



# Foundation of Faith

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THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

“SURELY I AM COMING QUICKLY.”

SUDDENLY! TOTALLY UNEXPECTED!

SAVED BY FAITH ALONE

A GODLY MARRIAGE

CHILLIWACK BIBLE COURSE REPORT

NOVEMBER 2018

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## *Editorial*

*Dear Reader!*

*In the earth's southern hemisphere, in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, etc., summer has arrived. There, it is turning warm, often hot, and everything is developing, blooming, and growing in anticipation of a rich harvest.*

*Here in the northern hemisphere, it is turning cold. The last leaves are swept from the trees by the wind, and in some places winter has already arrived. Snow and ice cover the ground. In the animal world, some have secluded themselves to hibernate. That which bloomed and became green only a few weeks ago has wilted and died. The days are getting shorter, and we are reminded that everything on earth decays and that everything transient must die.*

*Just as many animals, such as ants, squirrels, and bees, make provision for the winter during pleasant times, so also should we make provision for eternity. "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come" (Hebrews 13:14). Yes, our time on earth is running out. The hand of the clock of our life is unstoppably nearing midnight, and then what?*

*Therefore, my dear Reader, listen: "Prepare to meet your God" (Amos 4:12). Prepare yourself for eternity! Make provisions for your soul, for mansions have been prepared for you. The Lord told us all: "You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions . . . 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" (please read John 14:1-6).*

*Yes, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, came for us all, to redeem us and to prepare an eternal homeland, an eternal home, for us.*

*When by the gift of His infinite grace,  
I am accorded in heaven a place,  
Just to be there and to look on His face,  
Will through the ages be glory for me.*

*H. D. Nimz*

# When You Pass Through the Waters . . .

*“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.” (Isaiah 43:2)*

**W**e all face suffering, pain and loneliness in this world. They come sooner or later and must be borne. In times of distress and suffering, the child of God has a strong sanctuary unknown to those who have never found rest in the Lord. Many people numbly face all kinds of suffering and pain, even death. But as Christians, we can find comfort and strength for all this. We know that the promises of God are true, that when we need to go through floods and trials, God is with us and keeps us.

The testimony of a mother shows us the comfort of God. She was over seventy and mourning the death of her oldest son, who had indeed been a good son to her. She told a friend about the last days she had with her son.

“We knew that Edward was nearing his end, so his father and I prepared to go see him one more time. We had time to quietly discuss many things. You will understand everything better if you know that Edward was our mainstay in our old age. He was the oldest boy and felt a responsibility for his father and me. And it was he who gave us the comfort and encouragement that parents so much want to receive from their children.

“‘Mother,’ he said, ‘I would rather live. I have so much to live for. I want to take care of you and Father as long as you are alive. The work that I thought God had given me to do is not done. I have barely started it, and it is hard to put it down. My children need the care of their father and their mother needs the support of her husband. It will be hard for all of them. It’s hard to die when you have so many reasons to live.’

“‘Oh Edward,’ I said to him, because I had prayed to God and felt that it was God’s time to take him away, ‘we

must yield to the will of God. God sees what we do not see, and He understands the purpose He has for you.’

“‘Yes, Mother, I have thought of all that. I am willing to surrender to His will. He should have His way with me. I have the certainty that it is well with my soul. And when I go, I will be with God.’

“And it was a blessed comfort to all of us. He prayed for us all and commended us to the Lord. He was completely at the mercy of God, and God was with him.

“Finally, the morning arrived when Father and I had to return home. We prayed together again. We knew it was the last time. ‘Mother,’ he said, ‘this is the last time I can pray with you. We will never see each other again in this life. But over there, on the other shore, we will meet again.’

“‘Yes, Edward,’ I said, kneeling with his hand in mine, ‘we will meet again. We are old, your father and I, and soon we will come to you over yonder. It cannot be long now. Never have I felt this as certain as at the present. Here we part, but there we will meet again, never more to part. This thought comforts my heart.’

“He smiled and tightly held my hand. ‘Mother, we have the consolation that comes from God, and the world cannot rob us of that. Blessed be the name of the Lord! I will not press your hand here anymore, but over yonder I will again.’

“And so we parted from our son. We know that we will be called home soon. The hour of death wants to make me quiver because everything is a new way for me. But I’m not worried about the outcome. The One who has comforted me in all my afflictions, will continue to comfort me and bring me home safely.”

What a beautiful example of the faith of a Christian facing death. He knows the One he depends on and is

certain that all will be well. He has tested and proved the promise: “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.”

Such comfort is not something we deserve, but we are given it through faith and trust in Christ. The grace that makes dying bearable is the same grace that makes life

bearable. But we do not need to wait until our hour of death to experience this comfort! The one who seeks the presence of God and the Kingdom of God above all receives an assurance that only becomes greater and more glorious when the gates of death come into view.

M. Hale

## Passage and Full Board

**A**n immigrant to our country tells this story: “I became homesick. I needed to return home to Germany, but I did not have much money. The trip was expensive, so I decided to pay ‘only’ the passage. I would figure out how to get food somehow, I thought. I should be able to survive on raw food and the like for a few days.

“For the first couple of days, this worked pretty well. I had brought along fruit and nuts and ate my fill. However, one day, the tempting smell of a delicious roast wafted through the open kitchen door and straight into my nose. My stomach began to growl. All I could think about was a nice, warm meal. Finally, I could not stand it any longer. I went up to one of the other passengers and asked what it might cost to eat along. He looked at me incredulously and requested to see my ticket. It clearly said: ‘Passage and full board’!

“That meant that I would have been able to eat and enjoy all kinds of great food every day but had fasted instead! How foolish had I been not to read more closely! All tickets included full board. The salesperson had apparently not understood my question properly and had simply asked for my money. Now the journey was almost over, and I had missed so many good meals!”

Poor man! But are there not many such poor people on earth? Is the world not full of such foolishness? After all, we all are just passing through on the way to our eternal home. Unfortunately, many people seem blind to this fact, wasting away their days without thinking seriously about their lives. However, the truth of the matter is that this short life is just a journey. Our souls were created for eternity, and eternity is just around the corner. If we are very still, we can hear our souls crying out for eternity.


The Lord, our God, has provided for us. We have everything we need to make it through this journey. He truly wants to nourish our soul with the right food, and He truly wants to let us travel “with full board.” That is why He gave us His Word, why He allows us to enjoy fellowship with one another, and why the message of Jesus is being shared everywhere. We do not need to hunger and fast. We can enjoy every day of our lives and be fully satisfied.

But what do most people do? They make do with spiritual raw food! People who, in other matters, are quick to complain, who want more and more and only the best, and who never have enough, are remarkably easily contented in the spiritual realm and are happy with the world’s table scraps. Their souls long for nourishment, but they instead fill themselves with the things of this world, which only make their souls sick and which become deadlier and deadlier for them.

What has to happen? We need to experience the same thing as that passenger on the ship. We need to realize how glorious it actually is to receive the right nourishment for the soul. We need a longing to be awakened, and then we need to meet the One who can fill our life with what will truly satisfy.

