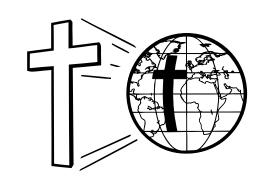
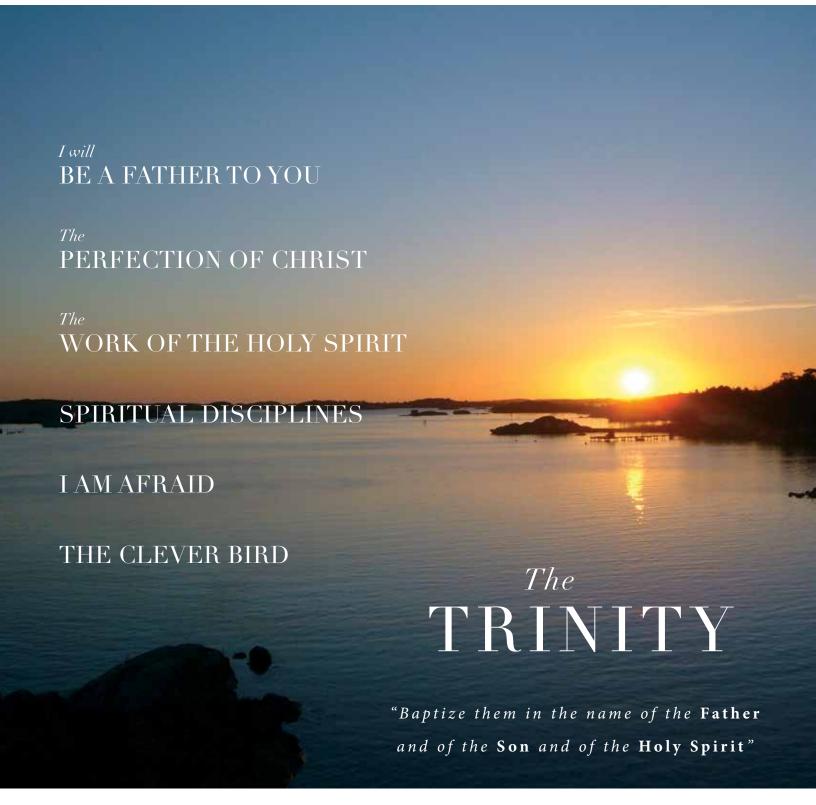
Foundation of Faith





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FOUNDATION OF FAITH

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Editorial

Dear Reader,

How wonderful is God's Word! How precious and deep are the wisdom and thoughts therein! What abundance and what great and magnificent secrets the Lord reveals to us in the Holy Scriptures!

This morning I read the first chapter of the gospel of Mark, how Jesus left Galilee and came to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist, and I was greatly struck by the concept of the Trinity, the divine, triune God: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was baptized and stepped out of the water. Then the heavens opened and the Spirit of God came and hovered over Him in the form of a dove. At the same time, a voice from Heaven said, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11). The Heavenly Father reveals Himself, and expresses His joy and delight in His Son. And the third person of the Divine Trinity gives testimony of the Messiah, the Lord of all mankind.

Yes, it is a marvelous, divine mystery that our God is the Lord, one God and yet three in one. Our human intellect is too limited, our knowledge too fragmented to understand this. But one day we will see Him and recognize Him, just as He knows us.

In faith we have already witnessed and experienced God at work here on earth. The voice of God's Spirit, His admonition, His illumination, and how He draws us toward the Savior. I have often prayed, "Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness" (Psalm 143:10).

Dear reader, we have an amazing God! The apostle Paul expresses the Divine Trinity with the clear observation, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen" (2 Corinthians 13:14).

H.D. Nimz

THE TRINITY

Who is Jesus?

The open area in front of the post office in a small village was usually a gathering place for all sorts of idle people who liked to chat there. The air in the area was usually filled with tobacco smoke. It was not unusual to hear swear words.

One day a young man, Al Woodward, entered the post office. He was completely different from most of the people who hung out there, and everyone knew he was a Christian. When the people saw him, they were typically more careful how they spoke and acted. And although Al had difficulty breathing in the tobacco-filled air, he usually didn't say much. But if he heard that the name of God or the Lord Jesus were being misused, he was unable to keep silent.

On this particular day, just as Al had picked up his mail, another young man entered with a big basket full of bread that he was to deliver from a little store affiliated with the post office.

Al had never seen this young man before and the other man also did not know who stood before him. He seemed to be a decent guy. But, as soon as he opened his mouth he revealed that he was in the habit of misusing the name of the Lord Jesus. Whether he spoke about the bread, the weather, or other things, he repeatedly misused the Lord's name.

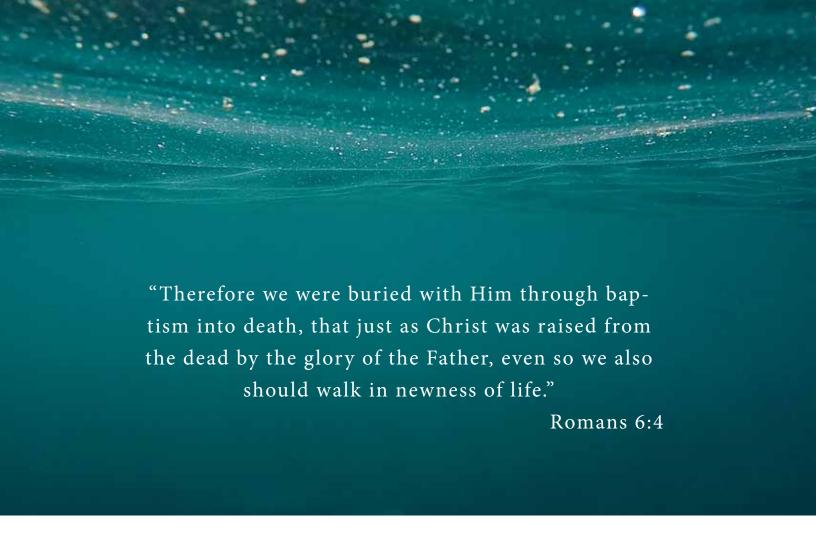
Al Woodword said nothing until the man tried to leave. Then he stood unobtrusively in the entrance, so that the young man had trouble getting past with his large empty basket. Al struck up a conversation with him.

"Who is this person that you keep on mentioning?" he asked the young man. For a moment he seemed to be baffled. Then he found his words again and said: "The person that I keep talking about? What do you mean?"—"I mean: Who is this Jesus whose name you brought up so many times? You mentioned Jesus Christ. Is he a close friend or an acquaintance of yours?"

Now the young man was even more astonished and bewildered. "What," he said, "You don't know who this Jesus is? Have you never heard about him?" He seemed to think that he had a clueless heathen before him. He was certain that Al Woodward was dead serious when he asked who Jesus Christ actually was. He was silent for a long time.

Woodward picked up the conversation again and said: "Indeed I have already heard about Him. But, who is He actually, this Jesus?"

"Well, if you don't know Him," the young man said in a condescending tone of voice. He kept silent and



seemed to find no more words. But Woodward continued: "So He is just someone that you've heard about? I'm sorry that I bothered you."

Now the other man was baffled again. "You really don't know who Jesus Christ is?" he asked in a completely different and rather serious tone of voice. But he kept silent when he saw the penetrating gaze of Woodward resting on him. Al was the one who broke the silence again: "You must excuse me. My thoughts were as follows: 'I believe in Jesus Christ as the one and only Son of God who came down from heaven to this earth. He became a man for our sake in order to save us from our sins"—"Yes, yes, that is the One I mean," stated the young man.

