



# Foundation of Faith

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THE HOLY SPIRIT—  
SOURCE OF DIVINE POWER

STRONG  
THROUGH THE SPIRIT OF GOD

God—the Holy Spirit

GUIDANCE  
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

ASSURANCE  
OF SALVATION

RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

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## *Editorial*

*Dear Reader!*

God's Word is so wonderful! We can never deplete its riches and fully comprehend all its treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The Apostle Paul writes to his young co-worker: "Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness" (1 Timothy 3:16 ESV).

Yes, "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." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:9-10). That is how this mystery of godliness is proclaimed and preached to us. Yes, we can find it ourselves in reading and studying the Bible, and delight in it. All earthly values fade when we recognize the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, experience the love of God, and discover the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (see 2 Corinthians 13:14).

Since the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, the third Person of the Trinity stepped into the forefront, along with the heavenly Father and His beloved Son Jesus Christ, as a Counselor, as the Spirit of truth, and as a wonderful Comforter. We recognize the Holy Spirit as a Person of the Trinity.

The Bible teaches us the following about the Holy Spirit:

- He has one "mind" and intercedes for us (Romans 8:26-27).
- He searches all things and knows "the things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10-13).
- He teaches believers and convicts the world (John 16:8).
- He proclaims everything concerning the Lord (John 16:13).
- He has a sovereign will (1 Corinthians 12:11; Acts 13:2).
- He can be grieved, insulted, and betrayed (Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 10:29; Acts 5:3).
- He gives courage, strength, and joy to witness (Acts 1:8).

By no means may we forget the peace and joy in and through the Holy Spirit. "[F]or the kingdom of God is . . . righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men" (Romans 14:17-18).

H. D. Nimz

# God Did This For You Too

**H**eavy darkness enshrouded the large city. The bells from the old town hall steeple tolled at midnight. Soon the moon would rise. The increasing moonlight illuminated the looming giant on the river bank. One could see how it towered proudly over trees, houses, domes and towers: the enormous cathedral.

In the tall cathedral, there was one who could not and would not sleep. Kneeling before the holy image of Golgotha, he desired either peace, a deep satisfying peace, or to find long-awaited death there in the swells of the flowing stream.

Hours passed. The lonely cathedral visitor shivered, and his knees throbbed. He wondered what his acquaintances would think if they saw him in this state! Wasn't he that impressive free thinker who, with his clear, factual, perceptive demeanor, was able to convince those who still believed in God of their fallacy through impressive argument? Wasn't he the one who could soothe those with a bad conscience when they trembled because of their sin? Yes, he was that man!

However, about a year ago, during one of his atheistic presentations, a simple man from the community shared how he had gone so long without peace but then eventually found a deep peace through the God whom he had fought. He could not forget the words nor the joyful expression of that man. Of course, in public he put him in his place, speaking of fantasy and self-induced thoughts. But not all of his audience was completely satisfied with this answer, and in truth, neither was he.

Again and again, he pondered why people who were on the edge of despair suddenly—as they said—found such happiness through this God. “One would have to be insane or at least terribly naive, when in the midst of great

distress one thinks that the trouble is fantasy and simply becomes joyful. If one could simply imagine themselves into happiness, it surely would only last a short time, because the terror and reality of difficulties always sets in again with renewed vengeance. However, I have seen those who, in the midst of the bitterest sorrow, were filled with indescribable and enduring joy.” Such were often his thoughts.

And then he thought of that woman who had lain completely paralyzed in her bed for 22 years and who had to be fed. One time as he visited her, he asked: “How can you even stand this suffering?” She answered, “Why don't you ask me if I can stand God's incredible goodness to me?”

His uneasiness grew until his ideology came crumbling down like a house of cards. He could not find peace of mind, neither in Nietzsche's, Kant's, or Schopenhauer's writings, nor in the philosophies of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

Today he desperately wanted just one thing: either peace or death. He did not want to shy away from finding peace because committing suicide seemed cowardly.

As a former Catholic, he had crept into the abbey and prostrated himself in front of this holy painting. The light of the moon only dimly illuminated this work of art. The longer he looked at it, however, the clearer his spiritual and natural eyesight became. He saw the crucified One, crowned with thorns, gazing down at him sadly, and it was as if he imagined hearing the words: “I did this for you!”

He could not tear his eyes away from this image, the image that he had glanced at with near disgust at an earlier visit to the cathedral. But now, Jesus' crucifixion which paid the price of redemption for the entire world's

sins, which he had rejected as a mere fantasy, became a great mystery to him. This very mystery soon unfolded for him into wonderful knowledge and acceptance: “He did this for me!” Peace now flooded over him. The swells of the river below still awaited their victim, but it was not to be.

There was upheaval among the leading circles of the Freethinkers’ Movement. One of their best had now resigned with the reason: “I have become a Christian.” They looked for an explanation for such a step but to no avail. Eventually, they came to the thoughtless judgment: “He always was an oddball, and something must have been abnormal with him.”

But from the mouth of this man, whose condition they called “abnormal,” came only a mighty message: “Jesus Christ, the crucified One!” From then on, his words continued to flow powerfully. There was logic, experience, and power in his presentations! He was delighted to speak about what he had seen and heard, whereas as a former authentic freethinker he could only propose weak hypotheses, which remained hypotheses despite all kinds of scientific investigations.

At last he had found true prosperity for his soul, which he never could have attained in all manners of self-struggle or discipline. Jesus Christ had now become everything to him!

O. G.

## *Opened Eyes*

“And now, Pastor,” said the blind man, “please read a Bible passage to me.”

I became flustered. I didn’t have a Bible with me; something a preacher should always carry.

The blind man obviously noticed my discomfort. “Reach behind you,” he said, “there on the windowsill you will find a Bible.”

There truly was one lying there. Of course he couldn’t see it, but obviously I wasn’t the first person that had failed in this way.

“Open to Psalm 34,” he commanded. And I read: “I will bless the LORD at all times.” I gazed over to the blind man.

His face shone remarkably, as if he was standing amidst the heavenly hosts and was joining in their angelic praises to the Almighty. I continued to read: “they looked to Him.”

I paused for a moment. Of all things, this blind man requested me to read a passage concerning sight. That just seemed tactless. However, at his wish I continued reading. “They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed.”

“That is true!” he reaffirmed. And then it dawned on me. This blind man could actually see! He belonged to

those that “looked to Him,” the One of Golgotha, the Savior, as He hung on the cross for us.

This wonderful Lord cannot be seen with natural eyes. They that look to Him, must have their inner eyes opened. This man’s eyes had been opened.

Minutes later, I pondered as I walked along the street. Grey rental houses lined the right side of the street. On the left side a long wall divided houses from the taverns and bars, from where you could hear raucous noise.

At the corner a few young fellows smirked at me as I passed by. One of them called after me: “pious clown!”

I whirled around. Cold, calculating, mocking eyes glared at me. And then it dawned on me. Yes! You have good eyesight. But in reality, you are blind, because you don’t see God’s salvation. The blind man however sees, because he sees the Savior! I was astonished to realize that the Bible truly turned everything upside down . . . those that are blind can see and those that see are blind!