Only then will we see how foolish we had been, and we might realize with astonishment how long our souls survived without this right nourishment, and how blindly we ignored the fact that God, in His grace, provided everything for us.

Are we still among those who know nothing of the journey to eternity? Are we still among those who could travel with “full board” and unsuspectingly content themselves with poor food? Are we still among the impoverished or are we already rich in Jesus and His Word?



THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

# Suddenly! Totally Unexpected!

*Events that occur so suddenly!*

**O**ur lives generally proceed for some time in a normal fashion. But then, often unexpectedly, events occur that we were not counting on.

In Luke 12:16-21, the Lord Jesus tells His listeners the parable of the rich farmer. Suddenly, without any warning and like a bolt of lightning from the sky, everything was changed.

We know nothing about the childhood and youth of this man or even if he had inherited his wealth from his parents. He was likely an industrious worker whom his neighbors probably appreciated. A few may even have been jealous of his large harvest, and others may have admired him as an example of a successful businessman.

This wealthy farmer planned only for the present and did not think about God and eternity. He counted on many more worry-free years. However, Jesus shows us that everything can change very suddenly. We should not forget this. God said to him: "Fool! This night your soul will be required of you, then whose will those things be which you have provided? So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:20-21).

What happened to Saul before Damascus? "As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'" (Acts 9:3-4).

This young Pharisee worked with extreme enthusiasm and zeal, but with ignorance of the Jewish Law. In

his delusion, he persecuted Jesus' disciples. Later, he himself testified: "Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things, contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities" (Acts 26:9-11).

We do not know how long, months or even years, this Saul of Tarsus persecuted the believers of God's Church. But here before Damascus, very suddenly and unexpectedly, he heard the words: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

Oh, how Saul repented, praying for three days for mercy and for forgiveness, and how he experienced God's mercy. Yes, a persecutor now became a true follower and a wonderful tool of God, an apostle of the highest.

My dear Reader, do you realize that God is still able to answer prayers today? That hopeless, evil, unbelieving, and hate-filled hearts can be changed through the power of Christ? Pray for lost and wandering sons and daughters!

"But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed" (Acts 16:25-26).

In Acts 16:11-34, Paul and Silas were on their second mission trip from Troas, which is in Turkey today, to Europe and arrived in the city of Philippi. Here, Lydia, a seller of purple, was the first who repented and was baptized. In her home was the first gathering of the Church of God in Macedonia, Greece.

After a few days, or even weeks, a female slave, possessed by a spirit of divination, was freed of this spirit by the apostle. We are told that the apostle Paul commanded this spirit: "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her" (Acts 16:18).

This slave was freed, but her masters had benefited from her ability to foretell the future. Now they influenced a large portion of the residents and the top officials of the city to have Paul and Silas whipped and thrown into prison.

This mistreatment and pain were tragic. Help from other people was unavailable! How long they would be in this situation was unknown to them, but Paul and Silas

knew their Savior, Helper, and Redeemer! At midnight, they both began loudly praising their God. The other prisoners heard them. Most likely, some of the criminals awoke and heard prayers and hymns in this dark location for the first time.

Not only the prisoners heard all this, but also God's eyes and ears were opened, and the Lord intervened wonderfully in this situation. "Suddenly there was a great earthquake . . . and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed" (Acts 16:26).

Yes, dear Reader, God hears prayers, and He is able to intervene and do wonders! How often have children of God suddenly experienced His help in suffering and in need, even today. Many have personally experienced the scripture: "Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits, the God of our salvation! . . . Our God is the God of salvation; and to God the Lord belong escapes from death" (Psalm 68:19-20).

The Lord saved Paul and Silas in Philippi. Yes, it was God's abrupt intervention. And their suffering resulted in something incredible: the jailer and his whole family became believers!

In God's Word, we see other evidence that events often occur suddenly and without warning. Moses, the man of God, tells us: "For we have been consumed by your anger, and by your wrath we are terrified" (Psalm 90:7). Also Asaph, the psalmist, tells of the godless, the braggards, and, by all appearances, the happy worldly people who mock and ignore God: "Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors" (Psalm 73:19).

Now I would like to come to a close with a warning from God's Holy Word: "He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Proverbs 29:1).

Dear Reader, this reminds me of the hymn:

*What would I do without Jesus?  
What would I do without Him?  
There would be no one to guide me  
Here through this dark world of sin.*

How good it is that we have a Savior, a Redeemer, and a Guide on our pilgrimage through life. The Son of God will help us in all situations, needs, and difficulties to bring us safely to our eternal home. May God be praised now and forever!

H. D. Nimz

# The Coming Judgment

**M**ost people are too busy to think about this topic. Time flies by quickly, and a certain invisible power seems to continually propel humanity forward. They fear being left behind somehow. Therefore, they have little time for the most precious part of their lives, for their inward person, for their soul. But the person who has learned to nourish his soul with glorious, eternal things, rather than turning to the hustle and bustle of the world, will do well!

The Bible tells us that this earth and everything on it will one day burn up. This truth has been taught nearly everywhere across the world. But it seems so distant and surreal that most people do not appear to occupy themselves with this thought at all.

Do not be deceived! “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10). If we ponder these things, it seems strange that such a radical change should indeed ever take place. What solemn feelings come upon us when we realize that we are approaching the coming of this Day very quickly! We ask ourselves: “Will this earth still exist another hundred years or more, or will we in a short time, perhaps already tomorrow, experience the realities of a different world?”

This old earth is no suitable place for the eternal dwelling of God’s redeemed. While the earth is good and flawless as God’s own creation, it is too closely connected to sin. It would remind us too much of some unpleasant things. “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:13).

The most important question now is this: Am I ready for this great day of the dissolution of this world? Peter exhorts us in 2 Peter 3:11-12, “therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God. He also warns us

that “if the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (1 Peter 4:18).

The expression “ungodly” and “sinner” includes those we would consider “good people,” whose morals and character we may admire. John, the writer of Revelation, clearly explains this question to us: “He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work” (Revelation 22:11-12). As we lived is how we will be found at His coming; and it will be too late for change. Can we boldly say: “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” Praise God if we can joyfully say so.

When Christ comes again, then He will come to take His possession, His Church, with Him, like a groom takes his bride who has prepared herself for him. He will give her her designated inheritance, eternal life in the glorious dwellings, which He is now preparing for her. That will be her home, a glorious home!

You may perhaps ask: “How is He preparing us for these dwellings?” The apostle answers us: “Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). So we see with our spiritual eyes how He earnestly intercedes with the Father for those who humbly come to Him in His name and repent of their sins.

Again: “For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18). We cannot overcome the many temptations in our own power. If we try it, we will only fail. But if we put our trust in Him and lean wholly on His strong arm in every temptation that we encounter, then He can give us the help and strength we need to go on our way with joy. Praise be to God! He keeps him in perfect peace who trusts in Him!