"So you do know about the One of whom you spoke so thoughtlessly and whose name you misused. This Jesus not only died for us on the cross of Calvary, He also rose from the dead and returned to heaven where He now sits at the right hand of God, the Father. He is our Savior, and our Mediator with the Father. But one day He will return in order to judge all people. We too will stand before His judgment seat. What surprises me is how easily you can misuse His holy name. Are you not at all afraid to sin against God in this way? He said

that He will not allow someone who misuses His name to go unpunished. Should you not fall on your knees before Him and ask for grace and forgiveness? God is ready and willing to forgive you for Christ's sake. Jesus Christ also bore your debt and sin on the cross. He can and will set you free from your burden and debt of sin. Yes, He can free you from the bondage of sin and Satan, so that you can serve God and find true joy in salvation through Christ."

The young man stood there utterly shaken and downcast. His eyes looked to the ground in defeat. "I believe you are right," he stated. "I have never thought of that before."

God had begun to speak to him. He took his basket and went to the car. Woodward however, stood and sent up a prayer to God on his behalf, that he might receive eternal life.

And you, my dear reader, do you personally know the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Are you saved from your sins? And if you rejoice in your salvation, what are you doing in order to help save others? Do you make use of the opportunities you are given to be a witness for Jesus? Let's ask the Lord for wisdom to be effective witnesses.

THE TRINITY

The Trinity

According to the doctrine of the Trinity, we understand that the Divinity has three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—one God in three Persons.

Although the actual word "Trinity" is never found in the Bible, the description of the Trinity is a main concept in the Bible, and so this expression is simply the theological reference to the three-fold characteristics of God, as revealed in God's Word.

Nature's Testimony

God gave us a threefold revelation of Himself; that is through nature, through His Word, and through Jesus Christ. And there exists a wonderful harmony in the demonstration of these three revelations. David studied the starry heavens with wonder and called out, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psalm 19:2).

In his book, "The Secret of the Universe," the author Nathan R. Wood illustrates the threefold unity found in nature. First he studied spatial matter. He pointed out that space is comprised of three dimensions: length, width, and height. Every item has these three dimensions, and we could not discern them without these dimensions. You can give the width and length of a house, but you do not really have anything until you also give the height. Similarly length and height are insufficient to refer to any item without also adding the width. All three dimensions are necessary to identify the whole.

Time's Testimony

Let us now turn our attention to time. It is comprised of the past, present, and future. The source of time lies in the past, and it flows through the present and into the future. There was a time when today was still far in the future. Little by little, time was shortened to months, weeks, until finally it became today. Today will soon however become yesterday, and so on. There will never be a time where all three—past, present, and future—exist in the same moment. And yet we have this threefold division. Similarly, God continuously reveals Himself through His Son, and the Son is recognized by our spiritual nature through the Holy Spirit. The past, present, and future make up our time; just as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit make up the Trinity.

Matter's Testimony

Let us now briefly study what we experience through our five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Through them, information is identified as energy, movement, and manifestation. Energy is the source of movement, and the combined result shows itself in the manifestation. Energy cannot exist without action or movement, which then brings about a manifestation. All three together make up matter. One cannot exist without the other, and yet they are unique.

In John 1:18, we read, "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." So the Father, Whom no one can see, will be near to us through the revelation of the Son and our understanding through the Holy Spirit.

The Word's Testimony

The apostle John began his gospel with the profound words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). How could the Word be God and be with God

at the same time? The root of "word," or in Greek "logos," means "the embodiment of a thought." The spirit of mankind is the source of thought, but no one can see what is being thought. Through our words, we express our thoughts, and so our words embody our thoughts. Thoughts and the words to make them known both exist in the same spirit, and yet they are not one and the same. John used this accurate comparison to illustrate the relationship between God the Father to God the Son. Just as the thoughts of the spirit cannot be realized unless they are expressed by words, so God the Father, the source of all truth, cannot be realized outside of the revelation of Jesus Christ. When John said, "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14), he was referring to Christ becoming a Man. God came in the flesh and lived among the people in human form. Just as our words embody our thoughts, so God embodied Himself in human form, in the Person of His Son, so that we might realize God through Him.

Let us review once more the Trinity's unity with a spatial comparison. Length, width, and height do not make up three separate items. We do not count them as three, but rather as one complete item. So the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit make up one Divinity in three Persons. God is the Father because He is the divine Source of His son, just as the physical sun is the source of its own light. They are one, just as body, spirit, and soul make up one person instead of three.

The divine Trinity is a divine secret, but God's Word attests to it, and we can accept and testify of it in firm faith.

H. C. Heffren



Father, Son and Holy Spirit

The theological term "Trinity" signifies the union of three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—in the Godhead. This subject was a most fruitful source of theological controversy in past ages, and even at the present day there are professed Christians who deny the triune nature of God. Our present limits preclude an extended discussion of the matter, but I will bring forward a few points favorable to the doctrine of the Trinity.

Since the exact manner of existence in the Godhead manifestly lies above and beyond the range of mortal mind, the basis of our theology respecting God should be laid solely in what is revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures. And if we appeal directly to them, we find it is impossible to avoid the doctrine of the Trinity without doing great violence to scores of plain texts bearing on the subject. The course of argument is as follows:

- 1. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are represented as special Persons distinct from each other.
- 2. They are classed together, separate from all other beings.
- 3. Divine titles are applied to each.
- 4. Divine attributes are ascribed to each.
- 5. Divine works are attributed to each. Yet there is only one God.

The Father

The word "Father," referring to the Godhead, is used in Scripture in a twofold sense. First, it is applied to God without any personal distinctions. "You are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation" (Psalm 89:26). (See also John 4:21,23; and other texts.) Second, it is applied to God in contrast with Christ, who is thus distinguished as Son in His office of Redeemer. "All things have

been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father" (Matthew 11:27). "Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working" (John 5:17). (See also Acts 2:32–33; Romans 15:6; Galatians 1:1–4; and numerous other texts.)

The Son

The passages already cited show that Christ is a person distinct from the Father. The following facts prove scripturally that the Son is divine—equal with the Father Himself:

- 1. Divine titles are applied to Him the same as to the Father. "To the Son He says: Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom" (Hebrews 1:8). "Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). "Immanuel" (Matt. hew 1:23). (See also Acts 20:28; John 20:28; Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 2:9; Titus 1:3; 1 John 5:20; Revelation 17:14; and other texts.)
- 2. Divine attributes are ascribed to Him: The following attributes of God the Father are also ascribed to Jesus Christ:
- a) Pre-existence, or eternity. "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58). "The second Man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Corinthians 15:47). "That which was from the beginning" (1 John 1:1). (See also Philippians 2:6-7; John 17:5; Micah 5:2.) Likewise, in the Revelation Christ is represented by that symbolic title signifying eternity, "Alpha and Omega" (Revelation 22:13). Therefore the statement that Christ is the Son of God doubtless refers specifically to His miraculous virgin birth, thus denoting God's special relation to Him in His office work as the world's Redeemer.

- b) Omnipotence. "The government will be upon His shoulder" (Isaiah 9:6). "Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). (See also John 10:17-18; 11:25; Philippians 3:21; Hebrews 1:3; 2 Timoth 1:10.)
- c) Omnipresence. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (28:20).
- d) Omniscience. "He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man" (John 2:24-25). "Lord, You know all things" (21:17). "In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). Also, holiness, truth, justice, goodness and faithfulness are attributes of Christ.
- 3. *Divine works are ascribed to Him.* The following works are ascribed to the Son:
- a) Creation. "God . . . has in these last days spoken to us by His Son . . . through whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1-2). "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands" (vs. 10). (Also John 1:3; Colossians 1:16.)
- b) Redemption. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7).
- 4. He is pre-eminent—above all things. "He is Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). "Lord of both the dead and the living" (Romans 14:9). (See also Philippians 2:9; Colossians 1:18; 1 Peter 3:22.)
- 5. He is a proper object of devotion and worship. Though the Scriptures denounce idolatry and enjoin the worship of the one true and living God only, they set forth Christ as a proper object of devotion and worship. "Let all the angels of God worship Him" (Hebrews 1:6). "All should honor the Son just as they honor the Father" (John 5:23). "And they worshipped Him" (Luke 24:52). Saints "in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:2). "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Philippians 2:10).

