



Foundation of Faith

Be Filled with the Spirit

A Complete Surrender

The Influence of a Mother

Obedience with a Promise

A Letter to Mother

How Will We Be Remembered?



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FOUNDATION OF FAITH

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Editorial

Dear Reader!

In the letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul writes as follows: “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:2).

We know that in His plan of salvation, God calls all to repentance and faith. Through God’s grace and His precious Word, unbelievers become His children, the redeemed of the Lord. The Savior calls out to His disciples: “rejoice because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20).

In His high priestly prayer, the Son of God asks His heavenly Father that His disciples, whose names are written in heaven, may now also be sanctified: “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth” (John 17:17–19). Here we are clearly shown that His disciples need an additional resource in order to be able to effectively and courageously fulfill their ministry, their divine task.

Before Easter and their encounter with the resurrected Christ, the disciples sat behind closed doors, despondent and discouraged. But by the feast of Pentecost, having prayed together for a number of days, they laid themselves fully on the altar. They were fully consecrated to God and received the Holy Spirit. The fearful disciples became courageous witnesses who proclaimed Christ’s suffering and His glorious resurrection without fear and with great joy: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).

Dear Reader, God calls all people, and those who come to Him find salvation. When the redeemed lays himself completely on the altar and makes a complete surrender, he is sanctified through the Holy Spirit.

H. D. Nimz



The Influence of a Mother

One Sunday morning, eight young men decided to go on an outing together. They planned to spend their day off drinking wine, playing cards, and pursuing other worldly pleasures. As they chatted and laughed merrily, the sudden ringing of church bells pierced the air. For one of the young men, it stirred up memories of his mother's voice from his childhood home. He stopped and explained to the others that he wanted to turn back and go to church. But instead of understanding, they responded with loud laughter and ridicule. "Stephen has suddenly become a saint," they mocked. "We should baptize him! And now, into the water he must go!"

Stephen remained calm and serious: "I know you are strong enough to throw me into the water. But listen to me before you do that. My home is far away from here, and you don't know that I have a loving, frail mother who may never leave her bed again. I am her youngest child, and since my father didn't have enough money to support me, a friend agreed to take care of me.

"It was hard for my mother to let me go. On the day I left, she called me into her room. She laid her hands on my head and prayed for me. Then she looked at me earnestly and said: 'My dear child, you do not know and will never understand what a mother feels when she says her final goodbye to her child. I know we will

never see each other again on this earth. It would be too much to ask for you to embark on the long trip back home before completing your studies. By the time you're finished, I won't be here anymore since my days are numbered. Where you're going, you will have neither father nor mother to guide and admonish you. But I will not stop praying for you. Every Sunday, when you hear church bells ringing, remember that I am thinking of you. Wherever you are, think of your dying mother when those bells toll. I love you like no one else can, and I pray for you with tears. Now give me a kiss and then farewell!"

Stephen continued: "I may not see my sweet mother here anymore, but I hope to meet her in heaven with God's help. How could I ever forget her? I have decided to choose my mother's God as my God."

After Stephen finished, his comrades were moved to tears. They made way for him as he turned and headed over to the church. His determination had touched their hearts as well. They all abandoned their original plans and accompanied him to church. What they heard there left a deep impression on them.

Stephen became a radiant child of God and, then later, a faithful worker in the Lord's vineyard. He never regretted following his mother's advice.

J. Klenert



Love, While There is Time

From the memoir of Monika Hunnius

One day, I took a walk through the cemetery with my uncle, the remarkable country doctor Hermann Hesse in Weissenstein, Estonia. Hand in hand, we went from grave to grave, reading the names on the tombstones and talking about the deceased. My uncle knew all those resting here. We lingered a little longer at a particularly adorned grave. The name of a woman was etched on the tall marble cross. The grave was surrounded by a railing secured by an intricately-designed door. My uncle looked at it pensively; sorrow reflected in his aged face. Finally, he broke the silence and began to speak:

“Here lies a mother whose only son broke her heart. He abandoned her, leaving her to live and die alone. She was too common for her son, for he had become rich and noble. He never invited her to his home. His wife, a proud woman of the world, never met her. The mother struggled through life, lonely and impoverished. Poverty did not trouble her, but her son’s rejection grieved her deeply. Her grandchild was born and how she longed to see it.

“Year after year, she waited for her son to bring the little grandchild to her. “They will surely come this

summer,’ she thought, and then she spruced up her home and planted her small garden with things her son liked. But they did not come; the visit was repeatedly put off with flimsy excuses.

“That made her ill. When I visited her, I saw the bitterness she held. So, I wrote to her son that his mother was dying. But he still couldn’t find time to fulfill his dying mother’s most heartfelt wish. When I called on her, I felt sorry for the poor woman. We prayed together.

After that, she was able to let go of her bitterness and depart in peace.

“And then, for the funeral, the son appeared. As he silently listened, I told him how his mother had worried and suffered. Apparently, it had touched him after all. On the evening before his departure, I walked to the cemetery. There I saw him sitting in front of the grave and heard him sighing: ‘Mother, oh mother!’

“Since then, he has been trying tirelessly to honor her grave. This year, he had this elaborate railing installed. But what does that help his mother? His troubled conscience is unlikely to be silenced by it.”

“Dear child,” my uncle concluded, turning to me, “shall we not love each other while there is time?” ■

“Here lies a mother whose only son broke her heart.”

What does Jesus' Ascension mean for me?

The ascension of Jesus is an event that generally receives less attention than Christmas, Good Friday, or Easter. With Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter, we know the life-changing significance they have for us, but what does the ascension mean for us? If we overlook this event, we miss learning some valuable lessons.

Without the ascension, Jesus' work would be incomplete.

In Acts 1:3, we read that during the 40 days after the Resurrection, Jesus spent time talking to the disciples about the kingdom of God. Although He was not with them continuously, He appeared to them at certain times. Throughout the Bible, the number 40 appears in God's plan in a striking way.

- at the time of the flood, God made it rain for 40 days and nights
- the Israelites wandered through the desert for 40 years
- when Moses climbed the mountain and came into the presence of God, he was there for 40 days and nights
- the spies spent 40 days exploring the land of Canaan
- Goliath taunted the Israelites for 40 days prior to the appearance of David

There are many other examples. Jesus was actively at work for some time after His resurrection, fulfill-

ing His mission here on earth. During those 40 days, He spoke to the disciples and taught them about His kingdom that had begun. He also revealed Himself to a group of over 500 brethren at once (1 Corinthians 15:6). Thus, He provided irrefutable evidence of His resurrection.