Oh, that we would remain in Him and trust Him so that we would not be ashamed at His coming! To those who are tempted and discouraged, the apostle says:



“Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: ‘For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry’” (Hebrews 10:35-37).

“He who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but

perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love” (1 John 4:16-18).

To those who have not yet placed their trust in God, we can testify that it is worth all costs, no matter how high they may be. Nothing in this world—money, honor, pleasure, nor anything else—is worth being robbed of your inheritance. Dear Reader, turn your back to sin and in faith take hold of eternal life!

## *May I See Your Ticket, Please!*

**H**ow often we heard this call, as we sat relaxed in the train, and deep in thought, while watching the scenery pass by. If our ticket was accessible, there was nothing to worry about. However, what panic one felt who didn’t have a ticket or may have misplaced it. In a frenzy, all pockets were searched, only to finally realize: “My ticket is gone.” What inconveniences resulted from neglect and indifference. Every traveler knew he needed a ticket and should have one somewhere, but did not care for it as he should have.

My dear Reader, we are all traveling, very rapidly in fact, towards eternity. The Word of God states: “For man goes to his eternal home” (Ecclesiastes 12:5.) This is a serious statement! There are certain things that people try to brush off as not quite credible, and they often deceive themselves. The fact that our life has a destination and that we must leave this world, just as our forefathers, is as clear as the fact that the sun gives life through its warm rays. It wouldn’t be as important if the end of life was the end of everything. But “man goes to his eternal home.” Yet, there is more: Man will remain for all eternity at a specific place, either in Heaven with the Lord and the redeemed, or in eternal anguish with all the demons and those who are condemned.

Even you, my dear Reader, have already traveled a good distance on the “train” racing towards eternity. But stop for a minute: What about your ticket? Hasn’t the great “Conductor,” the Holy Spirit, periodically asked to see it? Do you recall the time you were extremely ill, when your family was standing around your bedside crying? Do you still remember that quiet whisper from

a mysterious voice inside of you, saying: “Are you ready for eternity?” In a split second, your life flashed clearly before your eyes. Your conscience, that faithful watchman, was awakened after a lengthy numbness and convicted you without mercy for your wasted life. In your great distress, you made a promise to become a different person if God would save you once more from eternal destruction.

But today, you once again travel indifferently. Listen, dear Reader, the ID card that you need to enter heaven someday is salvation. Therefore, do not be negligent and unconcerned. Examine yourself thoroughly, because in the next few moments, the train you are traveling on could arrive in eternity.

What would the rich man, the one Jesus describes in Luke 16:19-31, have given if he could have had another opportunity? He had the writings of Moses and the prophets, and he was fully convinced that he had to change his life. Maybe he had hoped to turn around one day and change. But tragically, in the midst of his hoping and planning, his train came to a sudden standstill, and he heard: “Everyone off!” What horror he must have experienced as he opened his eyes in hell and torment. Not even a drop of mercy was granted to him. He had arrived to remain in this place for all eternity.

Dear Soul, stop and ponder on this thought! Ask yourself: “Where will I spend eternity? Do I have a valid ticket, salvation through the blood of Jesus?” If not, then prepare yourself today! Turn to Jesus; He has acquired your ticket through His death on the cross!

A. Borbe

# The Midnight Cry

*How suddenly this cry will sound: “The groom is coming!” Then we will be unable to change anything. How blessed we will be if we can meet Him with full lamps. The matter is serious. Let us be ready!*

**I**n the gospel according to Matthew, we read of those preparing for a wedding. The preparations were extensive. The time that the bridegroom would be coming was shrouded in secrecy, yet all were waiting for his arrival. Surely the signs of our time tell us that His coming is near.

Who is the bridegroom, and who is the bride? Jesus gives us the answer. His disciples asked Him: “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3). Jesus answered: “Take heed that no one deceive you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many” (Matthew 24:4-5).

Then He likens the Kingdom of God “to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom” (Matthew 25:1). We can assume that all of the virgins had made preparations for the wedding. It is clearly stated that half of these virgins were wise and the other half foolish—foolish for not taking extra oil to fill their lamps, yet wise enough to have lamps. “But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps” (Matthew 25:4). But since the bridegroom delayed his arrival, all of them fell asleep.

No doubt these virgins were all confessing Christians, all working for their Lord out of love. Maybe they used their time and means to help the poor, and maybe they tried to lead their acquaintances to the Lord. No doubt they belonged to a Christian congregation, went to wor-

ship services, prayed, and witnessed. But God cannot be fooled; He sees the heart. You can fool people but not the Lord!

Jesus tells us they were all virgins, but half of them were foolish. In which way were they foolish?

It may be that you yourself were deeply moved upon hearing a sermon about sanctification, a second work of grace. Maybe you continued searching and found a deep need for this experience. You consecrated yourself fully to the Lord, and before getting up from your knees at the altar of prayer, you felt that satisfying deep love of God in your heart. It was a love as you had never known it before. Your only wish was to win as many people as possible for Jesus. Oh, how the oil of the love of God filled your heart! In word and deed, you were a shining lamp. You didn’t care what others thought about you, as long as you were pleasing to the Lord. Your only desire was to serve Him better. You were sanctified, and you knew it.

When was it that you became negligent and started to pray less and read your Bible less? When did fatigue slowly come over your soul and you let the oil seep out, so that the work you once loved and did in the name of the Lord was put aside? It was as if you no longer had a hunger to attend prayer meetings and worship services. Although on the outside no one saw any real difference, you still knew that the oil in your soul was lacking. And you made no effort to fill your soul again until you heard the cry: “The bridegroom is coming!”



You would give anything to delay that call: “The bridegroom is coming.” Look over there at the virgins who have enough oil and are filling their lamps with it. They are awake, eager, and happy, whereas you are overcome with fear. You had the same opportunity as they had, but by your own negligence, you let the oil slowly diminish and disappear. Maybe they can spare some of their oil for you. In the anguish of your soul, you plead: “Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out” (Matthew 25:8). But they cannot give you any.

As you seek to be refilled with that love which once continually filled your heart, you shudder to think that it may be too late. Even if you are successful in getting oil, you know that when the door is shut, it will remain shut and never be opened again, no matter how many tears you shed and with how much effort you plead!

Tragically, it is your own fault that you missed out on exactly that for which your soul once so eagerly desired. And that terrible introspection haunts you as you cry out in despair: “Lord, Lord, open to us!” (Matthew 25:11). But the door you desperately seek to have opened remains closed. From inside, you hear those dreadful words: “Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you” (Matthew 25:12).

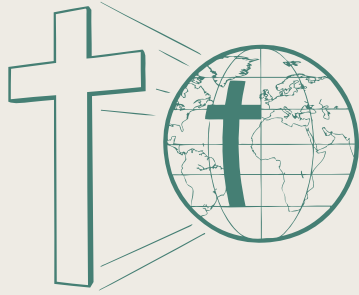
**“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming” (Matthew 25:13). He wants to etch these words into every one of our hearts.**

Jesus ends this parable with the words: “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming” (Matthew 25:13). He desires to etch these words into every one of our hearts. How good it is for us to heed His warning, now while there is still time.