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is also divine and is a distinct person from the Father and the Son. He is called the "Spirit of God" (Romans 8:9), because He "proceeds from the Father" (John 15:26); also the "Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9), because He is sent to do the work of Christ.

- 1. His deity. His deity is shown by many texts. "It is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you" (Matthew 10:20). Compare Ezekiel 36:27 with Acts 2:17-18. (See also Acts 28:25; Romans 8:14; 1 Corinthians 3:16.)
- 2. His personality. The personality of the Holy Spirit is shown by the following facts: a) He is associated with two other persons—Father and Son—as their equal. "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). b) The personal pronoun "He" is applied to Him, "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). c) Personal acts are ascribed to Him. "He will teach you all things" (John 14:26). "He will testify of Me" (15:26). (See also Acts 13:2,4.) d) Particular attributes are ascribed to Him. For example, knowledge (1 Corinthians 2:11), will (12:11), power (Romans 15:13).
- 3. *His works*. The works of the Holy Spirit are described as follows:
- a) In creation. "In the beginning God created.... And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:12). (See also Job 33:4; 26:13; Psalm 104:30.)
- b) In redemption. "Salvation through sanctification by the Spirit" (2 Thessalonians 2:13). God gave "them the Holy Spirit . . . purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8-9). "He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). (See also 1 John 3:24; Romans 8:9,14,16.)

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are classed together, separately from all other beings, as divine. "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28.19). "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians13:14). (See also Jude 20-21; 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 8:14-17; and others.)

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THE TRINITY

I will Be a Father to You

2 Corinthians 6:17–18: "I will receive you. I will be a Father to you." What a comfort and encouragement these words have been to many a weary soul!

After several days of strong temptation, I woke up one night with the words: "I will be a Father to you!" These words had previously never meant so much to me. I cannot describe what an impression they now made on me. I received the sweet assurance that I had a faithful and living Father. Oh how precious!

Dear reader, do you know who has promised to be a Father to us? It is God. Let us take a moment to seriously consider that. Think of His great power! No one else has more power than all the angels in heaven, all the evil spirits in hell and all the people on earth. And He has promised to help us when we need it. He will jealously guard you. He will cover you with His feathers (Psalm 91:4).

You may feel abandoned, but you are not forsaken, for He said: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). Our feelings often betray us, but God never will. He is faithful.

Our heavenly Father is wealthy. Many people may think they are wealthy. However, what they own actually does not belong to them. Everything we own really belongs to our heavenly Father, and He simply allows us to have it for a time.

Consider for a moment your heavenly Father's great love for you. Consider Christ dying for you. We have become so familiar with the story of Christ's suffering that for some it no longer makes an impression. However, if you would hear about it for the first time, what kind of an impression would it then make on you? If God's children would reflect more on the love it cost the Father to sacrifice His Son for us, their lives would be much more content.—Observe a child in the presence of his loving father. Observe how closely he nestles into him. Observe how content, carefree and fearless he is. He completely trusts his father.

God says: "I will be a Father to you."—Do you sometimes allow things to come between you and God so that you cannot see Him as your Father? Consider for a moment the merciful promises of your heavenly Father. Search for them in the Bible. All will be fulfilled. Who should then be discouraged and doubtful? We will indeed be tested, but God will not forsake us.

We feel sympathy when someone says: "I have no father!"—It is something precious to have a kind, loving earthly father. However, God, whose love and kindness can never be fully understood, will provide for us and protect us in every moment. He hears our softest plea, knows our every care and wants to take them from us and cover us with His feathers. What a privilege it is to have such a Father!

We find everything we need for body and soul, for today and eternity, in these words: "I will be a Father to you"!

C. E. Orr



Oh, the depth found in these words! How good and precious it is to know that there is Someone who knows us and is familiar with all our situations, afflictions, and needs. What a comfort and what peace in our hearts to know that our heavenly Father knows everything. Dear weary and heavy-laden soul, remember that your heavenly Father knows all your burdens, your pain, and your suffering, and is prepared to send you comfort and help.

We often come into times of difficulties with which we can trust no one, not even the most faithful of friends. How good and precious it is then to pour out our whole heart to God, our heavenly Father, our very best Friend.

In Psalm 11:7 we read, "His countenance beholds the upright." Your Father knows your upright life; He knows that you want to serve Him. He takes pleasure in His loyal people.

And yet He seems so far to some; their hearts are so heavy. Be comforted and not dismayed: your Father knows! He Who cares for the sparrows also cares for you, for you are worth more to Him than the sparrows. Believe and trust Him. He, your Father, assures you in Isaiah 66:13, "As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you."

"Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you" (Isaiah 49:15). How lovingly a mother stays at the bed of her sick child. She forgets her own tiredness; her heart is solely concerned with the care of her child. A mother might yet forget her child and neglect it in its suffering and misery, but your heavenly Father will not forget you. He loves you too much. Oh the unfathomable love of God—it transcends all understanding. And yet we can grasp enough that our faith can ascend beyond all difficulties that we may currently bear. We can throw all our concerns on Him, who knows all and cares for us

Is that not a glorious and blessed privilege? Praise His great and glorious Name, wherein lies comfort, peace, and rest. Storms may rage outside, but when our trust is anchored in God, our Father, He will prove Himself as a secure haven.

Lift up your head, dear soul! Your Father, Who knows all, will care for you if you trust and obey Him.

ΕP

Jesus Christ

The four Gospels give us a picture of Jesus Christ and what He has done for humanity. They show His humanness: He was tempted; He could sympathize with suffering; He embraced little children and blessed them; He withdrew to solitary places to pray.

But as we study the Gospels, we also see His divine nature. We are awed by His power to perform miracles, His power over sin, His death and subsequent triumph on the cross, and His resurrection!

The four Gospels show us different sides of Jesus so that we can better understand the magnitude and seriousness of the work that brought Jesus into the world.

The Word

John writes of Jesus: "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1). The Greek word *logos* refers to the outward expression of an idea, or to an idea itself that is made real through the power of the Holy Spirit. This part of Jesus' character teaches us that just as we can express our intentions to others through our words, Jesus is the agent of God's will and love to humanity.

The Bible connects Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, with the creation of all things. All of Jesus' earthly life bears the stamp of His divine nature. He Himself said that He is one with God. When we think about these things, we cannot help but worship Him, amazed that He sacrificed Himself in order to redeem us.

The Light

John also calls Jesus the light: "That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world" (John 1:9). Jesus is the source of all spiritual enlightenment. All light comes from this eternal light source. This light shines in the midst of all the sin and darkness to show everyone the way to salvation.

Jesus Himself says, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12). With these words, Jesus explains that the light is for everyone who is searching for the way out of darkness. The light not only shows the way for those who seek to follow Him, but it also shines into the great darkness, illuminating humanity's sinfulness and wrongdoing.

The Lamb

John the Baptist revealed Jesus Christ with the following words: "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). How important and meaningful were these words for the Jews! Since the time of Moses, lambs were offered on the altar for forgiveness of sins. The perfect lamb that was offered in the temple or tabernacle was the symbol through which the people received forgiveness of their sins from God. Every God-fearing Jew understood the significance of John's words. Repeatedly, the New Testament refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God, the Savior and Redeemer of humanity. Paul writes to Timothy: "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:5-6b).

The Master

By referring to Jesus as Lord and Master, the Bible acknowledges that He has a right to and claim on the lives and abilities of all people. He requires all people to take up their cross and follow Him. God has made individuals the doorkeepers of their own hearts, but He has sent Someone who stands at the door and asks to come in. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who asks, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20).

He invites everyone to walk in His footsteps and become His disciple. It is the Lord and Master Who has the right to give this invitation. However, it is our responsibility to accept or reject this invitation: "The Teacher has come and is calling for you" (John 11:28).

Meditate on the many titles the Bible gives to Jesus Christ: the Word, the Light, the Lamb of God, the Lord and Master! Truly, He is the Son of the living God, and He should become increasingly dear to us all.