The young men noticed my consternation and asked what was wrong with me. I explained it to them . . . and the smirks on their faces disappeared.

Wilhelm Busch



GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

# The Holy Spirit— Source of Divine Power

**T**he disciples watched as their Master rose up into heaven, and then “they returned to Jerusalem.” They had not yet realized that Jesus had left them in order to send them the Comforter, who could fill them and the Church of the Lord with divine power at all times. After all, why should He who is love itself leave those who had wholly dedicated themselves to Him?

Then, on the day of Pentecost, the Lord’s great love was revealed. Those 120 disciples were the first to experience the glory of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Only now could they be effective disciples of the Lord. The Holy Spirit inspired them to go out into a hostile world and testify of the great Savior Jesus Christ to all people. They preached not only with their words but also through the miracles that they performed in the name of the Lord. The lame could walk again, the blind were restored their

sight, and the possessed were liberated from the spell of evil powers.

Such great testimony did not miss its mark. Thousands came to the Lord. Large crowds fled to the Father's heart and found a loving reception there. No one who approached with sincerity was turned away, and even those who had called: "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" found forgiveness for their immense debt and pledged themselves to the service of the Lord. The darkness was broken by flashes of light—the warm light of the truth, which shone brightly and drew many near to satisfy the longing of their hearts at the spring of peace. The Gospel began its victorious campaign and spread across the entire known world.

What would have happened to the Gospel if Jesus had not sent the Comforter, the Holy Spirit? Surely Christianity would now be a thing of the past. It was through the agency and assistance of the Holy Spirit that the power of God worked its saving grace. All who were overcome by the Holy Spirit and who repented received the full benefit of the cross and of Jesus' act of salvation. The cross of Christ was glorified in all countries of the known world.

The Holy Spirit exalts Jesus by bringing the Word of God into people's hearts and encouraging and comforting their souls. He is patient and strives over and over. Blessed are those who are finally overcome by the love of Jesus as revealed through the Holy Spirit. Everything in their hearts becomes new, and Jesus becomes their One and Only. That is what the Holy Spirit wants to accomplish. He convinces sinners of their lost condition and

leads them to the cross so that they may receive peace and forgiveness.

The more room we give the Holy Spirit in our hearts, the more Jesus is exalted and the more we can become like Him. With His divine anointment, the love of Jesus warms our hearts and encourages us time and time again, filling us with praise and thanks. Doubts are overcome, and fear and worries banished. Joy and peace grow boundlessly, and already here on earth, the Holy Spirit reveals to us some of God's great glory. He lets us experience the love of Jesus, brings us into true service to God, and guides us in all truth.

The Holy Spirit is the greatest teacher. He wants to help us to recognize how dependent we are on Him and how much we need Him in our hearts; He wants to open the door for us to truly comprehend the great privilege of His fellowship and to passionately penetrate deeper into the power of God; and He wants to teach us true, sincere humility, for the Lord can grant grace only to the humble.

"Make me purer, ever smaller," should be our prayer as well. We should all have the desire to receive the Holy Spirit more abundantly. We must open our hearts wide to let Jesus and His Spirit in. Then we will get to know His glory in an amazing way, and the Father in Heaven will speak His "Amen."

Oh, may we all experience the glory of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit! Through His power we will be able to truly love His name, cling tightly to the cross, and stand firm for the cause of the Lord and for the glory of God and His dear Son.

S. R.

## *The Holy Spirit and the Bible*

The Holy Spirit is the inspiration of all the 40 or so writers who have written the Bible. There are 66 books in the Bible, and I dare to boldly claim that it is the best library in the world. The various books in the Bible were written in various places: some in palaces, others in prisons, some on mountains, others in the valley, some on ships.

Its writing spans centuries. But if you study the Bible's books closely, you find that they all had one author, and

that the 40 writers were just tools in His hand. This author was the Holy Spirit Himself. He never lost the thread, and there is the most beautiful harmony in all that He wrote from Genesis to Revelation.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21).



GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

# What Does the Holy Spirit Do For Us?

**W**hile Jesus was on Earth, He did a lot for His disciples. However, when He promised them the Holy Spirit, He expected that the Spirit would do something for them that He Himself had not done.

The Holy Spirit had already done something for the disciples, for He was involved in their salvation. I believe that we too easily forget the involvement that the Holy Spirit has in the first work of grace, which is salvation. His first role was to convince the disciples of their sin and of the need for a Savior, for it is the Holy Spirit who “will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8). The disciples had accepted Jesus; they were born of the Spirit of God.

Before His ascension to heaven, Jesus told His disciples: “It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you” (John 16:7). This arrival was meant to be a sure benefit for the disciples. The work of the Holy Spirit should closely correlate with each person and the work of Christ. The way the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost shows that something brand new began. In a greater measure than ever before,

the powers of the invisible world were given in order to fill the hearts of the Lord’s followers. A new life and a new power came into the world on this day.

## **The Holy Spirit sanctifies**

Although one experiences cleansing at the time of rebirth, it is not complete if that person is not baptized with the Holy Spirit.

The evidence for this is found in Acts 15. Here, Peter explains in front of the council in Jerusalem what God’s stance toward Cornelius and his household was: “So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:8-9). Cornelius’ heart, therefore, was sanctified or purified, for sanctification means purification. When we repent, we are saved from the guilt of the sins we committed and are purified. We are purified of the depravity we are born with, or inherited sin, through sanctification. This is what the Holy Spirit did on Pentecost for the disciples, and He wants to do the same for us today.

The Holy Spirit gives power: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (Acts 1:8) was the promise that was given, and this promise was fulfilled. They received power—power to witness for Christ wherever He sent them.

The Holy Spirit guides us: “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come” (John 16:13).

The Holy Spirit instructs us: “But 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” (John 14:26).

The Holy Spirit comforts us: “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper [Comforter] . . . the Spirit of Truth” (John 14:16-17).

He also wants to bring God’s people together in unity: May they “be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:19-21).

The Holy Spirit brought Christ back to the disciples, not in the flesh but to live in their hearts. During His time of teaching on earth, He was with them. But He could only be in one location, not numerous. Even after His resurrection, His appearances were limited by location and time. But what a difference after Pentecost!

The disciples knew that Jesus lived after His resurrection. They had seen how He had ascended to heaven, but ten days later, He appeared to them again in the Person of the Holy Spirit. Now He lived in them. Their lives were filled with His presence, and their hearts burned completely for Him. Jesus’ promise: “and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20) had become a reality for them.

Paul testified: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). Christ-like living is simply the life of Christ in us. The Holy Spirit takes up residence in the hidden place of our soul and shares the life of Christ with us so that the inner residing of Christ becomes a wonderful reality. All this is what the Holy Spirit can do for us.

E. Martin

## *The Holy Spirit*

Who opens up my eyes so I can see myself as realistically as the Bible sees me?

The Holy Spirit!

Who helps me enjoy salvation in Jesus Christ?

The Holy Spirit!

Who gives me love for the Bible and helps me understand it?

The Holy Spirit!

Who allows me to speak joyfully and with childlike faith with the unseen God?

The Holy Spirit!

Who ignites love for other Christians in my heart?

