

Christian MONTHLY

DEDICATED TO THE
PROCLAMATION OF THE
WORD OF GOD



Psalm 119:105
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.

IN TRANSITION: see pg. 17

NOVEMBER 2011



**O give thanks unto the LORD;
for he is good;
for his mercy endureth for ever.**

1 Chronicles 16:34

This Thanksgiving, and always, we need to remember from where all blessings flow. We have a tendency to think that by our own knowledge and strength we can prosper and thrive in this country, which has become altogether materialistic and self-centered. Surely we need to apply ourselves for our daily needs, but remember where all blessings come from and give thanks to The One to whom thanks is due.

In Deuteronomy 8, we read how the Lord God spoke to Israel as He brought them into the good land and how, after He had blessed them with all these earthly goods, they forgot where they came from and did not give the glory unto God, but took glory unto themselves: *For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou*

mayest dig brass. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

**Surely He is able to
heal this land...**

Deuteronomy 8:7-18

This country was established on God's Word. As a Christian nation, over the centuries, it has been immensely blessed. As a relatively young country, it had become a great leader and light unto this world. But, being lifted up, we have become self-sufficient, trusting in our own safety nets, abilities and knowledge. This destroys the faith and trust on which this country was established. Our money still reads, "IN GOD WE TRUST," but over the last 5 or 6 decades we have seen great decline. As we go through this prolonged economic downturn and we see all the natural disasters that are happening all over this country, pray that this country would wake up and turn again to its Foundation, its Creator and Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

In 2 Chronicles 7:14 we read, *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

Surely He is able to heal this land so that it could be a shining city upon a hill that cannot be hid, if we will heed His calling and repent. *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. (Revelation 2:5)*

May God bless us and our country,

Pastor Mark Aho

Ashburnham, Massachusetts



**Offer unto God thanksgiving;
and pay thy vows unto the most High:**

Psalm 50:14

The season approaches when, in accordance with a long established and respected custom, a day is set apart to give thanks to Almighty God for the manifold blessings which His gracious and benevolent providence has bestowed upon us as a nation and as individuals... We are a God-fearing people who should set ourselves against evil and strive for righteousness in living, and observing the Golden Rule we should from our abundance help and serve those less fortunately placed. We should bow in gratitude to God for His many favors.

President Calvin Coolidge, 1925

America has much for which to be thankful. The unequalled freedom enjoyed by our citizens has provided a harvest of plenty to this nation throughout its history. In keeping with America's heritage, one day each year is set aside for giving thanks to God for all of His blessings... Let us recommit ourselves to that devotion to God and family that has played such an important role in making this a great Nation, and which will be needed as a source of strength if we are to remain a great people.

President Ronald Reagan, 1981

THE FALL AND THE PROMISE

In the beginning, in the Garden of Eden, Adam had a good relationship with God. It was a nice, pleasant, comfortable relationship. God had placed him in the garden to dress and keep it. God had commanded Adam saying that he may freely eat of every tree of the Garden, except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and God had also passed sentence that *...in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:17)* God formed every beast and every fowl out of the ground and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them *...and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. (Genesis 2:19)* This shows an easy, pleasant relationship between God and Adam.

But that relationship was lost when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate the fruit that He had forbidden them to eat. Then *the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. (Genesis 3:7-8)*

God was not satisfied with this new relationship...

God was not satisfied with this new relationship. He was not satisfied with Adam fearing Him and hiding from Him.

Adam was His created child, and He loved Adam. And so, *the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? (Genesis 3:9)* And Adam—even though he was now spiritually dead, for God had told him that *in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, and Adam did die that day, even though he continued to live on this earth until he was 930 years old—this dead Adam responded to the call of God: *And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. (Genesis 3:10)* This shows us that the calling voice of God is so powerful that even the dead respond to that call. Even the spiritually dead of this day respond when they

hear and feel that call of God in their hearts and consciences. We ourselves have experienced this.

Then God began to further probe Adam's heart and conscience. *And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. (Genesis 3:11-12)* This was Adam's confession, drawn out of him by God: *I did eat.* God also began to probe Eve's heart and conscience, *What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. (Genesis 3:13)* Here we have Eve's confession: *and I did eat.*

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. (Psalm 103:13) God had pity on Adam and Eve. After He had drawn them to repentance and confession, He cursed the serpent and made the promise of redemption: *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (Genesis 3:15)* This was the promise of Jesus to come, to die on the cross to redeem them from their sins, which took place in the fullness of God's time.

He has had pity on us, too, and on every sinner who has been caught and found out in his sins. We are called by His Word and Spirit to repent of our sins, to confess our sins, and to believe that they are forgiven in Jesus' name and blood.