Jesus laid the foundation for the gospel that could and should now be proclaimed. In Matthew 28:18–20 and Mark 16:15–18, Jesus explicitly commanded the disciples to proclaim this good news of God's plan of salvation. They had therefore not traveled about with Jesus in vain, rather they now had tasks to fulfill. In order to do this, they needed the power of the Holy Spirit.

The ascension made it possible for the Holy Spirit to come.

Reading Acts 1:6–11, we find that Jesus ascended to heaven in a cloud. Why do you think Jesus was taken away before the disciples' eyes? We can clearly imagine that if Jesus had not ascended like this, the disciples would have continued to wait their entire lives for Him to reappear. His ascension marked the end of His earthly ministry and made the coming of the Holy Spirit possible. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7). According to His words, Jesus had to die, rise from the dead, and ascend to heaven before the Holy Spirit could come. The way was now open for the Spirit to come.

We may ask ourselves why it would be good for us that He ascended to heaven and the Holy Spirit came? A logical answer is that when the Lord Jesus was on earth, He could only be physically present in one place and at one time. The Holy Spirit, however, works in all continents, countries, homes, families, and hearts at the same time. The great undertaking of saving people was extremely important to God. Therefore, a representative was needed on earth who could assist the children of God in all places, someone who could complete the work begun by Christ in all parts of the world.

The ascension also signifies that Jesus is victorious.

If Jesus had not been victorious, He would not have gone back to the Father. The ascension emphasizes Jesus' triumph over sin, death, and the powers of darkness. We have only a description of what it looked like from Earth below as Jesus ascended to heaven. But have you ever imagined what happened in heaven when Jesus returned, how the heavenly hosts greeted and welcomed the hero, the Lord of Lords?

C. H. Spurgeon elaborated on this thought: "When a Roman general had performed great feats in a foreign country, his highest reward was that the senate should decree him a triumph. . . . On a certain set day the gates of Rome were thrown open; all the houses were decorated with ornaments; the people climbed to the tops of the houses, or stood in great crowds along the streets. The gates were opened, and by-and-bye the first legion began to stream in with its banners flying and its trumpets sounding. The people saw the stern warriors as they marched along the street returning from their blood-red fields of battle. . . . Bear with me while I humbly attempt to depict the triumph which now results from the cross. . . . Now, mark, how not only the angels, but the redeemed crowd the windows of heaven! He comes! He comes! It is Christ himself!" "God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet" (Psalm 47:5). "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:15). Jesus, the Victor, is back, back in glory. Before the foundation of the world, it was determined that Jesus would return to heaven after His work on earth. That is what happened. Jesus, the Lamb, the Son, is worthy to receive praise, honor, and glory.

Because Jesus ascended to heaven, He is our active intercessor.

When Jesus ascended to heaven, He sat down at the right hand of the Father and took on the role of High Priest, interceding on our behalf before God in His name. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14–16). He understands our struggles and intercedes for us. We can approach the holy throne of God because Jesus sits next to the Father and advocates for us! Jesus lives, advocates for us, and knows what life on this earth is like. This gives us great comfort! We can confidently bring our petitions to God (Hebrews 4:16).

The fact that Jesus ascended to heaven testifies to the fact that He will return.

The Ascension is inextricably linked to the promise of Jesus' second coming. At the time of His ascension, the angels said to the disciples: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw him go up into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Jesus will come again, namely in the clouds of heaven, just as the disciples had seen Him ascend into heaven. What a day that will be, when the struggles, burdens, and hardships of life will end forever, when the battle is over and our course is finished!

Just as the moment came for Jesus to return to heaven, the moment will also come for you and me to leave this earth. We are faced with the question: Will we go to the Lord as victors, or will we be eternally lost as sinners? Jesus has completely fulfilled His mission so that you and I can be saved. Accept the sacrifice of Jesus, be obedient to His voice in this life, and then one day you too will be with the Lord in glory. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also" (John 14:3). Nothing in this world would be worth missing this glory!

John Reimer
Neustädt, Mexico



Be Filled with the Holy Spirit

*The great need of sanctification
through the Holy Spirit*

If we wish to be useful in the service of our Lord and be a blessing to others, then we must be equipped with godly power. Before His ascension, Jesus told His disciples: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). All Christians who have not fully laid themselves on the altar of the Lord and dedicated their all to Him must yet experience this equipping of power from on high.

Christ placed great emphasis on the importance of the Holy Spirit, although he said little about the Holy Spirit until shortly before the time of his suffering and death. In John 14, Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit for the first time: “I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:16–17). Here, Jesus plainly states that He will ask the Father to send His followers another Helper, namely the Spirit of truth, to always remain with them. It was the Spirit of truth that protected the apostles and the church from heresy. This Spirit will also protect from error those of us in our time who submit to His leading and have totally dedicated ourselves to God. Those who are filled with the Holy Spirit and led by Him will be kept from all extreme and un-biblical ways and protected from heresy.

When Jesus was physically present with the disciples, their understanding was limited, as John 16:12 explains: “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now.” But in John 14:26, Jesus tells them that “the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things

that I said to you.” Jesus’ time on earth was nearly finished, and so He committed His mission on earth to those whom He had chosen and personally prepared for this work. This includes every blood-washed child of God today as well. “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*” (John 14:12–14). The people of God must continue the work that Jesus began. What a great responsibility!

When carefully studying the New Testament, we see that Jesus never commissioned anyone to preach the gospel without first experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit, except when He sent out the twelve and also the seventy before Pentecost. To these He also gave special power and authority for their mission (see Luke 9:1–2 and Luke 10:17–20). It is vitally important that we are filled with the Holy Spirit and led by Him if we wish to be useful in the service of the Lord and effective for His glory.

If we compare the lives of the apostles before and after Pentecost, we see the big difference that receiving the Holy Spirit made for them. When the enemies of Jesus came with a multitude to apprehend Jesus, Peter pulled out a sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. This was in opposition to the direct teaching of Jesus, and proved that Peter was

not yet ready for the service of the Lord. He made use of human weapons, a method Jesus did not endorse. After Pentecost, when Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, he was able to preach with heavenly power.

In Luke 22:24, we read that there was rivalry among the disciples, as they debated which of them should be considered the greatest. In Matthew 20:24, we see

a similar situation, and we read: “When the ten heard *it*, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.” There is no room for such rivalry in a sanctified heart. The “old man” must be crucified and buried.

In Galatians 5, the works of the flesh are

listed, and it is emphasized “that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:21). We see that after the apostles were sanctified, these carnal works were no longer seen. Jesus had commanded them to stay in Jerusalem until they were filled with power from on high. They obeyed, and on the day of Pentecost, they received power from above. They were baptized with the Holy Spirit and sanctified for service as effective witnesses for their Lord.