The Lord did not say to the virgins, “I never knew you,” rather, “I do not know you.” Let us consider the marvelous fact that this Lord, who chose us as His bride, was willing to become poor, homeless, despised, thirsty, hungry, and desolate and finally give His life for our priceless souls, so that we could inherit those wonderful treasures that He and His Father had in store for us before the foundation of the world. He wants to share these with us. Why should we not be willing to sacrifice all?

I want to love the master more and serve Him with more zeal, faithfulness, and holy fervor than ever before. It is my resolve to watch and pray so that when He calls me, I have no reason to be fearful, but able to greet Him, the Bridegroom of my soul, with overwhelming joy, having a bright burning lamp. That is also my wish for you.

F. R.



# Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs, Kitchener (ON)

## “Surely I Am Coming Quickly.”

**T**his comforting word was given to the faithful disciple, John, during his exile. He accepted it in faith and responded with joy: “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20). So speaks the heart of a man who waits unwaveringly for his Lord and is looking forward to His appearance.

When the apostle John wrote the book of Revelation, he was on Patmos, a small, lonely island in the Aegean Sea. He was banished there for the sake of his faith, his message, and had to personally experience the bitter persecution of the Roman state’s power. Because of this, he called himself “a brother and companion in the tribulation” (Revelation 1:9).

Repeatedly, we read in Scripture how the Lord led His chosen servants into solitude for specific purposes. And it was precisely in such a lonely place that John received the astonishingly profound revelation about the coming end-time events. We see in John how wonderfully our God can deeply enlighten and use a person for His very specific purposes.

Revelation is a book that uses mostly symbolic language to show the dark, prophetic images of time, some of which have already occurred and some that will still be fulfilled. It reveals to us how the Church went through dark and painful times of suffering. It also shows us Christ as the suffering and slain Lamb of God, who is nevertheless the Lord of time and also of eternity. The

Church goes through great tribulations and many persecutions, and yet it can participate in the victory of the Lord now and at the end. The great, comforting theme that echoes throughout Revelation is: “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me” (Revelation 22:12). And the waiting and prepared Church says: “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

The Bible clearly states the return of Jesus can only be a blissful and joyful event for the devout disciples of God. For the godless, unbelieving humanity, it will be an event of fear and terror. Regardless of these reactions, Jesus made His second coming a sure and absolute reality! Because of this, He admonished His disciples: “Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master . . . Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching” (Luke 12:35-37). And that is what He expects of us!

Hans Bruns writes: “I cannot forget it even though it happened many years ago: it was shortly after World War I. I was a student and we were just going to dinner. Suddenly, a very excited woman ran out of a house, grabbed the first person who crossed her path by the shoulder, which happened to be me, and yelled: ‘He is alive and is coming!’ When I asked her what was going on, she explained that she had just received a telegram stating that her husband, who had been missing, was alive and was



coming home that day. Being so overjoyed with this message, she could not stay in her house any longer, but had to run out into the street and share her great joy with everyone.”

So it is with close followers of Christ, who know from the faithful message of the Word of God that their Lord lives and is coming again!

Paul laid it on Timothy’s heart: “Remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead” (2 Timothy 2:8). We also should pay close attention to this important admonition, since the fact of Jesus’ resurrection is the only solid ground for His return!

Only a risen Lord can be expected to return again. Only the risen Lord could say: “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me” (Revelation 22:12). And only the firm belief in Jesus’ resurrection made John longingly exclaim: “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” This hope and conviction of the suffering Church helped

it to endure and overcome its afflictions. With this kind of faith we, too, can hope, believe, live, and survive!

Right in the first chapter of Revelation, Jesus is introduced to us as He “who is and who was and who is to come” (verse 8). His first coming was to bring necessary reconciliation through His sacrifice on the cross and to reveal the way of salvation to His people. The purpose of His second coming is as Judge at the great final Judgment and to bring all the righteous, His Bride, the Church, to eternal glory. The exact time of His arrival is unknown to us. But the signs of which Jesus spoke and the present manifestations of the times clearly show that this event is now very close. Those who still want to turn back and seek salvation for their souls should take advantage of these last hours of grace. Like the sound of a clear trumpet, Jesus’ mighty Words sound: “Surely I am coming quickly.” And you, too, can be among those who say with John and with all the saints: “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

## The Nocebo Effect

“**N**ocebo” comes from the Latin “noceō” and means “I harm.” Science refers to the nocebo effect as a harmful side effect, for example, from medication, simply because it was expected. Strictly speaking, it is the opposite of the placebo effect. After taking a placebo drug (without active ingredients), there is an improvement in the condition just because the patient expected a cure.

Negative expectations, often accompanied by negative feelings and thoughts, can make us sick. Often, people will suffer from depression and lack of motivation. They are desperate and do not see a glimmer of hope. The Bible shows us people who fell into great despair and (temporary) hopelessness. There was Asaph, who could not see any meaning in his service to God (Psalm 73:2-14). There was the prophet Jeremiah, who laments and gives us an insight into his feelings: “He [God] has led me and made me walk in darkness and not in light. Surely He has turned His hand against me time and time again throughout the day. He has aged my flesh and my skin, and broken my bones. He has hedged me in so that I cannot get out; He has made my paths crooked. He has bent His bow and set me up as a target for the arrow. I have become the ridicule of all my people, their taunting song all the day.” These are a few excerpts from Lamentations 3. The worst one seems to be: “Even when I cry and

shout, He shuts out my prayer” (Lamentations 3:8). Can we even comprehend that? Is it any wonder that Jeremiah states, “You have moved my soul far from peace; I have forgotten prosperity” (Lamentations 3:17)?

And God? Was God silent in all this? It is noteworthy that both Asaph and Jeremiah came to a decisive turning point, which can be attributed to personal actions. Asaph went into the sanctuary of God. He brought his plight before God. From his worries and negative thoughts he formed a prayer. Should it be in vain that he served God? Never! After this experience in the sanctuary with God, he had no choice but to say: “Nevertheless, I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand” (Psalm 73:23). It was the same with Jeremiah. He thought about God’s greatness, goodness, and mercy. Literally, he says: “This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:21-23). This attitude helped him have a breakthrough; it became his comfort.

What do you do with your negative thoughts, worries, and fears? Do they make you ill? Take them into the sanctuary of God. Remember God’s greatness and goodness. Nothing is impossible with Him.

Niko Ernst  
Herford, Germany

## Help! I’m Depressed!

**A**pproximately 4 million people suffer from depression in Germany alone. It is estimated that in the entire world, 350 million people are affected [5.4% of Canadians 15 years and over, Govt. of Canada; 6.7% of U.S. adults, NIMH]. These are disturbingly great numbers. This is sometimes referred to as a “national disease.” Unfortunately, this sickness is also creeping into the lives of believers in the churches, including the youth.