The Holy Spirit!

Who makes me concerned for the needs of my neighbor and motivates me to help?

The Holy Spirit!

Who urges me to confess my faith?

The Holy Spirit!

Who guides me through all the days of my life to that blessed goal?

The Holy Spirit!

# Do Not Grieve the Holy Spirit

**T**he Holy Spirit is the most precious and valuable possession one can acquire. Jesus called Him the “Spirit of truth” and “Helper” and promised Him to His disciples as His final bequest before His ascension. The apostle Paul spoke of Him as the “guarantee” of our inheritance (see Ephesians 1:14).

When one has received the Holy Spirit in complete surrender to God, then it will be his primary and greatest task not to grieve the Holy Spirit, against which Paul also warns the Ephesians (Ephesians 4:30).

The bond created between God and man through the Holy Spirit is possibly the most tender and intimate. To help humans understand this, the Word of God often compares it to the relationship between bride and bridegroom. Just like it is possible to tarnish this tender relationship, the Holy Spirit of God can also be grieved.

Paul shows us how we can grieve the Holy Spirit in his warning in Ephesians 4:29, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.” In fact, it is exactly those frivolous, thoughtless words that return to a person’s own heart like poison darts and wound the Holy Spirit. A Christian whose speech carelessly rambles on like an unrestrained waterfall, will soon sense the emptiness in his heart and painfully search for the lost peace in his soul. Oh, that we would watchfully and prayerfully become masters of our tongue so that we could become a complete person in Christ.

There are several other things that can disturb the bond between the soul and the Holy Spirit. It is always the “little foxes that spoil the vines” (Song of Solomon 2:15).

A danger that is not often heeded in our day is the cares of this world. Jesus told His followers not to worry (Matthew 6:25-34). He wanted us to put our complete trust in Him. Who has not experienced how worry can come between the soul and God and thereby trouble that tender, trusting relationship.

The Holy Spirit is not a spirit of fear. Therefore we do not need to be afraid, even if cares and difficulties rise up around us like mountains. Courageously going through difficult times, rather than fearfully giving up, has always honored and glorified God. If we can see the suffering of today as preparation for eternal glory, then we will not give up, no matter the burden.

How much more worthwhile is it to esteem and nurture the great gift of the Holy Spirit than to allow temporal things to prevail. Blessed is he who guards and nurtures this holy possession, this precious relationship between God and his soul above all. He can say with John, “If our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him” (1 John 3:21-22). God will answer our pleas in the way that He knows is best. He will tend to our supplications in a wonderful way; whether we are in spiritual or physical need, He will send us help at the right time. We will sense God’s love in our soul and feel the need to reciprocate this love, so that we proclaim with the apostle, “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). G. T.

# Guided by the *Holy Spirit*

**A**lthough I may not know much about sailing, I do know that the wind plays a big role. Without its power, a ship's sails fall slack; under its power, however, they billow out and propel the ship toward its destination.

This is a fitting metaphor for our lives. Our life's journey also goes through deep waters and sometimes over threatening crests or into treacherous troughs. Difficult and dangerous situations are likely part of your life as well. The important thing is not to be distracted from the destination, and that means: Stay with the wind! This "wind of God" can be neither seen nor heard but is rather felt in your heart and conscience. It is the Holy Spirit's task to magnify Jesus Christ, the Savior, in your soul. When you hear or read the Word of God, He shows you life's true objective and gives you the power to reach it.

You can learn how He works by prayerfully reading the Holy Scriptures. Surrender leadership of your life to the Holy Spirit, and you will see how He reveals Jesus to you. However, it would not be possible for God and sinful man to enter into such intimate communion if God Himself had not paved the way. First, the Son of God's blood had to be shed. On the cross, He took our sins, which separated us from God, upon Himself. Through the resurrection of Jesus, the eternal God accepted this offer for all the world to see. On Pentecost, the Lord, having ascended to heaven, sent the Holy Spirit to earth. He is

the Comforter, Teacher, Leader, and Master of those who love and trust Him, and He wants to enter every heart that has opened itself to the message of salvation through Jesus' blood.

How can we experience the leading of the Holy Spirit? We do not need to wait for great visions or supernatural voices. On the contrary, He works in our lives very simply and unobtrusively. He helps us to have faith in the Word of God and warns us of temptations. Should we fall, He encourages us to look in faith to salvation through Jesus rather than the sin. The Holy Spirit gives new strength to the discouraged and helps them to focus on the goal more clearly and firmly. When we are struck by heavy blows of fate, He points upwards to the One who makes no mistakes and whose leading is all wisdom and love.

Before important decisions, He gives us the inner confidence to choose the right path. He also helps us to point those around us to the right destination as well. On our deathbed, He will be with us—though not visible to the human eye—and lead us blissfully to our eternal home with God.

Is there anything more beautiful than entrusting our lives to the Holy Spirit in faith and obedience? I am certain that no one who has dared to take this step has regretted it. The Word of God says: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

C. R.



# Strong Through the Spirit of God

**M**ay God “grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:16).

The Apostle Paul’s wish for the Ephesians was that they may be strong and have adequate power and inner strength. Physically speaking, there are people who are strong and can do things that amaze us, whereas a weak or sickly person is sometimes not even able to stand on his or her own two feet. We know that being strong is associated with power, might, or ability that a weak person is not capable of.

In our Bible text, the might or strength spoken of is not physical but being strong in the inner person, strong in the Spirit. The world is full of sin and unrighteousness. In one’s own strength, a person who has not been born again is sold out to sin. It is, however, God’s intention that His will be done on earth. This means not only abstaining from evil and wrong, but also practicing what is good and what is right.

The popular teaching, which claims that on this earth it is impossible to live without sinning, wrongly insists that weakness and the failure to withstand temptation should be the Christian norm. Yet in Ephesians 3:16, Paul shows us that God “according to the riches of His glory” can strengthen us with might to be strong. This is God’s desire for us.

In 1 Timothy 1:12, Paul says: “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.” For what purpose did God make Paul strong or enable him? What did Paul do before his conversion, and how did that differ from his

life afterwards? Once he persecuted Christians, and after his conversion he became a faithful Christian, a minister, and an apostle.

John writes: “I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one” (1 John 2:14). Here John attests that he is writing to Christians who are strong and have overcome the wicked one. He does not plead with them to overcome evil, but he states that they have done so.

We can become strong in this life in order to overcome the wicked one and the temptations that come our way. We have no need to wait until a so-called millennium for the devil to lose his power. We can find the strength to overcome temptation and sin and lead a life of victory as the apostles taught. The previously mentioned scriptures verify this.

Although the Bible teaches that a victorious life is possible, some may ask how can this actually be put into practice? The reason that many people find it hard to lead a victorious life may indeed lie within themselves. Many honest seekers actually try to live victoriously by relying on their own power. That is a great mistake.

The Apostle Paul states that the inner man is strengthened through God’s Spirit (Ephesians 3:16). That is where the source of our strength lies. No wonder Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued with the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5). After being filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter never again denied his Lord but willingly suffered with Him, and he even died for Him.