The important question for all God’s children is: “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” (Acts 19:2). Let us consider the loving words of the Lord Jesus, who said in Luke 11:13, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

W. H. Tiesel

It was the Spirit of truth that protected the apostles and the church from heresy.

A Living Sacrifice

“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.” (Romans 12: 1)

The word “sacrifice” occurs frequently in the Bible. Notably, in this passage, it refers to our body, our entire being. When we are born again, Jesus comes into our heart and makes it His dwelling place. The life of sin is behind us, and the fruit of the Spirit begins to manifest. Instead of living in sin as before, the born-again believer now follows the Lord Jesus. The believer has died to sin and received new life through Jesus Christ.

Now, we are to present our body, in which new spiritual life resides, as a living sacrifice to God. This is not only a glorious privilege but also an obligation of the born-again believer. It is our “reasonable service.” God requires the offering of ourselves, yes, our entire lives, on His altar and to submit our will entirely to Him.

No one can maintain living in holiness without obeying this solemn exhortation of the Apostle Paul. In Romans 12:2, Paul says, “that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” The one who makes this complete surrender, as Paul states in the first verse of this 12th chapter of Romans, will experience that it is God’s will to sanctify us completely.

Do you, dear Reader, have any doubts regarding the work or experience of entire sanctification? Since this experience is so crucial for the child of God, and the success of a Christian life depends on obtaining it, let us consider what kind of sacrifice we must offer to be sanctified.

We are told that our sacrifice must be pleasing to God. It is our responsibility to ensure that when we lay it on the altar, it is such that God can be pleased with it and accept it. For this reason, it must be a holy sacrifice, meaning free from sin. Even the Psalmist cries

out, “Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD! Blessed *are* those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart! They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways” (Psalm 119: 1–3).

In Romans 6:19, Paul says, “I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness *leading* to *more* lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves of righteousness for holiness.” This shows us the kind of sacrifice Paul had in mind: all our members, all our gifts and abilities, must be dedicated to the service of God.

We must not seek sanctification in order to break with sin and unrighteousness. No, if we have not yet broken with all sin and unrighteousness, we are not in a state to be sanctified. Only when we have been redeemed from sin and have turned away from it, can we surrender our bodies to God as a living sacrifice.

The Israelites were required to bring a sacrifice when they made a vow, and only if they fulfilled it was their vow pleasing to the Lord. “Speak to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, who offers his sacrifice for any of his vows or for any of his freewill offerings, which they offer to the LORD as a burnt offering—*you shall offer* of your own free will a male without blemish from the cattle, from the sheep, or from the goats. Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf. And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, to fulfill *his* vow, or a free-will offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it” (Leviticus 22: 18–21).

We see that God would not have accepted this sacrifice if there had been any flaw in it. So, our sacrifice must also be perfect. In John 15:2, we read, “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.” Therefore, we must offer to God a sacrifice that already bears fruit.

If you seek sanctification, examine yourself to see if you already bear fruit. “But the fruit of the Spirit” (which must be evident to some extent before we can present ourselves as a living sacrifice to God) “is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithful-

ness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22). If we do not bear these fruits, the sacrifice we lay on the altar of God is not complete, not perfect, and therefore not pleasing to Him.

If you have tried in the past to attain sanctification and failed, do not be discouraged but examine yourself and then come with boldness and confidence to the altar. The way to the Most Holy Place is open, and if you are justified by faith, you can obtain the grace and the experience of sanctification.

C. E. Hunter

A Complete Surrender

In the practice of Christian life, it becomes apparent that most people feel a certain longing in their souls after their conversion to surrender themselves even more completely to God. They realize that there is still a certain something in them that is contrary to God’s will. Although they have experienced victory over sin, they must nevertheless be very vigilant and pray so that the foreign element, which is opposed to God, does not gain the upper hand. It may also be that many begin to doubt their conversion when they discover that not everything is as it should be with them. If such children of God do not receive the right instruction and give room for certain doubts, it will not be long before they begin to waver and possibly even fall. Many then draw the conclusion from this experience that it is not possible to lead a completely victorious life in a born-again state. If they then hear about complete purification or the state of being completely sanctified in God, they seek such an experience in order to be able to lead a truly victorious life. However, it will then be the case that they will be deceived despite their supposed surrender.

We ask ourselves: How can this be possible? It is simply because such precious souls had lost their salvation or redemption and had fallen into sin. They then believed that sanctification would certainly help them lead a victorious life—but then came the great disappointment! The Word of God teaches us that we are redeemed from all sin by being born again. We not only have forgiveness of the guilt of sin, but, thank God, we are also free from the shackles of sin.

“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). We read further in Romans 8:1–4, “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus . . . For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Also read 1 Peter 1:15–16; 1 Peter 2:24; Colossians 3:1–4.)

Being born-again brings us all this. But despite it all, the fact remains that a certain total surrender is still necessary for the born-again person to attain biblical sanctification.

What evidence do we have of this in the Word of God, which is authoritative in everything? Jesus said

to His disciples in John 15:2–5 that they were branches in Him and yet needed to be pruned. They were in Christ, were pure, bore the fruit of the Spirit, and were a new creature because they were in Christ. In the high priestly prayer (John 17), we find Jesus praying in a special way for His disciples who were not of the world and had been preserved from sin (verses 11–12, 15).

Their names were written in heaven (Luke 10:20). They preached the kingdom of God. Jesus prayed for them that they too would be sanctified in the truth. There is no doubt that the disciples were born again before Pentecost. And the apostle Paul prayed for the children of God in Thessalonica that the God of peace would sanctify them completely (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

We would particularly like to emphasize the purpose of complete surrender here. The Lord Jesus prayed in John 17:19, “I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.” In verses 17–18, He said: “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”

Why did Jesus come into the world? He said in John 6:38, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” The essence of complete surrender lies in the will of God. Jesus, our great Master, prayed in the most difficult hour of His life: “Not My will, but Yours, be done.”

Brother and sister, this is also where our complete surrender lies. Always remember that sanctification is not meant to protect you from sin, although it does. Being born again delivers you from the power of sin. Here, too, we have already surrendered to God in order to do His will. Sanctification, or our complete consecration, serves more the purpose of making us useful and usable for the service of the Lord. It serves the purpose of being able to say in all circumstances, in all situations: “The will of the Lord be done!”

If you know that God has forgiven you everything, then surrender yourself completely to Him and remember: you are to be a temple of the Holy Spirit. The essence of total surrender is to do the good, pleasing will of God in all circumstances.

A. Borbe

Announcements

Pentecost Conference 2024

May 18–20, 2024

Place: Herford, Germany
Zimmerstraße 3

Further information:
www.gghf.de

Camp Meeting in Blaubeuren, Germany

August 16–21, 2024

Church of God Edmonton
*Conference and
75th Anniversary of the Church*
“Your righteousness is like
the great mountains.” (Psalm 36: 6)

August 31st 2024 – 2:00pm and 6:00pm
September 1st 2024 – 10:00am,
2:00pm, and 6:00pm

Do You Still Give Thought to Saving the Lost?