Depression is a state of fear, hopelessness, a dark outlook, weakness, right down to feeling worthless and despairing. In short, a broken and ailing heart. The reasons for this can be very different and unique to each individual. Typical causes are, for example: being overworked, lack of love, having little fellowship, comparing oneself to

others (others simply have it better), difficult misfortunes or life circumstances, and many more.

However, as Christians, as children of God, we should not despair. No matter how bleak your situation is, there is hope for you! When it seems like no one understands you, then you should know that there is One who definitely understands and whose grace and mercy is unending. This is Jesus! “He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds” (Psalm 147:3).

The following tips might be helpful to you:

- Open your heart to Jesus. Speak openly and honestly to Him regarding your situation. David encourages us in Psalm 62:8 and says: “Trust in Him at all times,

you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.

- Sometimes it seems that we are unsuccessful with our prayers. Don't agonize by yourself. Obtain help from a trustworthy Christian who can pray with you. Perhaps you find yourself in a "maze of thoughts" and can't get ahead? Talking with an experienced brother or sister could be helpful to you and lead your thoughts in a positive direction.
- "Look away from your troubles and problems. Look up to Jesus!" A brother gave me this good advice as I was personally going through a hard time. I then realized how intensely I was concentrating on my life circumstances at that time, which stood before me like an insurmountable wall. But as I turned my eyes back to Jesus, the words of David, "By my God I can leap over a wall" (Psalm 18:29), became reality in my life.

- Search out the root of your problem. If it was sin that has caused your problem, deal with it, bring it in order, stand up, and continue on! Don't be afraid of a new beginning. Pray and wrestle until you have won the victory—even if it costs you a night in prayer. It is worth it. Life is short, and time is quickly passing away. God would like to use you in His service. This is not feasible as long as He finds you in this saddened and discouraged state.
- Count the blessings in your life, and thank God for them!

Dear Reader, if you are currently going through a deep valley, I wish you a steadfast assurance that God is with you and will lead you through so that you will be able to see the light in your life again and continue joyfully on your way.

Dina Grötzingler

## ... Notes from School (Part 10)

"For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you'" Isaiah 41:13.

During my seventh semester, I stood before a difficult exam, and was afraid I would not pass. Then I was reminded of this verse. In my prayers, I brought the exam to the Lord. The night before the exam, I even dreamt about it, and was preoccupied by a specific topic. In the morning, I briefly reviewed that topic before I went into the exam. The professor asked me a question that was directly about that topic. The result was very good. God had answered my prayer, allowed me to have this very special experience and helped me.

Years later, I stood before a different, major exam. Again, I prepared extensively for it. I prayed and believed that the Lord would help me. During the oral part of the exam, I already received feedback that I had failed. Somehow everything seemed to fall apart for me. In an instant everything went dark. But then, the verse from Isaiah returned to mind. However, this time I did not understand anything. It took several weeks and many prayers and quiet times before God until I actually understood that He continues to hold us by our right hand even when the result is very different from what we had hoped for. He tells me that I do not need to fear, for He is very near to me. Even when I cannot see the way that lies before me, God still leads and strengthens me by His great wisdom.

Patricia J. Günter

### VERSE OF THE MONTH

*"Serve the Lord with gladness." (Psalm 100:2)*

**It is impressive to observe people going about their work with song and cheerfulness. In contrast, which boss wants workers who do their work without enthusiasm and with indifference? Certainly no one.**

**Let us test our practical service to God through some questions:**

**Are you serving God with love and joy? Or due to a sense of duty or the fear of being lost in the end? Do you do your work gladly and willingly, or only because you must? Are the tasks a pleasure or a load? Do you serve the Lord wholeheartedly, or is your service just a side job?**

**God wants totally committed workers, led by the Holy Spirit, who gladly do His will. Are you already a servant in God's kingdom? It's worth it!**

## Experiences With God

*“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me” (Psalm 50:15).*

The last day of our Vacation Bible School in July had arrived. Every day, 47 children had gathered to sing, hear Bible stories, make crafts, and forge new friendships. It was a joy to see how happy they were.

It was Friday. The successful week was to be concluded that evening with a meal shared by the parents of the participating children and the brothers and sisters of the congregation. Following the meal, we planned to have the children put on a program with songs and performances to give their parents an idea of how they had spent the week.

Everything had been carefully prepared. The sisters would provide the food, and the brothers would grill the meat. We wanted to set up tables and chairs on the church grounds so that we could get to know the visitors during the meal. All angles had been covered, but we had just one problem: The weather forecast was not promising, with rain, storms, hail, and a tornado watch having been announced for Wetaskiwin.

What could we do? We could pray—and pray the children did. During the morning devotions, one little boy prayed: “Dear Lord, let it rain somewhere else!” But it did not look like his prayer was going to be answered. In the course of the day, dark clouds appeared, completely blocking out the sun. Then the storm began. When the clock struck 6:00 p.m., the storm was still raging outside. A meal on the church grounds was out of the question, and we only had an hour before the guests were scheduled to arrive, at 7:00 p.m.

I withdrew to my office and closed the door. I turned to God, pleading: “Father—not for my sake but for the children—let a miracle happen! The children have prayed and will be disappointed if You do not answer their prayer. Will You not intervene for the sake of Your name?”

At 6:30 p.m., the clouds dissipated. The sun appeared in its glory and beauty, drying the church grounds. The brothers and sisters went to work, and by the time the parents and others arrived, the food was ready. God blessed that evening. Even today, I am still in awe of our great God who valued the prayer of the children enough to stop the rain, storm, and hail.

It is also worth noting that when our program ended at 9:00 p.m., it began to rain again—to the great joy of our farmers, who had prayed and waited for the rain.

God is a great God. Not only does He allow us to come to Him, He even directly encourages us to do so: “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you” (Psalm 50:15). On this evening, that verse literally came true. The end of the verse reads: “and you shall glorify Me,” and that is the purpose of this testimony.

Harry Semenjuk





CHILDREN'S CORNER

# Caught!

**A**t school, a teacher had been observing for some time that his student, Henry, always carried candies with him. He would sometimes even generously pass them out to his classmates during recess. Because the mother was a poor widow, the teacher could not understand where the boy was getting the money for these sweets.

One morning, during class, Henry once again quickly popped a candy in his mouth. But this time his teacher caught him in the act.

“What did you put in your mouth?” he asked the boy. Henry saw the teacher’s stern gaze and blushed. “A candy,” he replied sheepishly.

“Where did you get the money for it?”

To get out of the sticky situation, Henry lied and said that his mother had given him the money.

That same afternoon, the teacher visited Henry’s mother to tell her what had happened. Then he asked her if it was true that she gave her son the money for the sweets, as Henry had claimed. The mother was horrified and tears flowed down her cheeks because of her son. Henry was called and paled when he saw his teacher

and his crying mother. Lies no longer helped. Under this strict scrutiny, he confessed and explained where he had taken the money from.

In a cabinet, the mother had a cup in which she put money. Again and again, Henry had dipped his hand into that cup when no one was home. In this way he had become a thief and a common liar. He was punished afterward, but was everything all right now?—Oh no!

