

Cover Picture: Climbing a Mountain

As we were walking in the mountains one day, our thoughts were directed to the statement in *The Ministry of Healing*, 508.2: "Come up to Me into the mount."

The path we were following was stony and steep, but it had been so well prepared by others that the going was easy. The path on which we can go to God is our Lord Jesus (see *John* 14:6). The fact that the path had been so thoroughly prepared helped us to see that in the spiritual realm others have gone before us so that our path would be easier. Jesus Himself is the best example of this, but prophets, reformers, and messengers also go ahead to prepare the way for us.

As we came to a fork on the path, a notice advised us to stay on the path and not take any shortcuts as that would damage the environment. In the same way, we should also remain on the path of righteousness and not try to take any shortcuts which would transgress the law, because these lead only to the destruction of ourselves, others, and our surroundings.

When we finally reached the summit, all our efforts were rewarded by the wonderful view that lay before us. Our toil was forgotten. We felt like staying forever at the top of the mountain, where all was quiet and restful, and from where we could look at the countryside below us from a completely different perspective.

In the same way, God wants to draw us to Himself in the mount because He can come much closer to us there, in the seclusion of prayer and study, than in the bustle of daily life. While we linger in His presence He gives us a blessed survey of His ways, which are as much higher than our ways as the heavens are higher than the earth (see *Isaiah* 55:9). We need these times of solitude with God in the mount to gather strength and courage to continue with the life of faith. As long as we live on this earth we will always have to return to the valley so that we can fulfill our responsibilities in this world, but we can go with new courage and revived strength because we have been empowered by God's presence.

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Gospel Order

Chapter 6

The Treasure in an Earthen Vessel

When Jesus lived on this earth most people did not recognize His divine nature—some did not want to acknowledge it and others were unable to see it. Once we have realized this, the question naturally arises as to why so few recognize the treasure within the earthen vessel.

We often judge the value of something according to the vessel in which it is presented. For example, no one would expect to find a valuable gift wrapped up in plain paper, or in banana leaves. And when the exterior wrapping is particularly ostentatious we assume that it contains something precious. But God does not work according to this principle. He deliberately chooses plain and simple vessels in which to hide His treasure.

Another illustration is that of a talented musician who plays an instrument to show his skill. Such an artist would choose the best instrument available for this purpose. It is difficult to imagine a famous musician using a cheap instrument when performing at a large concert. But this is just what God has done. He is the greatest of all artists, and the instrument that He uses is not that of a glorious angel but sinful, human flesh.

The Language of the Bible

In order to understand the process of revelation in greater depth we need to grasp this aspect of God's way of working. The message has a