That's a pretty direct question, and yet it is justified. Suppose you had to answer in all honesty with a "no." Suppose you had to admit that you do not think about the salvation of the lost—wouldn't you be ignoring the main mission of the Bible?

Jesus' last words before His ascension were purposefully aimed in this direction. That is why we aptly call them the "Great Commission."

In fact, wasn't Jesus' mission of His incarnation based precisely on this guiding principle of saving the lost? Why did Jesus become man at all? Why did He walk this earth and die the death of a criminal as an innocent man? Because He was concerned with the salvation of the lost. According to Luke 19:10, He answered these questions when He stated: "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." There could be no clearer answer.

But now our Lord and Master has ascended to heaven. Did He consider the search for the lost to be complete? Or did He command others to do this search for Him? If "yes," to whom is this command directed? To us! Shortly before His ascension, Jesus turned to His disciples and followers and commissioned them to continue the mission He had begun. It was a fairly direct mission. We find it in Matthew 28:19–20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." Jesus' mission has been passed on from generation to generation. And today it applies to us, our generation.

Do you still think about the salvation of the lost? Do you still pray for it? Are you still making your fi-

nancial contribution? And what are you personally doing about the salvation of the lost?

I read the autobiography of John Paton, a missionary. A powerful statement was made about him. He is described in the book as "the man with only one thought." He was all about winning souls for the Lord.

I couldn't help but think of the apostle Paul. Referring to his attitude to life, he wrote: "For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became

as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law, that I may win those *who are* under the law; to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under the law before Christ), that I might win those *who*

are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:19–22). Paul was thinking about the salvation of the lost. He was "a man with only one thought."

Living in this age of prosperity, we are in danger of losing this one thought. Where this thought is missing, the work of soul-winning is neglected. And the end result? The lost are no longer reached with the message of salvation.

I would like to encourage you to use your talents in this ministry. You can become a soul-winner right where God has placed you: in your family, at work, with friends, in your circle of relatives . . .

There is so much to do, even for you! May the Lord bless your resolutions and also your personal commitment!

Harry Semenjuk
Wetaskiwin, Alberta

You can become a soul-winner right where God has placed you.



Laura and the Butterfly

On a beautiful spring day, Laura was helping her mom pull weeds in the garden. The sky was a beautiful blue, the sun was shining, the birds were singing, and the fragrance of flowers and grasses was in the air. Then they saw two beautiful butterflies. Mom said they are called admirals because they have red stripes on their dark brown wings and a black border with white spots. In the spring, these butterflies fly long distances south to north, even over mountains. In the fall they fly to where it is warmer, and they don't freeze to death in winter.

Then Mom pointed out a nettle plant. There were little light green pearls stuck to its leaves—eggs that the female admiral had laid. Mom explained that all this beauty was God's creation because He created everything. God gave the butterflies the knowledge of when and where to fly and where to lay their eggs. This is so that later, when hungry caterpillars hatch from the eggs, they can feed on the nettle leaves. Mom left the plant standing and said that Laura would be able to observe a miracle of God's creation over the next few weeks.

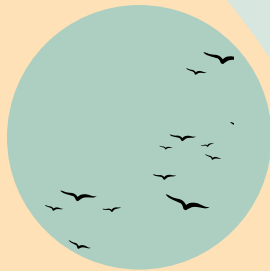
And indeed, a few days later, small, spiky, black worms with yellow spots on their sides and lots of legs emerged from the eggs—the caterpillars. They nibbled on these leaves all day and quickly grew larg-

*"O LORD, how manifold are Your works!
In wisdom You have made them all.
The earth is full of Your possessions."
Psalm 104: 24*

er. Then they began to bite through leaf stalks and spin a fine thread. They then stuck the leaf together and hid in it. It looked as if each caterpillar had its own sleeping bag—the pupae. After that, Laura had to wait another two weeks.

One morning, she saw that the chrysalis had cracked, and something was moving inside. After a few hours, young admiral butterflies slowly hatched from them. They looked exactly like their parents—the same body, colorful wings, and six thin little legs with which they could cling to whatever they were resting on. After the exhausting hatching process, they had to rest a little. But then they quietly spread their wings and flew away. One came and sat directly on Laura's hand. Laura was delighted and thanked God for this wonderful experience.

When was the last time you observed God's creation and thanked Him from the bottom of your heart?



On a Hike

On the previous page, you read about the migratory butterfly called the admiral. There are also many migratory species among birds—the migratory birds that spend the different seasons in different places. God has given these birds the knowledge of when and where to fly for breeding and wintering so that they can survive and raise offspring. For some migratory birds, the breeding grounds and wintering grounds are several thousand kilometers apart.

One of the many migratory birds that come to Germany for the breeding season in the warmer months is the crane. The large, gray birds make themselves heard in the sky with a loud trumpet call. They never fly alone but always in larger groups and in a certain order, which is called the wedge formation. This reduces the wind resistance and makes flying easier.

After arriving at the breeding grounds, they build their nests, lay eggs in them, and incubate them. The young hatch between the end of April and the beginning of May. They grow very quickly and learn everything they need to know from their parents before the fall. Finally, the adult birds train the young to fly for long periods of time, and in October or November,