Someone had always witnessed when Henry had taken money. It was the Lord Jesus, who sees everything we do. If we do not confess our sins to Him, we will receive eternal punishment. But if we confess everything, then He shows us that He has already received the punishment for our sins on the cross. That is why the Savior had to die on the cross so that we would be cleared of the punishment by His blood.

Have you already brought your sins to the Savior? If not, please do so now. He wants to forgive you for everything.

If you personally accept this in faith, then you can thank and praise the Lord Jesus that He also loved you so much.

# A Godly Marriage

“The Pharisees came and asked Him, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?’ testing Him. And He answered and said to them, ‘What did Moses command you?’ They said, ‘Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her.’ And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation, God “made them male and female”’” (Mark 10:2-6).

**F**rom what Jesus tells the Pharisees and His disciples, we can conclude the following three things about a godly marriage:

- A godly marriage is joined together by God.
- A godly marriage is blessed by God.
- A godly marriage is protected by God.

“What God has joined together,” Jesus states in verse 9, “let not man separate.” From this verse we can solidly conclude that a godly marriage is joined together by God. God has a plan for our lives. In Ephesians 2:10 it says, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” If God has made a plan for your life, which you simply must follow, then He must also have planned who your marriage partner will be. Besides salvation of your soul, the question of engagement and marriage is the most important one. This decision not only affects your entire life, but it also impacts future generations.

Many enter into marriage rather recklessly. They act as if they are merely going for a short walk lasting a few hours with each other. In reality, however, the marriage covenant is to be kept for a lifetime—a covenant that cannot be broken or severed. Whoever grasps the magnitude of this decision will gladly lay responsibility for it in the hands of the Lord! This area of life has the greatest repercussions when individuals choose wrongly by going their own way. Many have experienced bitter self-blame

because they found themselves in an unhappy marriage and needed to tell themselves: “This did not have to be! If only I hadn’t!”

In regard to this question, although it is important to consider the outward circumstances, it is of far greater importance to consider what God’s will is.

When a godly marriage is established, then all previous relationships are abolished. God does not bring children together so they can flirt with one another. God also does not bring young people together who are not yet able to contemplate establishing a household and family. God leads them together when they are ready to start a family.

These premature relationships have become like a damaging cancer in our godly circles. They usually do not end without sin. Often these kinds of juvenile romances lead to secrets that are kept from parents. They meet in secret and communicate in secret. As a result, they sin against the first commandment with a promise: “Honor your father and your mother.” They do not honor their father and mother if they engage in a secret relationship behind their parents’ backs.

And how great the danger, that through the years, such a relationship will not remain pure, and one partakes of that which is reserved for marriage. Sadly, many have gone into marriage with such scars on their conscience!

My dear young people, wait! Wait until God leads you together with the right person. Leave that decision up to Him. Do not rush into anything before it is time.



Let God work! The familiar verse, “Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him” (Psalm 37:5), ends with the words: “and He shall bring it to pass.” Yes, He will work if we don’t rush ahead of Him.

And if God does not lead young people together who are not ready to think about marriage, then He also will not lead couples together who are not unified in faith. Never is a union between a godly and ungodly individual pleasing to God. Does it not clearly say in God’s word that we should “not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers”! And where are people more closely yoked than in a marriage?

And even if a friend should seek to coerce or manipulate, that is no reason to say, “I do.” God’s Word says “no” to such a covenant.

Blessed is the young man who surrenders this issue of the future to the Lord! And blessed is the young woman who trustingly looks to the Lord with this issue and says: “I trust you, Lord Jesus. I trust you alone!” When they

wait until God reveals His plan, then they will not make a wrong decision. Then they will not go their own ways that end in misfortune and heartbreak.

For this reason, it is so important to heed this advice: Be faithful to your future spouse! That means, do not waste your youth with all kinds of romances and affairs, but save all of your love for your future spouse! It is unpleasant to begin your engagement by confessing with whom you “were together” and had prior relationships.

But how precious to know: This marriage in which I stand, I did not seek out for myself, but God established it. He led us together. What a confidence it gives and what a strong foundation! Then you know: If God united us and this marriage is His doing, then He will give us the grace to make this marriage a beautiful expression of His love.

Young people, out of love and concern we want you to know this: a godly marriage is one joined together by God!

# Saved *by* Faith *Alone*

**T**he last Sunday in October is generally acknowledged as Reformation Sunday. On this day, we recall an important event in the age of the New Testament Church. Before the year A.D. 1500, spiritual darkness reigned for an entire century in greater Europe. The bright light of the truths of the Gospel were concealed by traditions and false teachings. In answer to one of the church's abuses, Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses onto the church door of the castle church in Wittenberg, Germany on October 31, 1517. In the years that followed, many foundational truths of the Gospel resurfaced, which many reformers upheld and supported and were prepared to suffer for because of their courageous proclamation of the Word of God. These truths were so important to them that they endured imprisonment and torture rather than denying it. To this day, the living truth of the Gospel must be preached and believed, because errors lead to spiritual darkness and death, as Jesus states: "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

Let us examine five foundational truths that grew out of the Reformation movement and which are still proclaimed to this day.

## 1. Saved by faith alone—*Sola Fide* (Latin)

During the time of darkness, the foundational truth that someone who remorsefully seeks God's grace can be saved by faith alone went missing. The church had altered

this doctrine, teaching that a person must earn his salvation by doing good works.

The Apostle Paul wrote: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith'" (Romans 1:16-17).

No one can earn their salvation by their own doing, as it is the completed work of Jesus on the cross and the gift of God to us. In order to be saved, we must repent of our sins and accept the great gift of love from God.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

After one has been born into the family of God, the Lord expects each of His disciples to bear fruit. In other words, one should do good deeds that are pleasing to God. The Apostle Paul explains this truth in the following verse. Good works should flow out of those who are born again by the Spirit.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

## 2. Saved by grace alone—*Sola Gratia*

Over the years, the church modified the simple celebration of remembrance and biblical ordinances into a sacrament that somehow was thought to impart grace to the participants. For example, it is said that partaking of

Communion, through the symbols of bread and wine, will impart special grace to believers.

The Apostle Paul wrote: “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes” (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

As the Lord’s disciples, we should participate in the Lord’s Supper and thereby be reminded of His great sacrifice. We should thank Him that He redeemed us through the blood of Jesus, the sacrificial Lamb. If we participate in Communion and have sin in our hearts, we will not receive grace but rather will invoke the wrath of God on ourselves. Paul continues his teaching as he explains:

“Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body” (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

Similarly, the act of baptism by complete submersion serves as an affirmation that a person has become a child of God. Baptism illustrates the spiritual truth of having died to sin and now having been raised up to new life in Christ. However, this step in no way somehow gives us special grace. We are simply blessed by obediently following Christ’s commandment. It is through grace alone that we are saved, not by doing good works, nor by participating in Mass, nor by any one of the other sacraments that were invented by the Roman Catholic Church.