H.L.P.

The Perfection of Christ

Should a comparison between Christ and other leading men of religion be made, it would become apparent that we Christians don't value Christ nearly enough. Without a doubt, He towers over all the "good people" of history who lived in the era before Christ. Samson was chosen by God as a judge in Israel, but his downfall was attraction to foreign women. Lot is mentioned as a righteous man of God, but in his drunken state, he brought great shame upon himself. Moses spoke to God face to face (Exodus 33:11), but God did not allow him to enter Canaan because he took a rebellious stance on one occasion. David was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), but he sinned greatly against God and through it tarnished his otherwise exemplary life. All of these men were leaders, but how pitifully they compare to Jesus of Nazareth! And just as these men did not measure up to Christ, so the law is no comparison to the gospel. The law of the Old Testament was imperfect because it was imparted by imperfect people. God is Spirit, and we must worship Him in spirit and truth.

Christ, a perfect Man

Before Christ came, there was no perfect mediator between God and people. A conscience could condemn but could not remove the source of the condemnation. The writer of Hebrews says about Jesus: "For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself" (Hebrews 7:26-27). This statement introduces us to the perfection of Christ. As the text mentions, only a perfect person could become the mediator of the new covenant. The priests of the Old Testament were imperfect, sinful, and unholy. Caiaphas and Annas in the New Testament are a good example of this, too. We do not judge them because of their moral imperfection, for we know that they served an imperfect law.

A perfect High Priest

Priests were unable, from their own strength or from the power of their position, to help a person achieve new birth. Their priestly order was not capable of taking sins away. It needed a new, holy, sin-free, and unblemished priesthood. Jesus was the only perfect high priest—a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. This means that Jesus was the first priest of a new order and that there was no priest before Him who was a model to Him. He was so unblemished that when they

wanted to kill Him, false witnesses were procured. Pilate himself had to ask the question: "What accusation do you bring against this Man?" Christ's mind was perfect. Only the truth reigned in it; superstition was barred from it. The Mosaic Law failed because it was imperfect, in particular from the standpoint of the Holy Spirit. Christ took over this position, for He was perfect—perfect in His character and purpose, perfect in His love and devotion to the truth!

Christ the perfect sacrifice

Not only was Jesus a perfect Man, but He also brought a perfect sacrifice. For hundreds of years, the Old Testament priests had offered rams, goats, and sheep as sin offerings in the temple. No one experiences new birth through this. Such offerings weren't too different from the offerings of heathens, but it was the best that God could do for unknowledgeable humans who were not at all ready to accept Christ and His gospel. Jesus is the only perfect sacrifice for sin that ever was brought. All sacrifices pointed to His sacrifice, merely being models and foreshadows of that which He would once be to humanity. Jesus brought a perfect offering for sin, one that would never need to be repeated. At the time of the Old Testament, those bringing offerings would always have to ask themselves: "Is this pleasing to God?" God was not pleased with Cain's offering. God was well-pleased with Jesus' offering, for it was perfect. He offered Himself, He who was without sin or reproach. "For such a High Priest was fitting for us" (Hebrews 7:26).

The perfect Redeemer

Jesus was not only a perfect Man and the perfect sacrifice but also the perfect Redeemer. Over the course of centuries, other people have played the role of redeemer but of significantly less importance. The judges of the Old Testament, Samson, Deborah, and Gideon, were very imperfect redeemers of their people. Moses was a greater man but still could not live up to the required standard of perfection. Jesus alone is the perfect Redeemer and perfect deliverer. The judges and the law brought an imperfect redemption. The Old Testament sacrifices indeed brought forgiveness but an imperfect redemption. Only because Jesus was a perfect Savior could He give a perfect salvation. There is no sin from which Christ cannot redeem a heart that is repentant. No guilt is so great that Jesus' blood cannot erase it. Works and repentance cannot earn redemption. It is bestowed on us by being remorseful and having faith in God.

On the search for redemption

Jamie Cifuentes decided to enter the spiritual ministry at the age of thirty. He was taught that one could receive special grace from God through bodily chastisement and unusual sacrifices. So he led a life of renunciation, prayed in a dark cell, shaved his head, fasted daily, and scourged himself every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday with a chain he made himself, until blood streamed from his body. He spent the nights on the hard, cold floor without covering himself.

He himself writes: "I thought that for this self-denial God would certainly grant me unspeakable blessings. But



the longer I persisted, the more stubborn I became. My superiors did not believe in many teachings and customs of the church. Those who were older had become idle, sinful, and self-seeking. They did not participate in the religious practices and seemed to enjoy standing on the side and wasting the rest of their lives by simply eating, sleeping, and sinning. I had no peace in my heart. My soul was empty. God's presence had vanished from me. I was not allowed to read the Bible alone. I was even assigned to gather together as many unwanted translations of the Bible as I could to be destroyed. I collected the Bibles, but instead of delivering them all to the Prior, I kept a bilingual copy of the New Testament for myself. As I read the New Testament and knelt in my cell, I found my faith in Jesus and accepted Him as my Savior. Suddenly, peace was in my heart, which I thought I could obtain by much chastisement and many offerings. I was happy, and my sins were washed away in the precious blood of Jesus."

Neither good works nor the sacrifice of rams and goats are able do that for a person. Only Christ can redeem a human heart in this manner. Once, Peter cried: "Lord, save me!" (Matthew 14:30). On the way to Damascus, Saul of Tarsus asked: "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Acts 9:6). There is only one answer to this question: Jesus Christ, who alone can save men.

We cannot avoid Christ

It will never work to avoid Christ. He is the eternal truth, which presents us with an ultimatum. Can anyone abolish the moral law that is written into the Ten Commandments? Can you dismiss these laws with a motion

of your hand so that they no longer exist? Absolutely not! The Ten Commandments are indestructible because of moral truth, which they are an expression of. A country may pass a law that legalizes gambling, but it remains as before a moral wrong. A country does not have authority to exert power over the moral law. We can repeal a ban on alcohol but cannot undo the resulting consequences of it. Similarly, we can decide not to have anything to do with Jesus, but our rejection will not remove us from the relentless power of the law of cause and effect. Regardless, we will sow what we reap. Our sins will nevertheless find us out.

God has decided that we should serve Him. He has made it possible for us. If we refuse Christ and His gospel, we strike out the only way we could obtain peace, power, and living faith. Christ is not one way but the way. He is the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Him. He is a perfect Man, the perfect High Priest, the perfect sacrifice, and the perfect Redeemer. He is in the position to deal with your troubles in a perfect way. He has comfort for your soul, forgiveness for your sins, and a task and burden for you for your fellow men. Rejecting Christ means rejecting life. To accept Him means finding eternal and overflowing life. He has no genuine rivals, for there is no one that equals Him. He calls you to forgiveness and can completely transform your life. I hope you will give Him your heart. Christ, who is perfect, is capable of accomplishing a perfect work in your heart, as long as you allow Him. Please, open your heart's door to Him now!

Dale Oldham



The Work of the Holy Spirit

Many people believe in God and Jesus but don't know about the Holy Spirit. They are like the people in Ephesus whom the apostle Paul asked if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed. They didn't even know there was a Holy Spirit, much less why God sent Him to this earth. Do you know for what purpose the Holy Spirit came?

In the Bible, the third person of the Trinity is called the Holy Spirit. It is important to note that the Holy Spirit is a person, and since He is also God, He has been there from the very beginning. He is equally eternal with God and Jesus Christ, equally almighty, all-knowing and omnipresent. Since the work of the second person of the Trinity fulfilled the great plan of salvation, the work of the third person conveyed the work of redemption in such a way that it is beneficial to mankind. Jesus says of the Holy Spirit in John 16:8-9: "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me Can there be a greater sin than not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ who came into the world to accomplish the great work of salvation? The Holy Spirit will convict and convince the world that this great gift of salvation was accomplished at Calvary and that Jesus Christ is indeed the Savior of the world. But is it possible in every case for the Holy Spirit to convince people of this fact? Does it not often happen today as in the days of Noah? God said: "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh" (Genesis 6:3). Oh, that people would pay more attention to the faithful Shepherd of their souls!