We need the Holy Spirit. Our strength lies in Him. Many who profess Christ try to live a holy life without the Spirit. We would not expect to harvest apples without an apple tree. The source of the fruit must be present. The “fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). Since Paul calls these virtues the “fruit of the Spirit,” the Holy Spirit is analogous to the tree which causes the fruit to grow.

Souls that are filled with the Holy Spirit will naturally bear the fruit of the Spirit. That is why the Apostle Paul stressed the importance of every believer to be filled with the Holy Spirit as soon as possible. In Acts 19:1-2, at his first meeting with the disciples in Ephesus, Paul asks them right away if they had received the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, we are not able to live a life which is pleasing to God.

In his sermon in Acts 2, Peter instructs us how to receive the Holy Spirit. “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). First he says: “Repent.” By repenting, we receive forgiveness and are born again. After repenting, he says be baptized. When the time has come that a person is willing to do the will of God completely, he or she is able to receive the Holy Spirit.

Jesus once warned His disciples not to cast their pearls before the swine (Matthew 7:6). God Himself follows this principle. The Lord will not give the Holy Spirit unless a person turns their back on sin, unrighteousness, carelessness, and apathy towards the Holy Spirit. Before we put milk into a container, we first make sure

that the container is empty and clean so that the milk will not be spoiled. How much more should we make sure that our life is clean and prepared for the gift of the Spirit.

The reason so few Christians have received this precious gift of the Holy Spirit is usually the fault of each person individually. They must be careful to submit all, even the little things, in obedience to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit wishes to lead, rule, and guide the individual. Therefore, all our desires must be subordinated to the leading of the Spirit and the teaching of the Word. That is the proper and worthy condition of the heart in order to receive the Holy Spirit.

If you wish to receive the Holy Spirit, then fall on your knees, not to break out into a desolate cry, but to immerse yourself in God. Become still in your heart and conscience and ask the Spirit to show you if there is anything that would hinder His coming. If the Spirit shows you something you still need to rectify or subordinate to God’s will, then be willing to do it. Give up your selfish ambitions and humbly submit your whole being to His rule and leading. He will then count you worthy to make your heart His home.

Have you been filled with the Holy Spirit? Can He really lead you, guide you, and instruct you? Do you listen to His voice in all things in order to follow Him? Do you do what He asks you to do? Do you speak when He wants you to speak, and do you hold your peace when you should not speak? What a wonderful life is that life which is totally sanctified and fully submitted to God.

R. Girke

# The Relationship Between God and Man

**G**od and human souls are to be inseparable. Man, who lives in sin and is separated from God, always longs to return to his natural source of life. Through salvation which Jesus accomplished, the opportunity is given to reestablish an intimate relationship with God. Our human concepts and perceptions are far too limited and weak to give us an idea of the blessedness of this mutual relationship that awaits us in eternal glory. Eternity will reveal everything to us and will greatly exceed our expectations.

We want to consider what kind of an intimate relationship God and humanity can have while still on earth. This wonderful relationship is shown most clearly by mutual love.

Love has its origins in God. It is illustrated in the Song of Solomon 8:6-7 as a flame and fire. This flame is a good symbol of the nature of godly love. The flame consumes the object it emanates from in order to generate the energy needed to spread to other objects and to envelop them with itself. Godly love, which burns in a person's heart, wants to spread itself to fellow humanity and then onto others until its fire fills the whole world.

Christ says: "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" (Luke 12:49). Godly love prompted our Lord Jesus to offer Himself as a sacrifice in order to reach people and to infuse them with His nature.

When objects are ignited by fire, they produce this same consuming power with which they, in turn, seek to

ignite other objects. One flame joins another, and it continually spreads and does not stop until all flammables have been ignited and burnt to ashes.

Similarly, children of God who have been ignited by the love of Christ strive to return this same love to their Lord and offer themselves for Him and His work, as He once gave Himself as a living sacrifice for all. Christ's love drove Him to the cross for us! Look at the many thousands of martyrs! Did they not strive to equal Christ's abundant love and return the same burning love toward Him?

A mutual trust also comes from such mutual love. Queen Esther found so much grace in the eyes of Ahasuerus that he promised her half of his kingdom. But God wants to give His children, who found grace before Him, infinitely more! He has guaranteed not half, no, but the entire kingdom to them. Jesus says: "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

This kingdom is not earthly but heavenly and spiritual. It consists of justice, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. The kingdom of God is established in every heart in which these characteristics can be found. Every new soul, into which this heavenly nature is transplanted, expands the borders of this heavenly kingdom.

God sees the love of His children toward Him, and entrusts them with the most valuable riches of His kingdom, so that He can place the most precious jewels of His blood-bought possessions into their hands. But only he

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## Announcements

*Special Services in Swartz Creek, MI  
September 1-2, 2018*

*Edmonton Fest  
October 6 -8, 2018*

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whose heart and hands have been purified is worthy to call these precious riches his own. God never gives them to those unworthy. He is the One who tests humanity, the One who sees deep into the most hidden places of the heart. Only when we submit ourselves to the will of the Father in true humility and sincerity are we worthy to be a part of the church of God.

All who find the well-being of the kingdom of God to be so important that they are burdened in their souls can be assured that God looks down on them with favor. Whether He gives you special gifts, or even makes you a servant of His Word, must be left to Him. He knows what is useful and will lead to spiritual growth for each individual. Certain spiritual gifts are dependent on the possession of natural abilities. Seeking after God's glory and possessing a pure heart are essential requirements in order to receive spiritual gifts.

We also need to keep in mind that it is not only pastors who have special duties. No, every single person in the kingdom of God has a duty to fulfill. God directs each person to his or her position that they are to take up. While some are chosen to be shepherds, pastors, others distribute literature, as others go and visit the sick in their free time, comfort the sad, and bring new hope to those who are despairing. Others can serve the Lord with small gifts that further the kingdom of God's earthly affairs and advance the work. Some can pray and ask for God's blessings on all activities. When all do their part and serve the Lord with the gifts and resources He has

given and help to build His kingdom, the Lord will look down with favor.

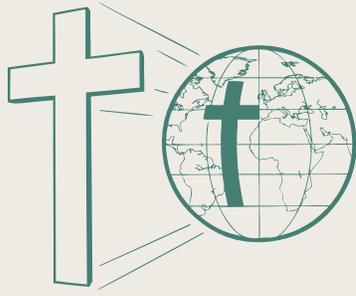
When a soul has found peace through the blood of the Lamb, both God and that individual feel deep joy. If one victoriously withstood a difficult test with God's help, both God and that person rejoice. When a child can trust His heavenly Father, and vice versa, both rejoice. Also, work for one another, mutual loyalty and love, and hope that we will one day see Him face-to-face, results in great joy for both parties.

God Himself is the source of all joy. Isaiah says in chapter 12 verse 3: "Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." And Nehemiah agrees: "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10).

You souls who are sad, discouraged, and without joy, press deeper in this mutual relationship with your God, and you will find as His Word promises: "fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11). And in Psalm 118:15, we read: "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous."

Shortly before Jesus ascended to His Father, He said: "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11). And when He comes again, surrounded by His glory, He will call to His faithful servants: "Enter into the joy of your lord" (Matthew 25:21). As the Apostle Peter writes in 1 Peter 1:8, this joy will be "inexpressible and full of glory."

