I was convicted of something. I didn't take it very seriously and forgot about it. After an evangelistic service last year, the Holy Spirit convicted me and showed me that it wasn't right. It was a difficult time with great spiritual distress. I prayed, fasted, cried, and did not recognize how I could make it right. I repented of it.

God's word says, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me." Also, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." My husband and I then did that. Then I went to the person involved and asked for forgiveness, and they forgave me. I promised the Lord that I would praise His name if He helped me out of my troubles. That's what I want to do through this testimony. Glory be to God. Nothing is impossible for Him. We just have to pray and trust Him. To my shame, I have to admit that I was lacking faith and trust. I am happy now that I have repented, even though it seemed impossible. But the Lord helps us if we pray.

*Anna P.
Minden-Lübbecke, Germany*

To God's glory, I would like to share how He has led my life so wonderfully. I was born on August 17, 1937, in Uzbekistan. My parents never spoke to us about God, although they were believers. They feared we would say something in school by mistake. It was a very difficult time. At school we were told there is no God. My grandpa was a pastor in the Lutheran Church for thirty-six years and in prison for five years, from 1930 to 1935.

My husband was sentenced to ten years in prison for his faith at the age of 22. He was granted amnesty

after five years and three months because the dictator died in 1953. We did not yet know each other at that time.

During the war, my father, like all German men, was sent to the labor camp in the Ural mountains. My sister and I were in Siberia with our mother. After the war, my parents and I (I was 19 at the time) found salvation in a Baptist congregation and were all baptized together early in the morning at five o'clock so we would not be stopped by unbelievers. Later, my husband forbade me to practice my faith out of fear

of being arrested again, and he even threatened to divorce me. We already had four children. So what was I to do? I fell away from the faith.

When we came to Germany in 1989, I went to a Baptist church. It did not satisfy my soul, and I couldn't explain what I was missing. When my husband died, my sister invited me to stay with her so I could recover a little. They took me to their church services. She and her husband were saved and baptized. My brother-in-law knew the Bible well. He explained so much to me, but I resisted for a whole year. Many times, I woke up at night and cried, asking God the question, "Am I going to be lost or saved?" Then I heard a soft voice: "You must seek salvation anew." Then I knew what I had to do. At the age of 63, I received salvation in the church of God in Gifhorn and was baptized there. For seventeen years I drove 200 km (124 mi) to Gifhorn every month for the "big Sunday." Since I moved to Hameln six years ago, I have been attending the congregation in Herford.

How often has my dear God saved me from the depths and perils of life; how often was prayer answered. He gave me strength and courage and strengthened my faith. Twenty years ago, I had to accompany three coffins to the grave: first, my son-in-law died at 44; a year later, my husband; and two years later, my son at 40. He was a pilot and crashed over Greenland. I never would have made it through without Jesus. In 2021, I had two major surgeries in three months and lost 19 kg (42 lb). I was very weak, but God got me back on my feet. Thank God! I am 84 years old and still alive. To Him be glory and thanks with all my heart.

Now I would like to share a poem with you:

"To live is Christ, and to die is gain."

*I know You love me, Jesus Christ;
I am Your child, healed by Your stripes.
I was in darkness and was blind;
You saved me and refreshed my mind.*

*You are the light upon my path;
You pulled me out of miry depths,
From world and sin You set me free;
You paid the highest price for me.*

*Repent, my friend, of all your sin;
A brand new life can then begin.
Before the judgment seat of Christ,
It matters how you've lived your life.*

*All worldly pleasures pass away;
What's done for Jesus, that will stay.
Oh, flee from sin and Satan's side;
Give up your stubbornness and pride.*

*Be ready then, for Jesus died;
His precious blood flowed from His side
So sinners poor and lost like you
Can leave their sin and start anew.*

*There is a broad and narrow way;
Choose the right path, do not delay.
Through grace your sins will be forgiven
And your name inscribed in heaven.*

Irma Ott



When Doubts Assail

When often doubts afflict me:
“Are you a child of God?”
Then Jesus whispers soft and gently,
“I cleansed you with My blood.”

The enemy would love to rob me
And take my peace and joy.
His lies for me are seen as folly;
I will not heed his ploys.

When I am sad because I'm suff'ring
And comfort cannot find;
When trust and faith seem to be lacking,
This vexes sore my mind.

Then God with grace comes to my rescue
And grants me victory.
That others thrive and have no issues
No longer bothers me.

There are things in life that cause me fear,
And yet what can I do?
In all things my Lord is very near;
I know He'll see me through.

So I'll praise the Lord with all my heart
Because He's good to me.
I will, whatever life may impart,
Rejoice eternally.

Edmund Hägele