The Holy Spirit is the One who convicts people of sin. There are many who say that sin does not exist. The Holy Spirit will try to teach them differently. If the Holy Spirit is able to awaken a person's conscience, then he will quickly realize that he is lost and unrighteous before God.

The Holy Spirit will give the opportunity for repentance so that a person can seek the face of God and find peace for his poor, restless soul. He will recognize that he has deeply offended and saddened God, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, he can make the decision to turn his back on sin forever. By faith, the Holy Spirit can bring life to a sorrowful heart, where man can accept the forgiving grace of God, be justified, and absolved of his sins. The father welcomed his lost son with a loving embrace! The work of regeneration was completed.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, man will be able to live a life pleasing to God. This Spirit teaches him to pray, not a form prayer, but to offer God his heart's desires in childlike simplicity. Next, He takes the child of God into the deeper experience of sanctification and shows the need of a complete indwelling of Himself. It is necessary to always live in obedience to the Holy Spirit, and not to stifle or grieve Him.

The Holy Spirit places each member in the right place in the body of Christ, or the church. He is the one who distributes gifts according to His will and pleasure. He alone brings about the unity of God's people. Alliances or associations of people can never do that. Therefore, it is necessary that people, more than ever before, recognize the working of the Holy Spirit! Let us see the Holy Spirit and His work more, appreciate it more, and as children of God be filled with this wonderful fullness of God!

August Borbe

He Will Bring to Your Remembrance

Remembrance truly is a precious gift. Without it, we are poor indeed. Our past would become dark and empty, and we could not remember or reflect on any past experiences. When our mind cannot capture and retain memories, we cannot apply what we have seen, read, learned, and experienced. Without memory, we would be dull and disabled creatures.

The gift of remembrance is particularly valuable in our spiritual lives. David testifies in Psalm 19 that there is a great reward in remembering and keeping the law and statutes of the Lord. The Word of the Lord not only gave David direction, but it also provided him with necessary warnings. Are these things not valuable for everyone who follows the Lord and wants to reach the eternal reward?

Unfortunately, we people can also be forgetful. We do not remember everything that we have read or experienced. In John 14:26, Jesus promises to send Someone to help the disciples remember what He taught them: "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." This Comforter and Helper wants to remind us of many things that are of vital importance. Jesus speaks more about this Helper: "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:14), and "He will guide you into all truth" (v. 13).

First and foremost, the Holy Spirit wants to remind us of Jesus Christ so that we can know and cherish His greatness and glory. It is the Holy Spirit that brings us to the Savior and draws us closer to Him. As the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit presents to us the true and unchangeable Christ. The Spirit reminds us of Jesus' kindness, exemplary life, purity, obedience, innocence, sovereignty, humility, righteousness, and saving love. The Spirit reminds of Jesus' suffering and death, of His saving power and His profound teachings, of His eternity and His second coming, and of heaven!

How important are these remembrances for our short but perilous lives in this evil world! No experience is more precious than that of allowing the Spirit to draw us into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ. A poet once said that he could not imagine a better thing on earth than to have an intimate relationship with the source of all life. For this very reason, the Holy Spirit reminds us of the importance of quiet time, of faithfilled receptiveness, of Bible-reading, of reasonable worship, of our responsibility, of our love for and surrender to Christ, and of prayer. He also reminds us and warns us of dangers.

A young sailor and professed Christian embarked on his first stay at a major port city. His friends convinced him to come with them to a hotel where wild entertainment would take place in the evening. He had barely stepped into the lobby when he heard a voice

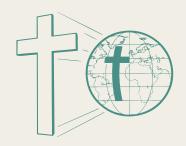
say, "Mother!" He did not know where this voice came from or to whom the voice was speaking. However, these words awakened his conscience. The thought of his mother praying for him at that very moment made him aware that darkness was at work in this place. Without a word, he turned around, left his friends, and went back on board the ship. He clearly felt that his faithful Lord had saved him from the "counsel of the ungodly and the path of sinners." The sailor never forgot this experience or his decision to turn back.

We people are often stubborn by nature. Sometimes we are not even aware that our actions are wrong because everything seems so harmless. It is only when the Lord speaks to us through another person or through His Spirit that we realize that we are not in harmony with the will of God. How fortunate is the person who realizes his mistake and is ready to repent!

Sadly, many people today pay little attention to God, and they do not allow the Holy Spirit to speak to them and help them remember. The Lord spoke to Moses: "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments" (Deuteronomy 5:29). We want to be such people!

Never forget that it is only through the truth that we can live a God-pleasing life. And it is only through the truth that we can live blessed and die blessed.

> Friedrich Krebs, Kitchener, ON



Radio Broadcast The Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs *Kitchener, Ontario*

Healing Works of the Holy Spirit

Before leaving this earth Jesus often talked to His disciples about the Holy Spirit. He promised that He would send Him because He knew how much they would need His power in their lives. Why did they need Him? What does the Holy Spirit produce in the lives of God's chidlren?

The word "healing" has a soothing sound. Where there is a potential for healing, hope is awakened. Healing uplifts, strengthens and comforts. We all wish to experience wholesome things. Healing is not just experiencing a lovely sunny day or the quiet breeze, but often entails storms and heavy rains which cleanse the air and refresh nature. Likewise, we do not always experience God's working in a quiet, mild way, but also with much earnestness and zeal! God does not often tolerate procrastination. His affairs often need quick responses, since carelessness and idleness are often the reason for great failings. Because of this, people have not only lost good opportunities for the present, but eternity as well.

God's work through the Holy Spirit is absolutely imperative. The prophet Elijah was repeatedly in serious dangers. He was a godly and very useful man. He understood how to serve in the kingdom of God with skill and authority. Unfortunately, his sometimes chastising and rousing messages were not well tolerated by his people. King Ahab and especially his wife, Jezebel, sought to end his life. The persecutions and threats against Elijah often brought him into trials of faith. He fled into the desert and desired to die. Instead, God sent him to the distant mountain Horeb where he found refuge in a cave. He was not to remain there. God's probing question came to Eli-

jah: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1 King 19:13). There was nothing for him to do in the desert. God had another job for him to do. At the entrance to the cave, he heard God's voice in the quiet breeze which encouraged him not to give up. It gave him the conviction that God was still with him. He experienced the helpful and uplifting work of the Holy Spirit.

Philip was part of the community of believers in Jerusalem. He was counted among those brothers of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and in the service of the Church (Acts 6). In Acts 8:26 we read: "Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, 'Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' This is desert." Here he was to meet a chariot carrying the treasurer of Ethiopia. This important man had a heart that was searching for God. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, Philip was to approach the chariot and give this man some much needed help. In this way, the foreigner found God and became a Christian. This is what the healing and helping works of the Holy Spirit look like!

These works of the Holy Spirit are clearly shown to us in God's word. Christians all over the world, have experienced them in their lives. Sometimes even non-Christians experienced them. This speaks to the righteousness of God since He is willing to help all people. Consider an example of this: A former soldier recalled an account from his experience at the front line of a battle. He had jumped into a foxhole during an enemy air attack. He immediately felt a clear warning to leave this foxhole. Shortly afterward, a bomb struck right where he had been standing. He survived!

Note: Whether the Holy Spirit earnestly defends, inhibits, prevents or warns, urges and impels—in every case, His services are healing and helpful. God's word confirms this!

In Acts 16, Luke writes of the the apostles' Asian mission trips. Suddenly they felt a distinct restraint and resistance. At the same time, the apostle Paul received the inner conviction to go to Macedonia. They followed this urge with assurance that God had called them. In this way, the gospel first came to Europe. This happened because of the clear influence of the Holy Spirit.