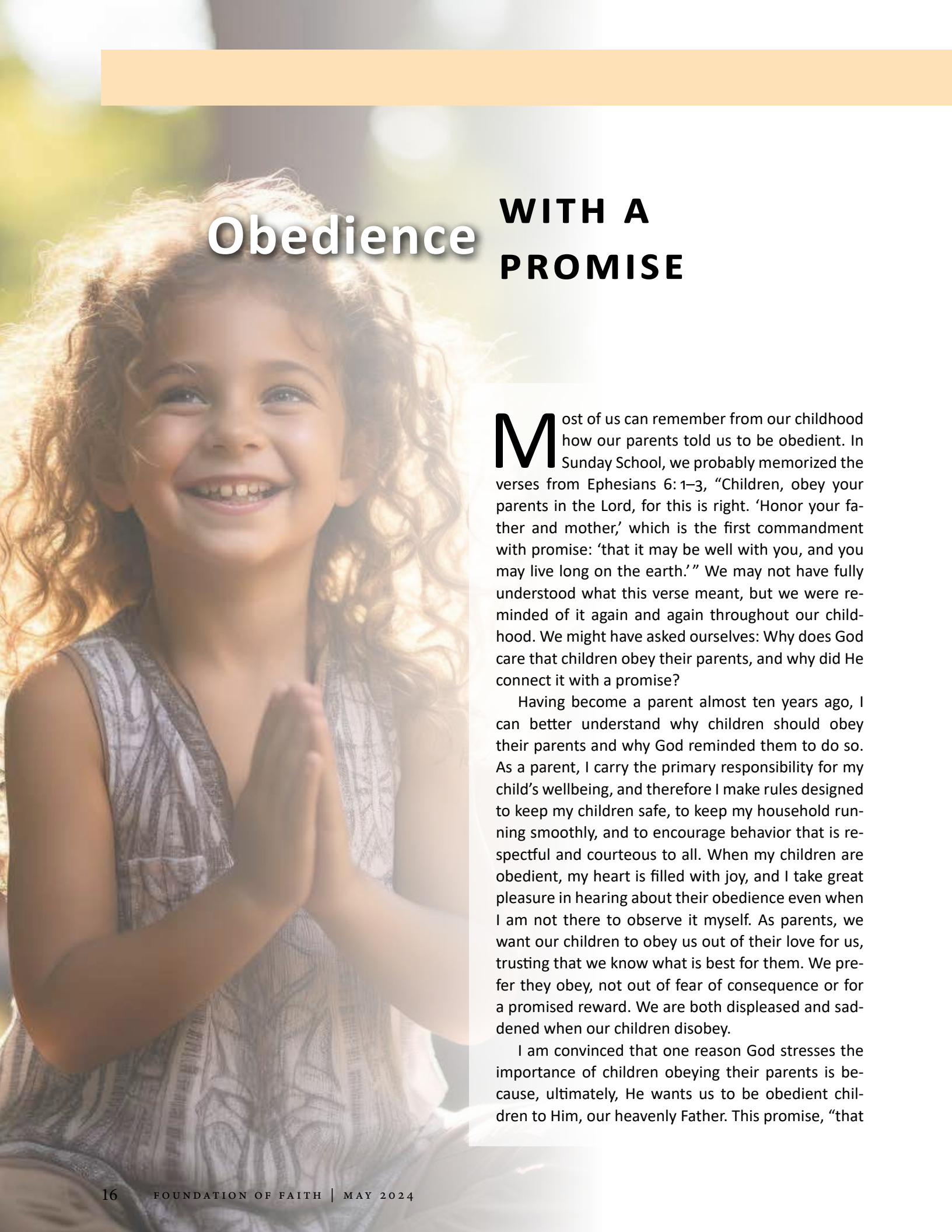
the crane migration can be seen flying on again. Scientists speak of three main routes the cranes fly, each being a distance of 2000 to 6000 km, interspersed by many obstacles (e.g., Himalayan mountains in Asia—an altitude of over 4500 m).

God lovingly cares for all His creatures, but most of all for human beings, because they have an eternal soul that longs for God, for lasting happiness, and for deep peace. Many try to fill this longing with things that do not last, and experience bitter disappointment. After all, the earth with all its beauty is not a permanent place for our souls, just a stop on the way to eternity. Jesus gave His life so that everyone may arrive at the eternal goal of heaven. He says: “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14: 6).

Today, you too can become a beloved child of God through Jesus Christ and one day be with Him forever in His heavenly home.

Helene Rotfuss





Obedience **WITH A PROMISE**

Most of us can remember from our childhood how our parents told us to be obedient. In Sunday School, we probably memorized the verses from Ephesians 6: 1–3, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: ‘that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth.’” We may not have fully understood what this verse meant, but we were reminded of it again and again throughout our childhood. We might have asked ourselves: Why does God care that children obey their parents, and why did He connect it with a promise?

Having become a parent almost ten years ago, I can better understand why children should obey their parents and why God reminded them to do so. As a parent, I carry the primary responsibility for my child’s wellbeing, and therefore I make rules designed to keep my children safe, to keep my household running smoothly, and to encourage behavior that is respectful and courteous to all. When my children are obedient, my heart is filled with joy, and I take great pleasure in hearing about their obedience even when I am not there to observe it myself. As parents, we want our children to obey us out of their love for us, trusting that we know what is best for them. We prefer they obey, not out of fear of consequence or for a promised reward. We are both displeased and saddened when our children disobey.

I am convinced that one reason God stresses the importance of children obeying their parents is because, ultimately, He wants us to be obedient children to Him, our heavenly Father. This promise, “that

“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

John 14:15

it may be well with you,” is a promise of protection and blessing. If we obey our parents as children, their rules will protect and shield us from various harms, and the trusting relationship we will be able to enjoy with them will be a blessing to us. When we translate that into our spiritual relationship to God, we recognize that our obedience to His commands protects us from all kinds of harm, and the blessings that flow out of a good relationship with Him are abundant.

The Bible makes it clear that God values obedience very highly. Jesus told His disciples, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14: 15). In the Old Testament, we also find numerous examples of how God reiterated the value of obedience above any kind of burnt offering or outward display of devotion to Him. When King Saul disobeyed God’s commands and tried to hide it with a burnt sacrifice, the prophet Samuel said to him, “Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *and* to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry” (1 Samuel 15: 22–23).

Beyond obeying the Lord’s commands to love Him above all and to love our neighbor as ourselves, I believe the greatest step of obedience we can take today is offering ourselves to Him as a living sacrifice. This means that we surrender ourselves in total and complete obedience to His will in every single aspect of our lives. Paul explains this perfectly in Romans 12: 1–2, “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.” This offering of ourselves is putting our love for God into practice by giving Him complete control over our lives. In doing so, we set ourselves apart for His purpose, and He fills us with His Spirit. At Pentecost, God’s children were gathered together, praying as one for His will, and in submission to Him. He responded by pouring out His Spirit, who then directed every aspect of their lives, leading them to spread the gospel to the world and emboldening them to live for Him without fear.

God has the same desire for His children today. He wants children to learn to obey their parents so that as they grow, they learn how to be obedient to Him as well. He wants them to display their ultimate obedience to Him by offering themselves as a living sacrifice to His will and His service.

Perhaps you are thinking to yourself, “That is too much to ask! I am young, I have plans, I have dreams, I seek adventure.” Let me assure you that this is an aspect of our “reasonable service.” It is no more than what God deserves from us. Beyond that, a life in bold and surrendered service to God is more fulfilling, more exciting, more filled with adventure and satisfaction than any life we could choose for ourselves. God created us, He knows our hopes and dreams, but when we surrender those to His will, He makes them even better!

*Karina Knelsen
Hamilton, Ontario*



How Will We Be Remembered?