W. Maxin



# Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs, Kitchener (ON)

## The Necessity of the Holy Spirit

*Sadly many people don't know what to do with the Holy Spirit. Many Christians don't see the value of sanctification. They think it is something for pastors and missionaries but not for them. But every child of God needs the fullness of the Holy Spirit.*

**A**lthough there are many impure spirits in this world, there is only one Holy Spirit. The great necessity and importance of this Holy Spirit is most clearly seen in His attributes and effectiveness.

He is God's representative here on earth. His nature and work are equal to that of the Father and the Son. This fact can clearly be seen in Hebrews 9:14: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Here He is called "the eternal Spirit." This proves His co-existence with the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ, from eternity on. This unity, or Trinity, can never be separated because each of these three persons remain equal in their nature and work and together form the one and eternal deity.

It is remarkable that the Bible depicts the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of grace, prayer, truth, strength, faith, freedom, love, justice, wisdom, and light, and not least of all the Spirit of life. Because of these many-sided qualities, His necessity and effectiveness are clearly recognized and understood. Being this kind of a Spirit, He can work against the dark elements and seek to create divine and God-pleasing relationships among us humans.

As a Spirit of faith, He works against unbelief. As the Spirit of righteousness, He works against injustice. As the Spirit of light, He works against the darkness. As a Spirit of love, He counteracts feuds and lovelessness, etc. It is so important to have the irreplaceable action of this Spirit in the Church and in our personal lives.

In John 14:26, Jesus mentions three other significant activities of the Spirit which are of great benefit to every follower of Jesus and to the Church. He says: "But the Helper [Comforter], 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." Yes, the Comforter will comfort you. Without the Holy Spirit, there can be no God-pleasing Christian life. Also, what the Holy Spirit wants to accomplish in our personal lives is why God's will is to have His children filled with the Holy Spirit. This experience is very necessary in the lives of His children.

For example, no one will be able to love the Lord Jesus above all else, in all circumstances of life, without the fullness of the Holy Spirit. We won't manage to put the kingdom of God first at all times and seek His righteousness. The zealous life for God, which begins with rebirth, will soon lose its attractiveness without the power of the Holy Spirit. Serving God will become powerless, irrele-



vant, secondary, ineffective, and fruitless. Church attendance will become a habit rather than a sacred duty and joy. Without the Holy Spirit, we will lose that inner thirst for God and the childlike need for fellowship and communion with Him. Our love for our Lord and His Word will grow cold.

Only through the Holy Spirit can we maintain a vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ. Where this Spirit of life is missing, our soul cannot be revitalized, strengthened, or consoled. Inwardly, we will become dull, tired, spiritless, less diligent, and broken, and the certainty of salvation will fade away. Without being personally Spirit-filled, we are in danger of losing our spiritual orientation. And that clear and joyful anticipation of being ready to meet God becomes uncertain.

It must be emphasized that the experience of sanctification does not put us on the same level as the angels. But the Holy Spirit transfigures Jesus Christ in us and makes Him visible in our lives. Jesus Christ takes precedence in all things, and we no longer live for ourselves but for Him!

It comes to that faith of which Paul says: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). The big “self,” which causes so much trouble for ourselves and others, will disappear, and our self-will will be submerged in the will of God. Just as a brook is no longer visible when it merges into a river, so it is in the life of the sanctified; they no longer seek their will but the will of God. We then become usable in God’s hand for His purposes and will. Our priority will then be to put the kingdom of God and His righteousness first and help win souls for God’s kingdom. As Spirit-filled people, we are ready for what He wants to do with and through us. We allow ourselves to be instructed, assigned, and guided by this Spirit and experience Him as the constant Comforter by our side. He will remind us of all that Jesus said and taught, and that will become our standard of life.

We all see and know how many deadly, worldly, and ungodly things try to influence Christianity today. And precisely because of this, we should realize how necessary it is to have the Holy Spirit in our lives. Let yourself be filled with this Spirit and become a blessing!

## Why the Church Is so Precious

“LORD, I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where Your glory dwells.” (Psalm 26:8)

Have you ever considered what your life would be like if you grew up without a church and without people who had any connection to the church?

For many of us, it goes without saying that we participate in the fellowship of the church. The danger is that it can become a habit which we no longer truly appreciate.

The following question should cause us to reflect: Why do I love and treasure the church?

*I love and treasure the church because . . .*

*. . . it shows us the way of salvation. Here we recognize the way to the cross, where we can be freed from our burden of sin. Here I was able to find peace and salvation for my soul.*

*. . . many more insights into God’s Word are conveyed to us in the church.*

*. . . in the church we receive the necessary direction to stay on the right track and not miss the goal.*

*. . . we are often strengthened and encouraged by the services and messages. This gives us new strength to remain victorious over sin and temptations in everyday life.*

*. . . fellowship with fellow believers who pursue the same purpose in life also spurs us on and strengthens us.*

*. . . it gives us a certain support, security, and help in life. In times of need or sickness we can ask the church for prayer support. The earnest prayer of a church moves God’s arm. I am especially grateful for this privilege and personal experience.*

*. . . Jesus loves the church and gave Himself for Her.*

*He wants everyone to belong.*

*. . . it is the body of Christ (Colossians 1:24). Christ and the church cannot be separated. If we believe in and serve Christ, we cannot disparage the church.*

There are certainly many more points that could be added and expanded upon. Not only for the church do we desire to lay expectations. If you and I are followers of Jesus and are part of His church, let us ask: What can I as a young person contribute to the blessing and well-being of my local congregation? Every kind word, every interest in the well-being of the other, every visible and invisible act of service, every prayer and testimony, glorifying God and Jesus Christ, adds to the blessing and makes the church more precious.

What does the church mean to you in your life?

## Not Without My Bride!

At the beginning of my walk in faith, I wanted to keep Jesus and the church separate by honoring Jesus and nearly disdaining the church. In my childhood, I was effectively kept away from Jesus and knew nothing of worship, and especially not the glorious fellowship of the children of God. Due to my family background, I did not associate church with anything positive. Even after my conversion, and having attended the congregation for quite some time, a remnant of this lack of positive association remained in my heart. My relationship with Jesus was my greatest treasure, but going to church was, in my opinion, a free choice.

Only after two brothers and sisters in the Lord shared something with me was I able to grasp it and finally

stopped rebelling against the church:

1. A brother presented me with an example of a couple: Suppose a family repeatedly invites a husband over for a meal but does not want his wife there. In a healthy relationship, the man would say, “Thank you, but not without my wife.”

The church is the bride of Jesus and He gave His life for her. Would He not likewise be saddened by contempt toward her?

2. A sister demonstrated her gratitude for the church and shared her experience with me. It came from a time when her mother was seriously ill and could no longer provide the support she was accustomed to.

In this “valley of tears,” the church was like a spiritual mother who carried her on hands of prayer and held her close.

These two examples really made an impression on me and made me realize the importance of the church.

The church is the bride of Christ and a spiritual mother.

As the church of God, we can be a great help and blessing to our brothers and sisters in the Lord when we

care for them in a motherly, loving way, showing our interest in them and praying for them.