In Romans 8:14 Paul remarks: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." Jesus taught His disciples, in great detail, about the blessed work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus speaks of all the things the Holy Spirit would do: "For if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you" (John 16:7b); "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin" (John 16:8a); "He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13b); "He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:26b); "Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates

and authorities the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say" (Luke 12:11–12); "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:14); "[T]he Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive . . . dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:17). Are these not wholesome, helpful, and indispensable services of the Holy Spirit?

Similarly, the good Spirit of God wants to serve us. Whenever a person who is lost and estranged from God experiences a clear, inner awakening and finds Christ, he has come in contact with the healing work of the Holy Spirit. Whenever a Christian experiences a strengthening of faith and an inner revitalization, the comforting and healing service of the Holy Spirit has been at work. Paul wrote in Romans 8:16: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." This gives us certainty and strengthens our faith. This Spirit of God testifies Christ to all the world. He glorifies Him so that everyone, including you, will recognize Him as your Lord and Savior and find salvation through Him.

In relation to the great importance of the Holy Spirit and all His necessary helpful services, we should take the admonition of Paul to heart: "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 4:30) and "See that you do not refuse Him who speaks" (Hebrews 12:25).

Friedrich Krebs



Spiritual Disciplines

"FOR PHYSICAL TRAINING IS OF SOME VALUE (USEFUL FOR A LITTLE), BUT GODLINESS (SPIRITUAL TRAINING) IS USEFUL AND OF VALUE IN EVERYTHING AND IN EVERY WAY, FOR IT HOLDS PROMISE FOR THE PRESENT LIFE AND ALSO FOR THE LIFE WHICH IS TO COME." 1 TIMOTHY 4:8 (AMP)

WORK OUT! GET FIT! EAT RIGHT!

Do you feel like you should be doing more to stay healthy? We are surrounded by messages promoting healthy living—from public health advisories to gym membership billboards—and for good reason. Research shows that the choices we make regarding what we eat and how active we are have an enormous impact on our well-being.¹

Making healthy choices takes discipline. It may feel easier in the short term to skip the workout or the veggies. Maintaining a healthy spiritual life is no different and is even more important. Like sticking to a diet or a workout schedule, spiritual habits help keep us on track. These habits are called spiritual disciplines.

WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE?

Spiritual disciplines are activities taught and modeled in the Bible that are intended to help us grow in our walk with God. Spiritual disciplines take time and effort. They often interrupt the pattern of our lives to turn our focus away from material things towards the heavenly. There are times when we may not feel like doing what is necessary for our spiritual lives and in those times disciplines provide structure to carry us through.

A note of caution: spiritual discipline is not the same as spiritual maturity. Christian habits can quickly become outward motions without substance. Keep in mind that spiritual disciplines have a purpose beyond the practice you are currently engaged in, namely to foster your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Spiritual disciplines can be focused either on inward reflection or on outward activity. Here are

three spiritual disciplines that you can start making a habit of today.

SOLITUDE

Taking some time away from the noise and activity of our daily lives to listen to the quiet voice of God is useful for refreshing our spirit and giving us clarity about the direction of our lives. This is the goal of solitude. Jesus and His disciples practiced solitude by regularly withdrawing from the crowds to a quiet deserted place (see Luke 5:16, Mark 6:31). Jesus often used this time of quiet and seclusion to pray. The soul needs a time of quiet to hear God and to feel the nudge of the Holy Spirit. When we are most alone, we often most experience the presence of God.

We can also benefit from solitude by taking time for reflection. Quiet has a way of clearing out the confusion of our everyday lives and gives us space to think. Solitude forces us to face things in our lives that we may be drowning out with all of our activity. Perhaps this is why the temptation to fill our lives with more and more distractions is so strong—to avoid confronting aspects in our life that need work.

Here are some tips to make solitude a habit in your life. Find a quiet place where you can be completely alone and go there regularly for a time of solitude. This might be a quiet spot in your home—Jesus spoke of going into a closet to pray—or outdoors on a walk, or maybe in your car. Avoid all distractions. Turn off your phone, or better yet, leave it behind. And finally, use the opportunity afforded by solitude to further your spiritual life by filling the quiet with praise, prayer, Bible study and personal reflection.



FASTING

Another common spiritual practice we see throughout the Bible and modeled by Jesus is fasting. Fasting is purposely avoiding something that our body craves, usually food or drink. Much of our lives are focused on the physical needs of our bodies. Think of how many hours you spend on preparing and eating meals, on grooming and on keeping your wardrobe clean and up-to-date. Fasting helps us remember the proper relationship between body and soul. We have a body but we are a soul. Withholding food and drink from our bodies emphasizes that the body is subservient to the soul.

Is there a specific area in your life in which you are looking for God's guidance or a prayer request that weighs heavily on your heart? Try fasting regularly, taking time during your fast to pray for your request. You can also make fasting a lifelong habit by practicing it periodically to strengthen your spirit as you turn away from the needs of the body to focus on the soul. Remember to pray while you fast—fasting without prayer is just dieting.

SERVICE

One spiritual discipline that is focused on outward activity is service. We don't have to look any further than Jesus for an example. The entire ministry of Jesus was one of service. He healed the sick and took time for the outcasts of society like lepers and tax collectors. We too are commanded to "[serve] one another" (1 Peter 4:10 AMP). When Jesus washed the feet of His disciples at the Passover meal, He showed that He was not above serving at the most menial of tasks. How could we then, being less than the Master, consider ourselves above serving one another?

Making service a spiritual discipline takes work. It means sacrificing your time and energy in being a help and blessing to others. One way you can serve is to encourage someone. Visit someone in the hospital or a senior in her home. Volunteer at an organization that serves those in need. Sometimes the best way we can serve others is just to be a friend, a listening ear as we support one another through difficult times. Invite someone out for a cup of coffee or into your home, especially those from whom you don't expect a return invitation, and those who are overlooked in the congregation.

CONCLUSION

Spiritual disciplines help maintain our spiritual fitness. They keep us engaged in the things of God on a regular basis. You can introduce spiritual disciplines into your life today. Take some time completely alone with God as you practice solitude. Refocus your attention away from the physical world to your spiritual needs by denying yourself food and drink in fasting. Spend some time and energy in being a help, encouragement, and blessing to others in service. May your soul be strengthened as you live a disciplined life in God.

Roy Seida Edmonton, AB

¹According to the World Cancer Research Fund, "about a third of the most common cancers could be prevented through eating healthily, being physically active and maintaining a healthy weight." http://www.wcrf.org/int/cancer-facts-figures/preventability-estimates/cancer-preventability-estimates-diet-nutrition

Jesus' Great Commission

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19)

Before Jesus left this earth, He gave His disciples an assignment that is commonly known as the Great Commission. That is to say the Gospel was to be preached "to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). In addition to all else, He Himself strived to do this (Luke 4:43–44; 8:1). Therefore the charge to His disciples. In this challenge, we find our main verse that speaks of baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. What do these last words of the Lord Jesus have to tell us? Let us study them in the context in which they are found.

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth"

The great commission was to be carried out in the name of Him, to Whom had been given all authority by God. That means Jesus, as the Son of God, had divine authority. If we fulfill the Great Commission in His name, we can count on divine authority. According to Mark, signs will follow as proof of the Gospel messenger's divine authority (Mark 16:17–18).

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations . . . observe all things that I have commanded you."

The Gospel was first preached among the Jews (Acts 1:8). Jesus' good news was not limited to just the Jews, but was to extend to all nations. All people were to hear about the saving grace in Christ and enjoy the blessings of God's Kingdom. The disciples were to go forth in order to complete their assignment. They did what they could in their time. Now it is up to us to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission. If we think of the opportunities that the disciples had and compare them with our opportunities and means, we should become inspired to work with even greater dedication.

It is noteworthy that the people were not only to be taught the Gospel and made into disciples, they were also to be taught to observe all things that Jesus had commanded. That is not a simple task for God's messengers. It is not sufficient to know God's will, it must also be obeyed. In this, regular worship services can greatly help.

"Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

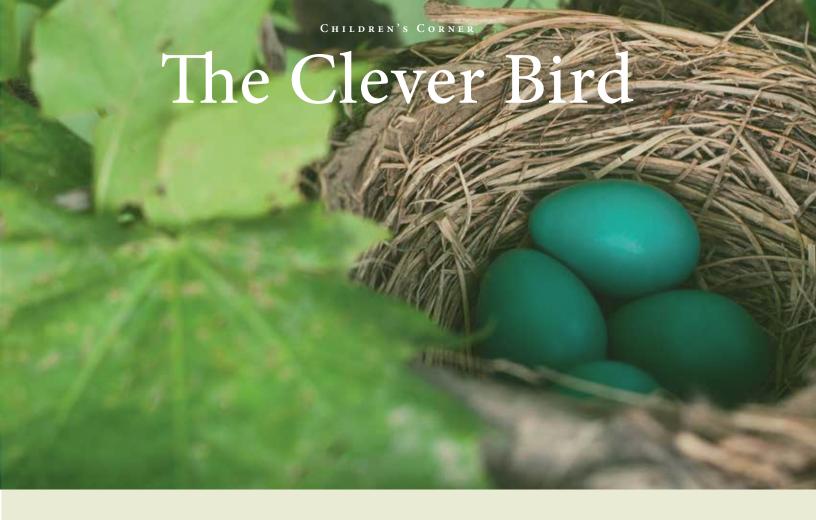
One fundamental doctrine of Jesus, as well as of the entire New Testament, includes justification through Christ. After a person has become a believer in Christ, he is to symbolically portray his spiritual experience in the act of baptism. Paul speaks of a death and burial to sin and the world, and of a resurrection with Christ into a new life (Romans 6:3–5; Colossians 2:12). It is also noteworthy that the spiritual experience of being born again can only be rightfully portrayed by the act of submersion (and not by sprinkling or pouring).

According to Matthew, the act of baptism is to be carried out in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Trinity. Baptism is so important in God's eyes that it is dignified by the Holy Trinity.

"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

The Lord ends His Great Commission for His disciples with these comforting words. In a few moments, He would ascend into heaven. However, His followers need not feel abandoned. Jesus would continue to be among them (and now among us) through His Spirit. It was in the strength of this Spirit that they could actually begin to fulfill the Great Commission (Acts 1:4). Let us personally join together as believers to fulfill Jesus' command in our day!

Reinhard Roesler, Toronto (CA)



missionary was traveling through the jungle. It was a difficult and dangerous path. But the missionary was always happy, because he knew that God kept him in all his ways. Suddenly he stopped in surprise. On a tree that was covered with tendrils he spotted a beautiful bird. He had never seen a bird like that. Its plumage was bright blue. He also saw the nest in the tree from which the female bird looked out and protected its young. Suddenly the blue bird became very anxious and restless and peeped fearfully. Was it fear of the missionary? No, what was that? An ugly poisonous snake crawled up the tree directly towards the nest. The missionary looked with anticipation to see what the bird would do. Closer and closer crept the snake, winding its way towards the nest. Soon it would reach

the nest! Suddenly the bird shot away like an arrow, leaving the female bird with her little ones and the nest alone. What did that mean? But after a short time the bird returned, carrying something in his beak. From a strange plant he had plucked red leaves. What did he want with them? The female bird came very quickly and helped him cover the nest with those red leaves. At the very last moment when the snake had almost reached the nest, they flew away. Now the path appeared to be clear for the snake to rush to the nest and devour the little birds. But when the snake reached the nest, it recoiled in horror, slithering down the tree as fast as it could and disappearing into the thick underbrush. The nest was saved! The two birds returned to the nest and struck up a song of joy. Why did the snake suddenly flee? Amazed and astonished at this incident the missionary asked some natives about it. They explained: "The red leaves that the bird put on its nest are poisenous for the snake. The birds know that, and every time their nests are in danger from the snake they protect themselves with the red leaves."

Now children, we are constantly threatened by an evil enemy. The Bible calls him the ancient serpent. You know who I mean? It is the devil. He wants to destroy us. But we have a life-saving resource. It is the Lord Jesus, the Son of God who has come to us on this earth. He died for our evil deeds, thoughts, and words. Now if you believe that the Lord Jesus died for you, and receive Him in your heart as your Savior, then you will be freed from sin, and the devil has no power over you. He is forced to flee, just like the snake fled from the red leaves. Don't you want to accept Jesus as your Savior now?

For Our Seniors

I Am Afraid

Have you ever been really afraid?—Of course, we all know what fear is. Some of us are even predisposed to being timid by nature. When I think of my fears, the list would be quite lengthy. Naturally, fears change with age, but here and there we still encounter fears today.

Just recently, the doctor prescribed an MRI to check my kidney function, a screening that can only be performed in the hospital. A nurse met me and briefly explained how the whole procedure would take place, adding that—before they could begin—I had to watch a video, in order to be able to give my consent. Another patient, who had been listening, offered the unsolicited comment that she had gone through the same examination once and it had been "very painful." I got a very strange feeling in the pit of my stomach. But my name had already been called and, shortly thereafter, I found myself alone in a room, staring at a screen. Full details of the exam were explained. And suddenly I was wide awake. I heard the following words: "In very rare cases, the examination can be fatal." My pulse beat furiously; my blood pressure was perceptibly elevated; my heart felt stuck in my throat. I looked at the door. I could still escape the procedure.

I survived the test. And it was not even "painful."

Maybe you are smiling about my fear; such tests may not bother you. You certainly have other fears. Some talk about their fears, others keep them inside, hidden from others. No one wants to be a "coward," hence we do not make a big deal of it. But fear is a reality. It is there, and even the well-meaning "do not be afraid" does not help us.

Fear often finds an open door when we are facing something new, such as the first day of school, before starting a new job or, related to aging, moving into a retirement home. We do not know what will happen to us. Will they accept us? Will we cope with the new and different? How will the situation turn out?—The more we think about the matter, the greater the fear. Such anxiety can make our life pretty difficult. It lies

like a dark cloud over our lives and wants to rob us of courage. In some cases, it even robs us of our appetite and creates insomnia. The words "I'm afraid" are serious words, when they concern me.

Naturally, the legitimate question arises: How can one best deal with fear? And what do we do when fear grips us? Sometimes it is good to ask others what they do with their fear and how they handle it. And that is what we want to do today. I have found someone whom we can ask this question. Why not take your Bible to hand and open Psalm 56 with me, which starts with the words "a Psalm of David." He speaks openly of his fear. We are not the only ones who need to deal with anxiety. Even "great" men and women know what fear is. We should take a look at this Psalm.

David wrote this Psalm when he was on the run. You will soon discover that it is a prayer. He speaks with the Lord about his fear. The fear is literally screaming out of him. He pours out his heart before his God and shows Him his enemies and their intentions.

- (1) "Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; fighting all day he oppresses me."
- (5) "All day they twist my words; all their thoughts are against me for evil."
- (6) "They gather together, they hide . . . when they lie in wait for my life."

This is not about a short-term matter, rather his enemies bothered him "all day" (verse 1). Fear was his constant companion. Verse 9 gives us a better insight into his situation:

- (8a) "You number my wanderings"—He uses the word "wandering" in the plural to describe his life on the run. He was in the wilderness, hiding in caves and needed to constantly move his habitation. He was never sure if he would live or die.
- (8b) "[M]y tears"—He is afflicted. He suffers. He cries.

At this point it would be appropriate to direct our questions to him: "How do you deal with your fears?

How do you manage to live with this fear, this pressure?" After David has described his fear to us, he does not leave us hanging, rather gives us an answer:

- (3) "Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You."
- (4b) "In God I have put my trust."