Recently, someone shared some memories on Facebook about their grandfather on the anniversary of his death. Here is a short excerpt: “Grandfather was a man who loved God with all his heart, and it showed. When he heard the name ‘Jesus,’ tears came to his eyes, and his face showed radiant joy for his heavenly Father.” And the tribute ended: “Grandfather was a unique and special man who was loved by many. Twenty-six years have passed since Grandpa left us to be with Jesus, but we know we will see him again soon.”

Since you are reading the Seniors’ Pages, you may also be blessed with grandchildren, as I am. Doreen and I have seven who call us “Grammie” and “Gramps.” This blessing is also a clear indication that we are inching closer to our goal. When you read this, the question inevitably arises, “What will people remember when I leave this world?” That is indeed a thought-provoking question. Why don’t we take a closer look?

How are memories actually created? Observations shape memories. Our entire life is like a drama seen by our loved ones and others we interact with. It is an undeniable fact that we really should be mindful of. We are being watched. And what do others see and hear? And what will they remember about us when we come to mind?

How do we act in difficult situations? What do we say about those around us? What do we do when fear overwhelms us and we cannot cope with life’s circumstances? How do we behave before going to worship service? And what do we talk about at the dinner table after the service? What comments do we voice about church problems? And, and, and The list of questions could go on endlessly. Are we just religious, acquainted with Christianity, or are we known as godly people in a close relationship with Jesus?

One could also phrase the question in a different way: How would I like to be remembered by my loved ones? Good question, isn’t it? You can compile your own list, but let me mention some points that became important to me after some thought. I want to live in such a way that those who come after me, when they think of me, remember the following:

- That I loved the Lord unconditionally and without reservation.
- That I served the Lord with joy.
- That I sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.
- That I was grateful even when life did not go as expected.



- That I was obedient to God's will, without "ifs" or "buts."
- That the Word of God shaped my life.
- That I was willing to go the extra mile.
- That I loved my neighbor as myself.
- That I faithfully fulfilled my role in the church.
- That the fruit of the Spirit was visible in my life.
- That I completed my race victoriously.

Of course, there are many other goals that could be mentioned. After all, this is merely a catalyst for reflection. I want to expand this personal list, especially focusing on practical ways of making these ideas a reality.

It wouldn't hurt to "look in the mirror" either. Are the things I wish for truly a reflection of how I live? Is it just wishful thinking, or will others want to follow in my footsteps?

Abraham lived about 4000 years ago. During his lifetime, he moved many times. If you follow his journey, you will notice something. It seems that every time he settled in a new place, he first built an altar to worship his God. We read in Genesis 12:7-8, "Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, 'To your descendants I will give this land.' And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and

he pitched his tent *with* Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD."—He had long moved on, but the stones of the altar remained and spoke clearly. They testified that Abraham worshipped his God here and served Him. And even today, a long time later, readers of the Bible are reminded of Abraham, his altars, and his worship.

I do not want my descendants to remember what I owned, or what I left behind for them, my achievements, or what I accomplished. I would much rather have my grandchildren remember Gramps and his faith, his love for God, his anchor in life, his love for the Bible, his close relationship with God in prayer, his trust in God, his love and compassion for others. And when they remember Gramps, I hope they are also reminded of Jesus Christ.

I believe this is only possible if one lives very close to Jesus. In John 15:5, we read, "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." A blessed life springs from a close relationship with Jesus; we will leave a legacy that people still talk about even after we are long gone.

*Harry Semenjuk
Wetaskiwin, Alberta*



I Will Be With You

Part 5: My Experiences at the Mission House in Essen

Salomon Weissburger (1887–1968)

In late November 1907, Heinrich Begemann approached me, asking whether I would like to enter the Lord's service as a missionary. The mission house in Essen was established by the pastor Georg Vielgut at Friedbergstrasse 13 in October 1907. It became crucial to our work in Europe (Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Latvia, Russia, and the Netherlands), serving as a base for missions trips to these countries in the following years.

Revival meetings were held at this location, initially lasting ten days each; they had a major impact on our work. It was also the center of an intensive literature distribution effort, which I was involved in for three years. We later moved down the road to Friedbergstrasse 21. The mission house was in a rented building, with the meeting room downstairs and 13 living quarters upstairs. Nearly the entire city of Essen was in a mining area, which meant that many buildings, including ours, often needed major repairs. A particular problem was posed by coal mining, which often caused buildings to sink significantly.

My work at the mission house involved helping in the kitchen and laundry and being responsible for cleaning the meeting room. Food was scant, especially in the beginning, when there was no money to be had; later, we received an allowance of between 15 and 20 German Marks per month. However, I found that there were great spiritual benefits. There was always a pastor present: initially Georg Vielgut, then Karl Arbeiter and his wife, and finally O. H. Doebert and his wife. Devotions were a great blessing and served as a type of Bible school. Since my soul thirsted for the Word of God, I paid no attention to our physical circumstances, instead diving deep into the spiritual wealth on offer.

I enjoyed the great blessing of gaining a thorough knowledge of the Bible through the full teaching of biblical truth, which I still cherish to this day. In addition to doctrine, areas of focus included the full experience of salvation, rebirth, and sanctification. Thanks to the intensive work the brothers and sisters did with us, we built up a solid spiritual foundation. For that I am still grateful to God and these brothers today.



“Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul.” Psalm 66: 16

The value of inner unity became especially clear as living together in such tight quarters let everyone see who we really were inside. There were between 10 and 15 of us living in the mission house at any given time, and we all came to acknowledge that we still had much to learn, regardless of how good an impression we made on others in public.

If we play an instrument for ourselves alone, we might think it sounds good, but if we play in an orchestra, it will not sound harmonious unless each instrument is properly tuned. The same applies in our spiritual lives, especially for pastors. We need to be in tune with our Lord, not with human opinions (Romans 15:5–7). Jesus Christ must set the tone for us.

The leading apostles had to stay together in Jerusalem for many years in order to gain a thorough and practical education in the unity of the spirit and of faith. Only then did they set out, now connected inwardly even if separated outwardly. Instead of seeking their own interests, as is unfortunately common, they worked together, not only with each other but also for each other; they worked to fulfil the Great Commis-

sion of our Savior, who came to seek and save those who are lost.

I was able to experience this in a practical way at the mission house back then. I am a witness that these were not empty, proud words. We practiced real, applied unity.

From late November 1907 onwards, I was at the mission house in Essen, led by brother Georg Vielgut. In 1908, Karl Arbeiter and his wife came from the United States to relieve Brother Vielgut, who then returned to his family in the United States.

Having known me for years, Karl Arbeiter and his wife were aware of my education and background in business, so they had me keep the books for the mission house and the literature ministry. These tasks were not difficult for me, and I served as the head of the literature ministry until February 1911. One year, demand for our literature was so high that we had to work in pairs to get all this work done. Back then, people still took time to read the Bible and study good books. That yielded great blessings, and sincere seekers were grounded in the truth. ■

Dear Mother,

God's Word commands us: "You shall honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12).