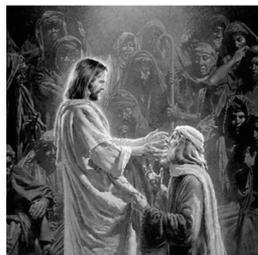
Today we may hear that confession of sins is not needed, but we can see from the experience of Adam and Eve that the promise of redemption was not made until God had drawn them to confession. Our own experience verifies that the order is still the same today. I remember wishing and hoping that I could be relieved of my burden of sin, but there was no relief from it, or from the fear of impending doom, until God had granted the grace of repentance and confession. It was then that He also granted the grace of the knowledge of forgiveness. This drawing work is not man's own work. It is the work of God in the heart of a sinner.

May God continue to do His drawing work in the hearts of the children of this last time. In Jesus' name, Amen.

David Olson
Rindge, New Hampshire

A ROOMFUL OF CHILDREN

And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.



John 9:1-3

As part of our outreach on one of my first trips to South Africa, our team visited a home for children with cerebral palsy. It was so heartbreaking to see rooms full of children with bent bodies jerking in discordant motion, rooms full of children with blank faces staring vacantly into nothingness, rooms full of children with drooling mouths making garbled and discordant noises...

One team member expressed the cry of everyone's heart when he cried out to God and asked, "Why have you allowed this, Lord? Why are these little ones trapped here in the prison of their bodies?"

God answered. In John, people also questioned Jesus about someone with a disability and Jesus answered that the man was born blind so that the works of God could be revealed. I looked back around the room and wondered, "Can I see God at work in these children?"

It was then that God helped me look past the bent bodies to the smiles that radiated with peace and joy, to the genuine enjoyment of the songs we sang them, and to the absolute trust that shone in their eyes when they looked up at you.

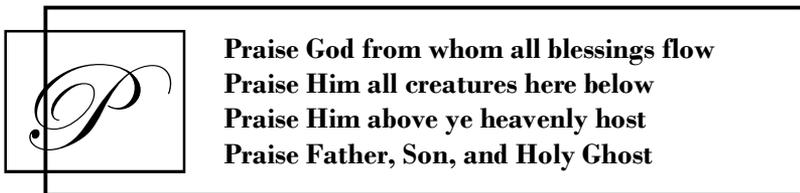
Perhaps I cannot understand the complexities of why or how these children are the way they are, but I can give my doubts and questions to God. And perhaps when I see God shining so clearly in the faces of those children, I begin to see God's answer.

Thank You, Lord, for the gift of children! Help us to love each and every one of them with Your love.

*Leona Matson
Langley, British Columbia*

THANK WHO?

The four lines of what is commonly known as the Doxology have been sung for more than three hundred years:



It has been said that the Doxology, which literally means *words of glory*, has done more to teach the doctrine of the Trinity than all the theological books ever written. To this day, when I sing those powerful lines, I recall the colorful lesson of my first grade Sunday School teacher. With something like cookie dough and bologna magically falling down on the table before us, she read us the story of a God who made the heavens rain bread and quail so His grumbling people might be satisfied and know that God is God. I was impressed. And when we sung the Doxology at the end of the service, I thought it helpful that I knew a little more of what it means when we sing that God is the God from whom all blessings flow.

Cornelius Plantinga Jr. once made the pointed comment that it must be an odd feeling to be thankful "to nobody in particular." He was commenting on the odd phenomenon of finding, especially around the American celebration of Thanksgiving, so many people thankful *in general*. To be thankful "in general" is very strange, he concluded. "It's a little like being married in general."⁽¹⁾ Of course, his words are not dismissing the thought that it is good to give thanks in all general circumstances. Rather, Plantinga raises an important philosophical question. Can one be thankful in general, thankful for the blessings and gifts that flow, without acknowledging from where or *from whom* they might be flowing?

In what remains a revealing look at human nature, Moses describes life after Egypt. A rescued Israel was a grumbling people sick of manna, wailing for meat, even longing to go back

to the land God had miraculously delivered them from. Though their daily bread was literally falling from heaven, they wanted more. In the midst of their discontent, Moses revealed God's promise for meat, but added the wake up call, "You have rejected the Lord, who is among you" (Numbers 11:20).

To our grumbling prone lips, these words are quite revealing. If being thankful is by nature being aware and appreciative of things beyond ourselves, complaining is refusing to see anything *but* ourselves. It is refusing to see the one who is among us. Moreover, it is an expression that serves only to affirm our own expectations, whether they are based on faulty visions of reality or not. Certainly the Israelites did not *want* to go back into captivity, but in their grumbling even slavery began to look inviting. Likewise, the falling bread from heaven ceased to be a remarkable sign of provision from the Father, but remarkably, a sign of monotony and their own dreariness.

Our complaints are not only a choice to overlook the good around us, but the choice not to ask where or from whom our blessings come. The attitude of thanksgiving, on the other hand, makes the choice to inquire. Being thankful is therefore always more than a glib note of gratitude or a warm sentiment *in general*; it requires something far more personal. It not only chooses to recognize the gifts before us, but recognizes that there must also be a giver. There is someone to thank. There is indeed one from whom all blessings flow.

⁽¹⁾ Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., "Assurances of the Heart" *Christianity Today*, Vol. 39, no. 13.

"Thank Who?" by Jill Carattini, *A Slice of Infinity*, No 2559, originally printed 27 September 2011 (www.rzim.org).