That all sounds good, but is it that simple? How do you do that? How does one simply trust? How does it look in "real" life? Nor is David silent in this matter. He shows us how this "trust" can be realized. He refers us to the Word of God. (4) "In God (I will praise His word) "—We must not forget that at that time it was all about the Torah, the 5 books of Moses. Why was the Word of God so important to him? What was in the Torah? Here he found the history of Israel, the history of his ancestors. Here he read about the wonders of God, His divine intervention seen in humanly hopeless situations: liberation from slavery in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the cloud and the pillar of fire, the fall of the walls of Jericho, etc. The beauty of the Word of God, is that in it, He reveals Himself to us. He shows Himself to us in His power and greatness, but also that He is the unchanging God Who can help today, just as He did then. For him it was as the prophet Jeremiah: "Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts" (Jeremiah 15:16).—In the Word of God, he finds solace, and joy returns. The Word of God has brought everything into perspective: God is still God!

David has found his footing again and fear must flee. How great it is to hear what he now expresses: (4) "In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?" He sees himself securely in God's hands, although his outward circumstances have not changed. Full of confidence, he writes:

- (9) "When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back; this I know, because God is for me."
- (11) Until now he has always said "in God I will put my trust." Now he says: (11) "In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" He trusts; it is no longer merely an "I want to trust."
 - (12b) "I will render praises to You."
- (13) "For You have delivered my soul from death. Have You not kept my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?"

Let us leave David. He has found his help in the Word of God. Could God's Word help us as well? In our fear? I think so: Immerse your fearful soul in God's Word. Here, the living God, who made heaven and earth, will meet you. He has considered your situation and will help you. A song says this so nicely:

"Commit whatever grieves thee into the gracious hands, of Him who never leaves thee, who Heav'n and earth commands. Who points the clouds their courses, whom winds and waves obey; He will direct thy footsteps and find for thee a way."

(Paul Gerhardt 1607-1676)

God bless you on your pilgrimage.

Harry Semenjuk

Special Services 2016

Church Dedication Services in Chilliwack

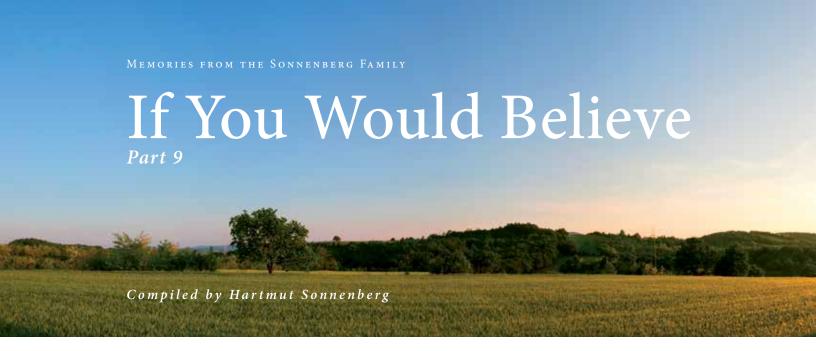
SEPTEMBER 2-4, 2016

Special Services in Flint

SEPTEMBER 3-4, 2016

Special Services in Edmonton

OCTOBER 8-10, 2016



Unjustly Punished

"He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly." (Proverbs 13:24)

With three rambunctious boys in the house, our parents, in rare cases, resorted to an old fashioned method of discipline. Having a more gentle hand than father, mother usually doled out the deserved paddling. Punishment never followed an accident, but willful disobedience in serious matters was not tolerated. The penalty, in measure with the transgression, failed to engender resentment in us since it was perceived as punishment justly deserved. From the perspective of many years later, it seems that it may well have taught us to accept responsibility for our actions.

One time father became aware of a serious transgression. He was firmly convinced that the youngest was at fault, and because of its seriousness, he himself would administer the punishment. The boy's plea of innocence found no ear. What the transgression was has long been forgotten, but having been unjustly punished hurt deeply. In due time father realized that he had punished his son for something he had not committed. What now?

Father was visibly remorseful when he sat down with his son and said, "My son, I have done you a grave injustice. I was firmly convinced that you were guilty, and now I have learned otherwise. You are innocent. I have punished you unjustly. What I have done to you, I

cannot undo." Looking deep into his son's eyes he continued, "I plead for your forgiveness, my son. Please forgive me the injustice I inflicted on you!"

That struck like a bolt of lightning – father, remorseful and repenting before his 10 year old, and seeking his forgiveness. No words of justification, or excuses, or qualification for his actions. Our father simply declared his guilt and remorsefully sought forgiveness from his 10 year old son.

It is interesting how father's act of humility raised his son's esteem for him. Nothing he could have said or done would have raised respect for him more than this demonstration of humility. Doesn't Scripture confirm this?

"And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Matthew 23:12)

Going to Heaven, Without Dying

In a tiny, leased church in Edmonton, Alberta, German church services began in 1949. At that time, we were living in Wetaskiwin, about 70 kilometers south, where our parents were serving the local congregation. The Mission Board sponsorship of our immigration committed father to intermittent travel to serve remote congregations for one year. In his absence, mother substituted in the services at Wetaskiwin. Added to this were the new responsibilities in the growing church in Edmonton.



Soon the Edmonton congregation outgrew the leased facilities, and with great sacrifice of members of the Edmonton and Wetaskiwin congregations, a much roomier new church was constructed and dedicated to God's glory in April, 1952. Our parents, no longer able to meet the pastoral needs of the rapidly-growing congregation from a remote location, relocated to Edmonton in September, 1953. Already one and a half years

after the dedication of the Edmonton church, planning for a much larger church building became necessary.

Demand for German language services came also from other cities, among them Calgary, Alberta, where services began in February, 1956. Our parents shared the responsibilities at this new location: Mother traveled to Calgary for the Sunday services and father to the prayer meetings on Thursdays.

That was a taxing time. Sunday upon Sunday, summer or winter, mother engaged willing drivers from the Edmonton congregation for the four hour drive by car to Calgary. Mostly a group of singers would accompany her to serve in the services in Calgary. By the time they arrived back in Edmonton, following the evening service, more than 18 hours had elapsed.

Late one Sunday night, the telephone tore us out of deep sleep. The Police informed us that mother had been involved in a car accident, and had been transported unconscious and with serious injuries to the hospital. Near the town of Innisfail, the car in which mother was a passenger sideswiped a second car while passing, and in the ensuing crash she was ejected from the vehicle. When mother came out of the coma, she had no recollection of the accident.

Finally, the day arrived when mother was discharged from hospital. Recovering on her bed at home, she turned her lacerated face toward us, and burst

"My children, wouldn't it have been amazing if I had died in that accident? One moment I sit peacefully in the car, and in the next moment, without any recollection of dying, I wake up in heaven and see Jesus face to face! Wouldn't that have been amazing to go to heaven without dying?" forth with unforgettable enthusiasm: "My children, wouldn't it have been amazing if I had died in that accident? One moment I sit peacefully in the car, and in the next moment, without any recollection of dying, I wake up in heaven and see Jesus face to face! Wouldn't that have been amazing to

go to heaven without dying?"

Basking in that thought a moment, she continued, "I know you still need your mother. My work here on earth is not yet complete. By the grace of God, I am still with you." Again her face lit up. "Children!" she exclaimed, "There is nothing greater than to serve God! What a privilege to know that we are ready to meet Him at any moment's notice. There is no greater joy than to serve God with all your heart!"

Jesus Alone is My Savior

My Jesus alone is the Savior, Who saved me from sin and from pain; From enemies and all confusion, For He turned my loss into gain.

My Jesus and Lord is my healer; In Him, I am safe and secure. When asking in faith He will answer, His promise and sayings are sure.

My Jesus is also my Keeper; His heart, it is beating for me. In storms, when the tempest is raging, He helps me, whatever may be.

My Jesus illumines my pathway; He's light in the darkness of night, And when I go through the dark valley, I never go out of His sight.

My Jesus is the One that I trust in; I doubt not, wherever I go; In Him there is victory always; His people will vanquish the foe.

My Jesus can help you and save you, Can free you from sin and despair! O come to the cross and believe Him; Entrust yourself now to His care.