I am sincerely grateful to be able to count myself a part of the Church of God, and that this connection makes me feel at home with believers in other parts of the world as well.

Stephanie Wiefel,  
Eppingen, (DE)

## ... Notes from School (Part 8)

I was saved in my early youth and I am grateful to serve Him. One thing burdened me and it was repeatedly in my prayers over the years. The problem persisted when I went to university. I lacked the answer and strength to change. It was quite clear to me from the Word of God and from sermons that I should be a light among my fellow men and tell them about my Savior and Redeemer. But I just did not dare. I simply could not find a way to tell anyone about Jesus.

Even to my friend, whom I had met there, I did not say a word about Jesus. We talked about everyday things and about our studies—but not about Jesus. I brought the need in prayer to the Lord as I was very discouraged about it. She had been raised Catholic, but lived without religion like many a contemporary young person. One day she suddenly said, “Tell me Patricia, I like being with you. You radiate such peace that it is really nice to be with you. What do you have that others do not have?” And suddenly the door was open. I could tell her what God had given me, how I can live with Him and what He means to me.

Now I understood that our wordless testimony speaks much louder than a spoken testimony that lacks the works. People read our lives and see and observe our choices, and our Christian behavior when we run into problems. When they ask, doors and hearts are opened to share the good news.

Patricia J. Günter

### VERSE OF THE MONTH

*“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”*

*Proverbs 25:11*

*Serving an absolutely perfect, clean and shiny apple on a silver platter speaks of esteem, respect, and care towards the person to whom it is offered. In exactly the same way, our words should be careful, thoughtful, respectful, and pure towards those we have conversations with.*

*How easily can thoughtless, untrue, disrespectful, unkind, and unhelpful words be spoken. They are like feathers scattered in the wind and can never be gathered up again. This can often have bitter consequences. A quote from Matthias Claudius states, “Say not always what you know, but always know what you say.”*

*With our words, let us figuratively serve golden apples on silver platters.*

## Childlike Faith

*A mother lay dying. The sickroom was only dimly lit. Next to the bed stood the crying husband and his nine year old daughter. "There is no more hope. Her strength is quickly fading", said the doctor.*

*"Father, will you not pray?" asked the child in an anxious whisper. "Ask the Lord Jesus to keep mother alive."—She begged in vain. Fear kept the father's mouth closed. How could he pray in the presence of an unbelieving doctor? The little girl, having no knowledge of the doctor's views, turned to him with this desperate plea, "Doctor, please pray for my mother." His only answer was a derisive smirk. The doctor angrily turned around in order to avoid the girl's pleading gaze.*

*In despair, the child sank to her knees. With her eyes closed and her hands folded, she knelt at the bed of her dying mother and prayed in a quiet, but clearly audible voice, "Please, Lord Jesus, the doctor says that mother will die. Will you not make her well for father, for me, and my younger siblings? Dear Lord Jesus, what would we do without our mother? Who would teach us, who would lead us to you?"*

*Here the child paused for a moment, and as if remembering what her mother had taught her, moved her thoughts in a different direction. "Mother says," she continued, "that You know best what is good for us. Maybe it is Your will that our mother not die, for Your name's sake. Amen."—A deep silence filled the room. Maria remained on her knees with her eyes closed and her hands folded.*

*The doctor impatiently broke the silence, "For God's sake, take the child out! She has lost her mind!" Maria heard these words. She opened her eyes, the only change in her position, and stated humbly, but at the same time with a touch of reproach, "I have not lost my mind, doctor. I am waiting for the answer."—And the answer came.*

*The mother said later, "That evening, I heard everything going on around me. I felt my strength fading. But as my daughter prayed, a change occurred in me. I felt my strength returning and prayed silently, 'Lord if it is Your will, let me live.' So the Lord answered the prayer of my child. From that moment on, I gained strength and hope revived me. I was saved."*



CHILDREN'S CORNER

## *More Valuable Than a Clock*

Sanah had been rescued from heathen cruelties and taken to the Children's Home at the mission station. Here he was treated kindly by the missionary who was "Mother" to the children.

Soon Sanah was loved by everyone. Mother made him her "trustee." His duties were to sweep and clean around the mission, and to run errands for the missionary. Each morning he went into her office, before she arrived, to clean the room.

One morning while performing this work, a terrible thing happened. Sanah knocked Mother's pretty clock off the desk and broke the crystal into many pieces.

What should he do? His first thought was to run away and return to his people. But he did not want to do that. Then he thought he might pretend that the cat broke the glass, and act as though he knew nothing about it. But how could he act a lie, when he knew it would grieve the Lord Jesus so? Sanah knew that God's Word says, "Have regard for good things in the sight of all men" (Romans 12:17b).

Two miserable days passed. Sanah could think of nothing but the broken clock on the floor. The temptation was strong to lay the blame on the cat.

At last he decided to ask the man who kept the gate what to do. He felt sure he would know. "Tell her the cat

knocked the clock off the desk," the man told him, "and I will say it's a fact, and that I saw the cat jump through the window."

"Oh no," cried Sanah. "That is just the thing I have been trying not to do! I will tell her the truth, and then I will go back into the world again, for she will be very angry with me."

He entered the office. Mother was at her desk reading God's Word when he came in. He told her just what happened, then began to cry. Quickly he turned to leave, so he would not see the angry look on her face.

"Sanah, my son, wait," she said kindly. "Let us talk about this." To Sanah's surprise Mother did not seem a bit angry. She offered him a nice seat, and gave him some candy from her desk. His fears left.

"Sanah," she began, "the truth is worth more to me than any clock in all the world. I love you because you have told the truth, and you have also pleased the Lord Jesus. The crystal of the clock can be replaced, but had you told a lie your soul would have been marred. Always tell the truth. Now, please take this clock to the jeweller and have a new crystal put on."

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The Beautiful Way

# Assurance of Salvation

**A**s a young man, Dr. Leseur met with forest service officer Von Rothkirch, who asked him in his fresh manner: “Do you have a living Savior?” Somewhat embarrassed, the young man answered: “I think so, I hope so!” “Now young man,” replied Rothkirch, “if I ask you, ‘Do you have a Sunday suit at home?’ then you wouldn’t answer ‘I think so, I hope so,’ but rather ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ Something like that you ought to know.” These thoughts caused the young student to feel uneasy until he obtained the assurance that “Jesus is my Savior!”

Often when I ask the question, “Do you know if you are saved?” I receive the answer, “I hope so!” If this is your answer as well, than let me lovingly tell you: Examine and change your life. People who have a Savior don’t say “I hope so,” rather they know:

*Now I am bound to You, Lord,  
Now I am Yours, and You are mine.  
I have found You, my Salvation,  
So it shall be now and for all time.  
I am reconciled with my God,  
and crowned with His grace sublime!*

To profess this is more than just hope, it is blessed assurance. We aren’t proclaiming some new doctrine by saying: “You will only be saved if you are sure of your salvation.” But we know that there are children of God who live God-fearing lives, yet don’t seem to have this assurance. In this kind of spiritual life, true joy is constantly lacking.