### **3. Christ alone–Solo Christo**

During the Middle Ages, the fallen church began to elevate the priesthood as well as Mary,



mother of Jesus, to a higher position. They saw Mary and the Pope as assistants to Jesus in His role as Mediator of the New Covenant. However, Jesus remains the only Mediator of His Church, and He alone intercedes on behalf of His people. There is absolutely no need for any other mediator, be it Mary or the priesthood.

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth” (1 Timothy 2:5-7).

Those who have been called to be preachers, teachers, or bishops are only His witnesses and servants. They point others to Christ and may help them to pray in His name. Nowhere do we find that they are to fulfill the role of Christ. Only Jesus can forgive sins and add us to His Church, strengthen us, answer our prayers, and give us eternal life!

#### **4. Scripture alone—Sola Scriptura**

During the great apostasy of the truth, the church for centuries allowed only the priesthood to have the Word of God. When reformers such as Tyndale, Wycliffe, and Luther translated the Bible from Greek or Latin into the language of the lay people, they were heavily persecuted by the Catholic Church. By reading the Bible, many would have their eyes opened to God’s truths, and the corrupt practices and opposing teachings of the church would be revealed.

One of the key phrases of the Reformation was “back to the Scriptures alone.” In other words, they would not accept any new decrees, writings, catechisms, or traditions of the church that were later added on. For example, praying to Mary or to one of the saints was a later invention of the Catholic Church and is not biblical.

The Bible is God’s inspired Word and does not require any further revelations or teachings since its completion (see Revelation 22:18). We rely on the Bible alone.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

#### **5. Holiness alone—Solo Sancto**

As the Reformation further evolved during the 1800s, another vital truth from God’s Word became clear.

Reformers such as John Wesley and Daniel S. Warner began to teach that a Christian should lead a holy life. Once a believer has been saved by grace and has begun to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, it is necessary to lead a holy life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

“As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:14-16).

There are many Bible passages that illuminate this wonderful truth that children of God can overcome sin and temptations and can lead a holy life. Passages such as Ephesians 5:25-27, Romans 8:5-8, and 1 John 3:4-9 explain this. This indicates that all habitual sins have ceased. A liar lies no more, a robber steals no more, the one who swore swears no more. For we have been sanctified by the grace of God and the words of Jesus: “Go and sin no more” (John 8:11; John 5:14).

The Holy Spirit is the source of power to completely overcome temptations and have complete victory over sin. The long-lost truth about sanctification or baptism by the Holy Spirit is what gives a Christian the inner strength. This experience of Pentecost requires that believers give themselves as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). God acknowledges this offering by filling His children with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul emphasizes very clearly in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5: “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God.” Later, he writes this wonderful promise:

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24).

This priceless truth signifies the blessed unity of all God’s children in the living Church of God. All should be redeemed and sanctified and serve Jesus in true holiness.

Let us remember these fundamental truths of the Reformation and keep the inspired Word of God in mind and live it out—not only in October, but throughout the entire year.

Harry Klinger



STORY

# How Do You Imagine Life in the Hereafter?

**T**here was a large gathering in a diplomat's home. His godly wife was in conversation with a prominent Chinese and asked him what, according to the teachings and hopes of his religion, life in the hereafter would be like. He told her to imagine the following:

"Let every window shutter be tightly fastened and every window shade be drawn so that no light from outside can be seen. Then ask the orchestra to be silent; no piano or voices should be heard. Ban the cheerful chatter of these ladies and gentlemen and the laughter of that group over there. Let all the fragrant flowers and plants be carried out as well as the birdcage and its merry performer, so there is complete and utter silence in this room. Then turn off every chandelier and every other light source in this room and you have an image of what I expect from life after death."

He then asked her, "what will life in the hereafter be like according to your Christian religion?"

The hostess replied, "Imagine the following: Open all the window shades and shutters to allow all the sunlight

in. Have the orchestra and piano play the most glorious sounds ever created and ask the singers to sing their most beautiful songs. Bring the birdcage back inside. Bring back the flowers and the plants as well as many others. Then turn on every light on the walls and in the chandeliers until everything shines from the inside and the outside. Then you have an image of my Christian expectation of a life of bliss in the hereafter.—A glorious image!"

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on" (Revelation 14:13). This is why Paul also said, "For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" (Philippians 1:23). The images we are given of the hereafter in the New Testament, especially in Revelation, are uplifting, yet completely inadequate because the human mind cannot imagine what has not been experienced. God has prepared everything so wonderfully for us. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).



REPORT

## Bible Course 2018 Held *in* Chilliwack

**W**ith thankful hearts we look back at two weeks of blessings at this year's Bible Course of the Church of God held in Chilliwack, BC. About 40 students and four teachers attended the course, which began with a Devotional and prayer each morning, followed by four teaching hours. Bro. Taron spoke in the first hour on the Church of God. Bro. Kehler followed with Principles of the Greatest Commandment. After lunch, Bro. Klinger presented Christian Apologetics and Witnessing, and finally, Bro. Mielke sang with the students and taught about The Bible, Truth, and God. All who participated were richly blessed and encouraged in their Christian walk. Below are a few comments by some of the students who attended the course.

*I thank God that I was able to attend the Bible Course. I was richly blessed by all the lessons, the singing, and especially the fellowship with other believers. I hope and pray that we could keep being passionate about God and His Word throughout our lives.*

*Trudy Neufeld, Rosal, Mexico*

*One of the things that really made an impact on me was the session on the Greatest Commandment, loving God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself. True love can't be commanded or bought, it must be freely offered.*

*Anna Klassen, Steinbach, Canada*

*I'm thankful I had the opportunity to connect with fellow Christians who are really serious about their faith. This fellowship is a great reminder that I serve the true, living God.*

*Miran Marinc, Hamilton, Canada*

*While praying with one of the pastors, I had a really special encounter with God. During the course, I felt the presence of God as never before. I am so thankful that God let His Holy Spirit rest on us over these two weeks.*

*Henry Borsch, Steinbach, Canada*

*Bible Course always feels like a mountaintop experience. Learning about Bible truths, having fellowship with many believers, and singing late into the evening is a highlight. Please keep us young people in your prayers, so that we can remain in what we have learned.*

*Ruth Mirau, Barrhead, Canada*

*I thank God for the opportunity to attend the Bible Course. The in-depth study of several important topics, the fellowship, singing, getting to know new friends, and sharing experiences defined these two weeks and will make them unforgettable to me.*

*Kerstin Schmelzle, Pforzheim, Germany*

*Singing together with so many believers has really encouraged me.*

*Ines Neufeld, Edmonton, Canada*

*What stood out to me was that in order to witness to others, we need to live a life of integrity and not compromise our faith for anyone.*

*Karsten Brix, Aylmer, Canada*

*I am so blessed that I got saved and had the opportunity to join the Bible Course. We learned about how to love, what is biblical Christianity, facts of the Bible and church history. Together we will carry the torch and light up all the nations,*



spreading the Good News to all people.