Today, on Mother's Day, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to you, my mother. Many opportunities to say "thank you" have long since passed. How often do we miss this opportunity!

Far too little have I appreciated the tireless work of your hands. From an early age, you lovingly raised me with the necessary strictness and, above all, in the fear of God. As a child, one often has different views, but I am so grateful for your constant care and rebuke which spared me from many difficulties. No matter how big or small my concerns, we were always allowed to share them and together bring them before God's throne of grace.

Every day I was, and still am, able to experience how God's arm is moved through your prayers, be it in the small everyday problems at school, or at work and in serious illnesses.

There have been difficult situations in my life alongside all the good times. One thing was always clear, something I learned from you at an early age: what God has promised, He will keep. We can give everything to God, as it states in 1 Peter 5:7, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." He wants to help us and be with us. I can still feel the same from your motherly love today. Through the love you showed and gave to us, your children, we can sense God's love for us. Having you as a mother is a great privilege. You have given up so much in order that we would be well. Many things we did not realize, and you never reproached us for it. You simply endured in silence and did your duties and tasks. Like Jesus, who is also compared to a lamb, you never requested a "thank you" but did your tasks as a matter of course and even tackled my challenges. Your selflessness and willingness to help is something that I have always been happy to take advantage of without showing you the necessary appreciation.

Through our daily Bible readings and prayer times, you repeatedly directed our attention to the Lord Jesus Christ. Together, we have discovered our favorite Psalm (Psalm 23), which has served as a blessing and encouragement. He alone deserves thanks for the fact that I can have a mother like you! A mother who supports me in prayer. A mother who lives according to God's good pleasure and who raised me up in the same love, as it says in God's Word to His followers: "Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice for a sweet-smelling aroma" (Ephesians 5:2).

Through you, I can know what it means to feel this love in a very practical way, and with God's help I want to pass this love on to all people and shine as a light for the Lord.

I am so grateful that God has given us a voice so that we can praise God together in song. I am grateful to you for teaching me many spiritual songs as a child, which I still fondly remember today. The content of many songs has touched my heart and often comforted and strengthened me in challenging times.

The description of a praying, caring, selfless, helpful, counselling, and sacrificing mother would not be comprehensive enough to cover what you do and are for me.

Even though I far too rarely thank you for all that you do for me, please know that I thank God in prayer every day for giving you to me, and I ask Him to continue to carry you through life. This allows every day to become a Mother's Day in my heart and yours.

You are the best mom for me. God bless you, and may you be richly rewarded for everything!

Your Son

A Mother

*Having a mother who really understands,
Who, like a friend, always lends a helping hand;
Who faithfully prays, desiring what is best;
Whose thoughts are with you, when busy or at rest;
Who is on your side whether you cry or laugh;
That's one of the greatest blessings you can have.*

*Having a mother, someone that you can trust
When you don't feel like going on, but you must;
When the world seems like a cold and cruel place,
Consistently flowing with a rapid pace;
If others don't care about you, she shows love;
That's one of the greatest blessings from above.*

*When you have failed, she still believes you can;
Through thick and thin she has a helping hand.
Cherish her—a treasure that cannot be bought!
Not everyone has such a great gift from God!
All her days, hold her dear, honor her, be brave;
Always treasure her, even beyond the grave.*

The Prodigal Son

Moody writes:

One night in Chicago at the close of a meeting in the Y. M. C. A. rooms, a young man sprang to his feet and said: “Mr. Moody, would you let me speak a few words?”

I said, “Certainly.”

Then for about five minutes he pleaded with those men to break from sin. He said:

“If you have anyone who takes any interest in your spiritual welfare, treat them kindly, for they are the best friends you have. I was an only child, and my mother and father took great interest in me. Every morning at the family altar father used to pray for me, and every night he would commend me to God. I was wild and reckless and didn’t like the restraint of home. When my father died my mother took up the family worship. Many a time she came to me and said, ‘Oh, my boy, if you would stay to family worship I should be the happiest mother on earth; but when I pray, you don’t even stay in the house.’ Sometimes I would go in at midnight from a night of dissipation and hear my mother praying for me. Sometimes in the small hours of morning I heard her voice pleading for me. At last I felt that I must either become a Christian or leave home, and one day I gathered a few things together and stole away from home without letting my mother know.

“Some time after I heard indirectly that my mother was ill. Ah, I thought, it is my conduct that is making her ill! My first impulse was to go home and cheer her last days; but the thought came that if I did I should have to become a Christian. My proud heart revolted and I said: ‘No, I will not become a Christian.’”

Months rolled by, and at last he heard again that his mother was worse. Then he thought:

“If my mother should not live I would never forgive myself.”

That thought took him home. He reached the old village about dark, and started on foot for the home, which was about a mile and a half distant. On the way he passed the graveyard, and thought he would go to his father’s grave to see if there was a newly-made grave beside it. As he drew near the spot, his heart began to beat faster, and when he came near enough, the light of the moon shone on a newly-made grave. With a great deal of emotion he said:

“Young men, for the first time in my life this question came over me—who is going to pray for my lost soul now? Father is gone, and mother is gone, and they are the only two who ever cared for me. If I could have called my mother back that night and heard her breathe my name in prayer, I would have given the world if it had been mine to give. I spent all that night by her grave, and God for Christ’s sake heard my mother’s prayers, and I became a child of God. But I never forgave myself for the way I treated my mother, and never will.”

Oh, what misery people cause themselves when they waste the best years of their lives apart from God, and then must spend their days in remorse because they brought so much grief to their godly parents!



What Disrupts Family Life?

We live in a time in which unhappy and even ruined families are no exception. Let's try to name a few reasons why:

Misuse of authority

If the father, like a tyrant, suppresses every opposing opinion, and all must submit to his will, whether he is right or wrong; or if the wife takes the reins and wants to be the absolute ruler; or if the children rebel against the will of their parents and want to decide everything for themselves, then family life is bound to be unhappy.

In a healthy family, the children show respect for their parents. Father and mother lead the family in wise harmony, and the children submit to this divinely-ordained order. If this relationship is disturbed in any way, the result is an unhappy life together. Nowhere can there be happiness and harmony if one member of the family leaves their rightful place and demands rights over the others.

Lack of self-discipline

There are families in which the father, the mother, or both get terribly upset about every little thing that doesn't go their way. Where this becomes a habit, where the lack of self-discipline makes people tense and quick-tempered, peace and harmony cannot prevail. When people allow themselves to be controlled by their emotions, emotions can become a tyrant. Parents who are moody, sensitive, and irritable in front of their children poison the children's minds. Such parents teach their children how to get into the habit of being domineering, unbalanced, and tense. Are they not burdening themselves with a heavy guilt?