In all facets of life we seek to have certainty. When we have major pain in our bodies, we call for the doctor. We desire to have reassurance about our health. In business situations we also want to have assurance. When we apply for a job, we ask: “How much will I make?” People wish to have assurance in all aspects of life.

But when it comes to spiritual things, many people are indifferent and content to say “I think” or “I hope.” They consider anyone who says they know their sins are forgiven to be arrogant. If a child of God tells others that he is certain of his salvation, he is ridiculed and labeled a brag-

gart. Then they say: “No one can know that for sure; it is just a false fantasy. If someone achieves salvation, it will first be revealed on the other side of death and the grave.”

Would you say that a drowning person who holds tightly to a solid rock is being proud or boastful? Certainly not! But, instead you would say: “He did the right thing! It’s good that he reached for the rock.” The same applies to people generally. We are like the drowning person. We are pulled down in the floods of sin and rushing towards eternal destruction. But praise be to the Lord, we can escape ruin. For there is a way to be rescued. Blessed are those souls who cling to One who is their only help and Savior in their time of fear and need.

Do you know this Savior? He is the Lord Jesus Christ. You can come to Him with this prayer:

*Since I have nothing to bring,  
I cling to Your cross alone,  
Naked and bare—o, please cover me!  
Helpless and lost—o please save me!  
Unclean as I am, Lord, I flee to You;  
Cleanse me, Jesus, by Your blood!*

You see, if your heart is right with God, you can and must have assurance of salvation. There may be some who go through death’s door with fear and trembling and will still be saved, because they have clung to the Lord, but a life of faith without assurance is an unhealthy life. The normal life of God’s children is grounded upon the certainty of having salvation. Assurance of salvation is the crown of our faith. Do you possess this assurance?

## **The Bible Speaks of Assurance of Salvation**

Like a scarlet thread, this concept of salvation is interwoven throughout the Holy Scriptures. The keynote of its testimony is the assurance of salvation. Repeatedly, we read verses that confirm this assurance. Since there would be too many to cite them all, we will examine just a few.

**Job** was a man who had firm certainty of his faith. He testified: “For I know that my Redeemer lives” (Job 19:25). Can you also say this? Are you certain that your sins are forgiven?



**The prophet Isaiah** called out: “Behold, God is my salvation” (Isaiah 12:2).

**David**, who had fallen deep into sin, experienced being pulled out of the pit of destruction. With joy he professed: “You forgave the iniquity of my sin” (Psalm 32:5).

The **Apostle Paul** triumphantly wrote of the certainty of this assurance. He said: “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39).

**John** proclaimed as one who rested in the arms of Jesus: “We know that we have passed from death to life” (1 John 3:14a).

**Peter** testified: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3). “For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25).

The **Lord Jesus** says: “Rejoice because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20b). I could list one passage after another to prove that the Bible speaks of assurance of salvation. Based on these passages we can joyfully proclaim with certainty: “My name is written in heaven and I am a child of God!”

In addition to the Bible, a host of poets and songwriters spoke of this blessed assurance. They lived with certainty of their salvation and call to us: “There is an assur-

ance of forgiveness of our sins!” They strum their harps, and the heartstrings of God’s children respond.

The writer Ernst Moritz Arndt wrote: “I know what I believe. I know what remains secure when everything else here vanishes in sand and dust.”

Hiller wrote about his assurance in the words of this song: “Mercy was shown to me, mercy undeserved; I count it as glorious, that which my proud heart had never sought. Now I know it and do rejoice and praise His mercy.”

Rothe chimes in: “I have found the foundation that holds my anchor eternal: Where else but in Jesus’ wounds? There it lay before time began, this unshakable foundation which stands secure though heaven and earth pass away!”

Finally, Zinzendorf says: “Christ’s blood and righteousness, these are my jewels and robe so white, with which I’ll enter heaven’s gate and stand in God’s pure light.”

In like manner, we could list song after song, in which the writers expressed their assurance of faith. This certainty, which is a clear teaching of the Bible and of which songwriters of the past and present sing, must also become the keynote of your life. Don’t be satisfied with an uncertain hope. No, indeed no! You can have more. You must have assurance here on earth; a living hope amidst a hopeless generation. If you cannot say with Job: “I know that my Redeemer lives,” then reach out your hands and do not rest until you can say with all your heart:

*As sure as the sun shines in heaven,  
so sure have I, a lost sinner, been forgiven.*

Heinrich Mueller



# The Lord's Prayer

by Gerhard Mielke - Part 17: Forever

The second last word in the Lord's prayer is "forever." In English, the word forever means without end. The kingdom of God and the power of God and the glory of God are forever because God is eternal. In the Psalms we read: "Your years will have no end" (Psalm 102:28), and again "even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (Psalm 90:2).

## **A Long Time**

When the Bible uses the word forever, it may mean unending, but it certainly does not always mean unending. It may refer to a long time, as in Daniel 6:21, where "Daniel said to the king, 'O king, live forever!'" Also in Ecclesiastes we read: "One generation passes away, and another generation comes; but the earth abides forever" (Ecclesiastes 1:4). It is true that the earth remains unlike human generations that are constantly passing away and being replaced by others. Nevertheless, it is not imperative that this earth that is always remaining will not one day also cease to be.

We know that the earth is not everlasting, however the Word of God is, because Jesus says: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

## **The eternal gospel**

Jesus came to preach the good news of the kingdom of God. This gospel is still proclaimed today and

is everlasting. We read: "Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6). It is the covenant that Jesus provided for us through His sacrificial death and resurrection that is everlasting. This is confirmed in Hebrews 13:20-21, which states: "Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you complete."

The Lord's Prayer teaches us that the glory of the Lord is forever. This glory was revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Christ is the Word that was with God and was God (John 1:1). "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). He gives us eternal life.

Perhaps the best known verse in the New Testament is: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). We are invited to share God's everlasting glory. Referring to Himself as the Bread of Life, Jesus said to His listeners: "This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever" (John 6:58). If we confess our sins and turn from unrighteousness,



teousness, Christ will grant us eternal life (1 John 1:9), but rejecting Christ also has eternal consequences. Speaking of the Last Judgment, Jesus said of the unjust: “And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matthew 25:46).

### **God is eternal**

Since God is eternal, so are His attributes. His mercy, righteousness, and truth are eternal. The Bible says: “the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children’s children” (Psalm 103:17). In 2 Chronicles 7:3, we read that the people worshiped the Lord saying “For He is good, for His mercy endures forever.” And Psalm 117:2 declares: “For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the LORD endures forever.”

It is almost impossible for our finite minds to comprehend endlessness. To illustrate this, someone used the following picture: Suppose there is a huge mountain, and suppose once every 1000 years a bird comes and flies up to the mountain and takes away a grain of earth from that mountain. How long would it take for that mountain to disappear? And when it finally disappears, only the first second of eternity will have passed!

We have seen that eternal can refer to a very long period of time. It can also be in reference to some-

thing that never ends and lasts forever. The word eternity expresses timelessness. Often it is used in reference to heaven. In fact when Christians speak of eternity, they often speak of heaven.