Y. L., ZhengZhou, China

*What impacted me at the Bible Course? The smoky conditions from the wild-fires surrounding us, the prayers at night, the fire of God's love burning in our hearts, the good lunches provided, the lessons we learned that strengthen us in our walk with God. Thank you, Lord, with mighty thanks!*

Jenery Perico, Edmonton, Canada

*My faith was strengthened through the Bible lessons and I became more grounded in the truth of God's word. Our free time was also a tremendous blessing to me. We spent time together as young believers enjoying God's creation, studying the Word together, worshipping Him in song, and sharing how He is working in our lives. Thank you to everyone who prayed for us during this time!*

Ken Froese, Edmonton, Canada

*I was blessed by the lesson on loving your neighbor as yourself. To love, you need healthy self-love. In other words, if we focus so much on others that we neglect ourselves, how can we wholeheartedly love somebody else?*

Jasmina Powell, Hamilton, Canada

*The time in the lessons, the time spent worshipping in song, and the fellowship with other believers have always let me feel blessed.*

Bryce Schroeder, Hamilton, Canada

*I really appreciate the Bible Course. It's a wonderful opportunity to learn about truths in God's Word. One of those truths is the Church of God. I love this. God calls everyone out of division and error into one true church which carries the Father's name. What an honor and privilege that is!*

Mike Thiessen, Chilliwack, Canada

*I am very thankful that I was able to attend the Bible Course. I was richly blessed through the conversations we students had. The apologetics and witnessing lessons were the ones that I learned a lot in. We learned how we can be an effective witness to those around us and how to give a ready defense when others ask us about our faith.*

James Schulz, Steinbach, Canada



# The *better* or the *best* way

*There are situations in life that make us look for the best way. Because we urgently seek the best way, time and time again, we strive to recognize it by contemplating or even requesting it. Psalm 25:12 says: “Who, then, are those who fear the Lord? He will instruct them in the ways they should choose.” Here it is clearly stated that we should always search for the better or best way from God. A songwriter wrote: “Thou never lacks for means, Thou always find’st a way.” However, we have to decide to choose the best way and be willing to walk it in faith. The Lord expects us to obey fully and is ready to reward our obedience.*

*Friedrich Krebs, Kitchener, Canada*

## I. THE WAY BACK TO GOD

1. This is truly the best way for all people of every time. Jesus said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). “He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).
2. The way to God is a rewarding way—a way that leads to life. “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). Whoever rejects Him loses the greatest gains of his life! There is an article entitled, “People die without having lived.” That

means that they chose many of their own ways, traveled through many countries, but they did not know the way to God, and they will be absent in heaven!

3. Those who preach Christ simultaneously preach the only and best way to righteousness.

*We Pray:*

- a. That the biblical way to salvation would be preached earnestly to the people of our time so that they recognize the deception of sin and become saved.
- b. For a clear and deep awareness of the saving truth of salvation (see John 17:3).

## II. THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUTH

1. “Righteousness exalts a nation” (Proverbs 14:34), and it exalts every righteous person within a nation. Such people are noticeable. They are loved, they attract others, and they win trust.
2. Righteousness shows strength of character and is often associated with a fear of God and the truth. Such people are an example and are respected and needed, for light and blessings come from them.
3. Through truth and righteousness, we honor God and keep our conscience pure. “Let man be noble, generous and good”—even the world expects this to some degree!

The way of righteousness and truth has always shown the best results. It is a way of victory!

*We Pray:*

- a. That God would help us to cling to righteousness and truth in all circumstances of life, as God’s Word teaches us.
- b. For grace to honor our Lord through a pure heart and life, and to be a good example to others, even in the most difficult situations in life.

### III. THE WAY OF PEACE

1. The way of peace includes submission, forgiveness, and reconciliation in many circumstances. The primary purpose of Jesus' coming was to bring reconciliation and peace (see Isaiah 53:5 and 2 Corinthians 5:19). This was, of course, reconciliation with God! But even true reconciliation with people leads to peace.
2. Jesus Himself commended this way when He said: "First be reconciled to your brother" (Matthew 5:24). However, to result in lasting peace, reconciliation must be done genuinely from the heart.
3. The way of genuine reconciliation puts aside hurt

and difficulties, and leads to a sought-after peaceful relationship and joy. Without submission and reconciliation, no true peace with God and with fellow men can exist.

*We pray:*

- a. For grace and genuine willingness to submit to God, and likewise to our neighbors.
- b. For people who have lost their assurance of salvation.
- c. For people who are in spiritual need but don't have the courage to turn and repent.

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### IV. THE WAY OF PRAYER AND OF GODLY SOWING

1. Ecclesiastes 11:6 says, "In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not withhold your hand." "Seed" refers to our good and helpful deeds. Are we able to list them?
2. Jesus' life in this world was clearly characterized by tireless work, sowing of the best seed, and continuous prayer.
3. There are situations where there is no better way than only to pray.

*We pray:*

- a. That in this time, God would still awake a vibrant spirit of prayer among His people! Prayer is truly the best and only way out of all troubles and transgressions.
- b. For new courage and for the necessary depth of faith to pray earnestly.
- c. For prayer warriors who are strong in faith. God can raise them up.

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### V. THE WAY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. In the Beatitudes (Matthew 5), this way is clearly shown to us.
2. This refers to the one way to salvation, brought about by Christ, that leads to the highest, best, eternal goal and prize.
3. We can have assurance of this way. Paul, in the midst of his burdens and suffering, testified: "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).
4. Gratitude is also absolutely the best way that leads to heavenly righteousness (see Psalm 50:23)!

*We pray:*

- a. For strengthening of faith, comfort, and a strong assurance of salvation for all who encounter various afflictions, burdens, and suffering.
- b. That people would find God and clearly recognize and accept the way to their salvation.
- c. For our brothers who preach God's way to salvation. May God grant them courage, perseverance, and joyful fruit.
- d. For more pastors, who are urgently needed, and for open doors for the Word (Colossians 4:3).

## *Let Us Work Tirelessly!*

*Let us work for Christ the Savior,  
For He died on Calvary  
To enact a full salvation,  
And from sin to set us free.  
Let us tread the narrow pathway,  
Eagerly cling to His word.  
For the faith the Lord has given,  
Let us stand with one accord.*

*Let us stand for truth and share it  
And reach every heart with song.  
That all false pretense may vanish,  
With all pain and sin and wrong.  
Who can watch the masses living  
So in vanity and sin,  
Without peace and without knowing  
Christ, who gives true peace within?*

*Let us pray for them and carry  
Out our mandate for the Lord,  
Working tirelessly and watching  
That we don't transgress His word.  
Let us love Him, for He loved us  
First of all and gave Himself  
So that we may find salvation;  
This our joy, above all else.*

*Let us therefore never falter,  
Pressing onwards for the Lord.  
When this fleeting life is over,  
We obtain a great reward.  
Should we not make every effort  
In the cause of Christ, our King?  
His great love is never ending,  
So let's give Him everything.*

*A. E. Gust*