Lack of love and warmth

No family life can be happy without love. Therein we can train ourselves. The love between a couple increas-

es when one shows the other small kindnesses, speaks a word of comfort, and has a friendly expression. If we do not continually put our love into practice, it will start to wither away.

Financial conflict

Every family needs money to maintain an orderly lifestyle. But there is an obvious danger that money will take a place that it should not have. Family life will never be happy if the wife has to ask her husband for money for every little thing, but neither will the wife who recklessly spends money help to promote peace at home. Children who are allowed to buy anything they want will have their problems in the future. If people want to have a happy family life, they need to learn how to manage money.

Inadequate parenting

Children are the greatest blessing of a family, but they can very easily become a disgrace if they are not brought up to be obedient. There is nothing that can destroy family life and make it more of a misery than misbehaving and disobedient children.

There are, of course, other causes which destroy domestic peace, but in general it may be said that most, if not all, quarrels have their root in selfishness. People may live together for a long time and get along excellently, but only so long as each gives the other the same rights which he claims for himself. Our homes could be more pleasant and friendly if we treated each other with more love. Small acts of love and kind words cost no more than a little friendly consideration, and the effect is great.

If your family life is disruptive and unharmonious, recognize your responsibility, and walk in the ways of peace and harmony. Don't wait for the other person to make a start, but start yourself! Start today! ■

Our Age Needs Christian Mothers and Fathers

Mothers do not have it easy today. The social changes of the last 70 years, especially in our Western culture, have had a major impact on the ideal image of the family, the tasks of parents, and the role of women. Whereas in previous generations family life was essentially characterized by the concept of responsibility, today self-realization and uninhibited pursuit of adventure are considered attributes of an ideal life. But what remains when the exhilaration has faded and, apart from debt, only loneliness and worthlessness define the daily routine?

Some of you may remember the song by D. O. Teasley, “Back to the Blessed Old Bible.” Isn’t this the much-needed orientation for our families in 2024? Our time needs mothers who define their roles according to divine order and who have found their place where God has placed them, women who have recognized what a great task God has entrusted to them in raising the next generation.

Today, we are richly blessed with a good education and a wide range of opportunities for our lives. In most cases, girls have the same career opportunities as boys. There is only one thing that boys cannot do: have children. According to the divine order, men and women have complementary roles in a family and need each other. Together, God entrusts them with the responsibility for the next generations—even if fewer and fewer couples recognize this for themselves.

God created us humans in such a way that after puberty and adolescence, our natural senses are heightened to start a family and have children. But the social and cultural mindset today teaches us: don’t get married too early—you must first enjoy your freedom, have a career, and accumulate prestige and wealth—then at some point, you can round off your luxury with

a family. Many people live like this—but is it what God intended for His children?

Isn’t life much more valuable when young people choose their profession according to God’s will, marry the right partner, and then serve God together? God and living for Him are at the center—and His blessing nourishes and develops the family. If the young parents are prayerful, people full of faith and devotion to God, then they create a refuge for themselves and their children that promotes growth and love. They offer their children not only security and prosperity but also a solid Christian value system that gives them lasting strength to withstand the storms of life.

Yes, such a life is not possible without sacrifice. It will mean that the father and mother will have to do without. Fellow students may have success, wealth, and experiences in faraway countries. But Christian parents have chosen time with God, time together, and time for their children. Yes, this time may not be enough for a career—but it carries high interest rates, dividends from a currency that remains hidden from the driven of today’s generation.

Christian mothers and fathers are richly rewarded—not just with the happy laughter of their children. They are richly rewarded with the prayers of the children and their answers to prayer, with the faith of the children and their childlike, simple-minded love for God.

Our time urgently needs Christian mothers and fathers who dare to lead an alternative life—a normal life according to the Bible, parents who offer reliable orientation and an example worthy of imitation, parents whose lives are rich in God’s overflowing blessings.

*Hermann Vogt
Gifhorn, Germany*

A Mother's Love Directs Us to Jesus

In Joroco in Africa, a woman named Marierose lived all alone. Her husband had died, and her two boys had been taken away by his brother. It nearly broke her heart, but there was nothing she could do. As is common in many parts of Africa, her children were essentially owned by their father; when he died, control over them passed to his brother as the nearest male paternal relative, and they now belonged to him.

Thinking to use the two boys as workers, this uncle took them away, leaving their mother devastated. She was always on the lookout for people who had travelled through the area the uncle lived in. Since it was very far away, such encounters were rare, but they at least allowed her to occasionally get news about her sons. What she heard made her heart heavy: Her children were in a bad position, having to work to exhaustion and often being beaten.

Marierose had no recourse but to pray and ask, "God, please, I want to have my children back!"

One day, she heard that her children's uncle had left them with another family near Banga. When she further learned that a missionary planned to travel to that area, she asked to come along. "Sure, if you are ready to go at five tomorrow morning," he said.

The next morning, she got on the back of the missionary's truck and sat quietly until they arrived in Banga in the afternoon. "I will continue on foot," said Marierose before asking, "When are you heading

back?" "Tomorrow morning," was the answer. "Good, I'll be there," she promised, going on her way.

She walked far into the night. The cooking fires still burned in the little village. The tired mother approached a hut. In the second half of the night, Marierose came out again, this time with a young boy holding her hand and an older one walking at her side. Nobody knows what happened inside, and when asked, all she said was, "God helped me."

The three of them now had twenty kilometers to walk back to Banga, but when the missionary began preparing to leave in the morning, he found the three of them already sitting on the tailgate of the truck. Without a word, Marierose bared the back of one of her sons and pointed out the wide scars left by beatings he had received.

Tears came to the missionary's eyes. "This truly is a mother's love," he thought as he drove. "She endured so much to get her children back!" In the rear-view mirror, he saw them sitting, Marierose in the middle, a child at each side encircled in her strong arms.

In the Bible, we read that God's love is even greater than the love of a mother. The Savior endured so much in order to bring us back to the Father! There were no limits to what He was willing to do. This love is still there, for you and for me, and He will not rest until we are home, encircled in His arms.

H. Schilling



Let Us Praise Our King!

Let us rejoice in our King, who with glory
Ascended on high to the throne of His might.

The battle is won, let's pass on the story;
He reigns in the kingdom of light.

He has conquered the forces of hell and of death,
Successfully triumphed o'er darkness and night.

May He be exalted by all who have breath;
He reigns in the power of His might.

O Jesus, our Master, to You be all praise;
You went on ahead and prepared us the way.
Give us the strength to follow, all of our days;
In faith we adore You and pray.

Dora Rappard