### **Heaven**

Heaven is called our eternal home. The things of this world will pass away, but we have an everlasting hope, an abode prepared for us with the Eternal Father. Paul says: “we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 4:15 - 5:1). If we believe that our life on earth is preparatory for eternity then it is absurd to spend so much time worrying about the things of this life and not paying more attention to the things that are eternal.

Since heaven and earth will pass away, but the words of Jesus will not pass away (Matthew 24:35), Peter wisely says: “therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness” (2 Peter 3:11). Let our striving be for holy conduct and godliness so that we too will be able to share in the glory of the Lord, which lasts forever.

# The Last Cool Drink

*This heartwrenching story occurred many years ago. Many changes have occurred in the world since then; people have come and gone. However, the relationship between man and God remains unchanged. Unlike fashions, the simple and clear way to salvation has not changed, but is eternally true. Even today, the Holy Spirit still works compassionately on the hearts of sinners. Will man accept this invitation, open his heart to God in repentance, and receive salvation? Everyone must personally arrive at this decision, even you.*

A beautiful, intelligent young lady went to a tent meeting where the power of God was present. Sinners were being saved and saints being edified. The Spirit of God brought conviction to this young woman and tears began to flow down her cheeks. She wiped them away with her handkerchief.

Her father, a wealthy farmer, stood on the outside with others. He looked across the tent and saw his daughter weeping. He remarked to a friend: "If my daughter goes to the front I will wade blood to my neck to take her out of there." But a young man was standing by her side and she did not go that night. The father got into his auto and drove home, and the young man took the young lady home in the buggy. When she got inside she saw him—a big, 240 pound father—walking the floor, and she knew that something was wrong. She said, "Papa, what is the matter with you? Why are you not in bed?" He answered, "I have stayed up to give you your orders." She asked, "Papa, what in the world have I done?" He replied, "I looked across that tent tonight and I saw you weeping, saw you have your handkerchief up to your eyes. Marie, if you go to that front altar, I will wade through blood to my neck to take you out of there; and when I get you home, I will wear out a hickory over your back."

He put it down so strong that she knew he meant what he said. She began to weep and went to her room, and there in the darkness she settled it that she would not go with God. She closed her fists and said: "Oh, God, I will never seek Thee! Take this feeling away from me! Oh, God, lighten my heart! I do not want to feel this way. I will never seek Thee! Take this burden away from my heart!" God heard her prayer. The Holy Spirit left her, and her conviction was gone. She went to bed and went to sleep. Because you can go to bed and go to sleep, do not think you are saved. Many people go to bed and go to sleep to whom God will never speak again.

The next morning this young lady got up and went to school, came back, and went to the service that night. Her father stood in the same place as the night before, and kept his eye upon her. He saw her standing with a young man, laughing. He took his neighbor by the arm and said, "Look at my daughter. I conquered her last night before I went to bed. She will never go." So this girl laughed and giggled while other folks wept and got saved.

But listen! The meeting closed on Sunday night, and settled the destiny of dying men and women. The tents were taken down, and the preachers left the grounds. On Monday morning this girl went to school as usual, and went all that week. The next Monday morning, as she started, she said, "Mamma, my head is hurting me." The mother said, "Marie, go on to school," and Marie went, but returned in two or three hours and said, "Mamma, my head is hurting me so that I couldn't stay." She went to her room and went to bed. She had been in bed three days, when, on Thursday afternoon, she sent for her mother to come up, and said, "Mamma, I am sure that you and papa do not know my condition, and I want you to send for a doctor. I am in an awful condition and I am going to die." The mother was excited, and said, "I will, I will!"

She had the family physician come, and he felt her pulse and took her temperature. He touched the big, strong father on the shoulder and asked him to come outside to the automobile. He loved the family. They had been kind to him. He said, "You have been true to me, and I must be true to you. You have called me too late. Your daughter will soon be in eternity, and if you have anything to tell her, tell her at once. It is no use for me to tell you that I can help her, or to call for more doctors. In a few hours she will be gone." Listen! The neighbors a mile away heard that father. What do you suppose was the first thing he thought of? I know—the night that he conquered his daughter and made her settle with God. He left the automobile and came in wringing his hands.



He fell at her bedside and said, “Oh, Marie! Oh, Marie! Seek the Lord. Marie, pray! Give your heart to God! Pray, Marie, pray!” She put her hand on his face and said, “Papa, please do not taunt me with the Name of God—please do not mention His Name to me. My heart has been like a stone since the night you gave me my orders. I went to my room, and I asked God to leave me, and God took me at my word.”

Then she told him that she was conscious that her doom was sealed, and that from the beginning of her illness she knew she was going to die. She said, “Papa, what time is it?” He answered, “Four o’clock in the afternoon.” She said, “How slowly these hours are passing away! But, just think! I am going to a place where there is no time.”

They had built a new home out on the pike, and their old home stood back in the field, with the old moss-covered well and moss-covered bucket. She said, “Papa, go to the old moss-covered well and bring me a fresh drink of water, for I will soon be in a place where I can get no water.” He went and brought the water and put it to her lips, and she drank it. Her mother was praying, her unsaved brother was praying, and her two unsaved sisters were down on the floor praying. Oh, I have heard the loudest prayers from sinners praying for their loved ones, that I ever heard from anybody’s lips. I have heard louder prayers around corpses than I ever heard anywhere else.

This dying girl said, “Papa, put your hands under my arms, and pull me up in this bed. My feet are in fire. My feet are slipping.” He put his hands beneath hers, and drew her up in the bed. Again she said, “Papa, my feet are slipping. Take my feet out of the fire.” He said, “Marie, I have done all I can. Your head is against the head of the bed.” She said, “Papa, go back to the old well again, and bring your daughter another drink of water.” He went for the water, but before he got back, his beautiful daughter had gone into eternity.

Listen, friends! That father goes to town to buy hardware or groceries, and he stands over the counter like a maniac, and the merchant has to talk to him to find out what he wants. He goes to the field to plow, but he does not plow. He goes to salt the cattle, but he forgets to take the salt. When he goes to market, he stands there and does not know what he wants. Everyone who knows the story knows what is the matter with that father; they know what is on his brain.

May this be a warning to parents not to obstruct the way of their children, and keep them from this free and full salvation, that was purchased for us by Jesus Christ on the cruel Cross of Calvary, which fits and prepares us for Heaven and the Glory World.

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Galatians 6:7).

## *Come, Holy Spirit*

*Descend on us, o Holy Ghost  
And make us your abode.  
O let Thy breath revive us most  
Upon the narrow road.  
O let Your church awake from sleep,  
Let us proclaim your message sweet.*

*Descend on us, o fire pure,  
That we may burn for Thee.  
Our proclamation to be sure  
Must never cease to be.  
O may pure love be once again  
In every Christian heart a flame.*

*Descend on us, o Holy Oil,  
Revive our weary souls.  
Perform Your wonders as we toil,  
Revive and make us whole.  
O pour Your flood upon our land;  
To seeking hearts salvation grant.*

*O wind of heaven, blow once more  
That spark into a flame.  
Your oil upon the burning pour  
The fire to maintain,  
Till every knee upon this sod  
Shall bow before the Son of God.*

*August Rücker*