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*Submitted by Alvar Helmes
Battle Ground, Washington*

Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him...

Psalm 37:7

Restlessness and impatience change nothing except our peace and joy. Peace does not dwell in outward things, but in the heart prepared to wait trustfully and quietly on Him who has all things safely in His hands.

Elisabeth Elliot

IN MEMORY

Lucille J. (Martin) Conboy, born September 27, 1912, received the call to be with her Lord and Savior on May 30, 2011, in the Pine County Care Center in Sandstone, Minnesota. A life-long member of the Finlayson Apostolic Lutheran Church, God granted Lucille a long life of ninety-eight years and eight months. Her greatest desire was to love and serve her Lord faithfully. God had seen fit to bless her with the gift of poetry, which is evident in this poem, which was written when she was just a young woman of nineteen years.

My Prayer

God, let my thoughts and words be pure;
Let my deeds be good and true.
Let everything I do each day
Be acceptable to You.

Give me faith and understanding;
Give me patience to endure
All the trials You'll put before me
Just to test my faith in You.

Let me take Your Hand, O Jesus,
When the way seems dark and deep;
Give me ears to hear Your calling
If I chance to fall asleep.

Let me rest against Your bosom;
Keep me pure and free from sin.
Oh, dear God, stay close beside me;
Don't let me err and forget Your Name.

Lucille Conboy, April 3, 1931, Good Friday

Lucille's favorite Bible verses were *Matthew 7:7-8: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

*Remembering Lucille with love,
Pastor Don and Edith Bisila
Circle Pines, Minnesota*

Dear Children,

O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people. (Psalm 105:1)

I would like to share with you an account about a certain man whom Jesus healed, found in *St. Mark 5:1-17*.

A MAN NAMED LEGION

Jesus had been with His disciples on a boat and He had calmed a great storm. His disciples were witnesses to this miracle and were amazed and afraid as they wondered, "Who is this man that the waves and the wind obey Him?"

They brought their boat to the shore in the country of the Gadarenes. As Jesus stepped out onto the shore, He was met by a man who had an unclean spirit who lived in the tombs. He was a crazy man and, even though he had been caught and chained up many times, no man could keep him as he would break anything he was bound with. Men tried to calm him, but it could not be done. Night and day this man would stay in the mountains and tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

When this man saw Jesus, he ran and worshipped Him, and cried out loud, "What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the most high God? I beg of You by God, do not hurt me."

When Jesus came near, He said to the spirit, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." *And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. (verse 9)* "Legion" is a term used to describe a Roman army—it could be 3000 to 6000 in number. There were a lot of bad spirits in this man. Mr. Legion begged Jesus not to send the bad spirits out of the country that he lived in.

Nearby on the mountains, there was a herd of about 2000 pigs feeding and the bad spirits came to Jesus and said, "Send us into the pigs that we may enter into them." Jesus allowed the spirits to go into the



pigs as they asked. As the bad spirits went into the pigs, what do you think happened? Yes, they made the pigs go crazy. If they made the man crazy, of course it would be the same for the pigs. Suddenly this big herd of pigs stopped eating and started running down the mountainside toward the lake. Into the water they all went, never to be seen again.

The keepers of the pigs were amazed at what they had just seen and were very much afraid. They ran into the city to tell the people. The townspeople ran out to see this great thing.

The people saw the hillside was empty of pigs. They saw Jesus and Mr. Legion, who was sitting with clothes on and as normal as could be, and the people were afraid. This was an amazing thing for them to witness, as I'm sure they had seen Mr. Legion before when he was crazy and now he was well. They had seen the pigs on the hillside many times and now they were all gone.

There was something more they were afraid of, and that was how this all had happened. They knew it was a miracle that Jesus had done and we can see their fear in the last verse of this text: *And they began to pray (plead with) him to depart out of their coasts. (verse 17)* These people knew in their hearts the power that Jesus had but they were not willing to believe and wanted Him to go away. So many times in Jesus' ministry, the people who lived in an area where Jesus had done a miracle became afraid of Him.

I'm so happy that Mr. Legion was healed. As I thought about it, I realized that his name would not be "Legion" anymore, as he would not have many evil spirits living in him and ruining his life. Jesus brought him peace in his heart and now he could live as other people did.

Jesus, the Son of God, is good; He will always be there to bring peace to those who want it. Children, never be afraid of Jesus; He is the best Friend you will ever have. He will give you the best advice, the best correction when you have done wrong, and then the best love to comfort you. Keep believing and follow God's Son, Jesus, all your days.

I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. (Psalm 104:33)

*God's peace,
Gwen Wilson*

PRAYER, PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

Prayer, praise and thanksgiving all go in company. A close relationship exists between them. Praise and thanksgiving are so nearly alike that it is not easy to distinguish between them or define them separately. The Scriptures join these three things together. Many are the causes for thanksgiving and praise. The Psalms are filled with many songs of praise and hymns of thanksgiving, all pointing back to the results of prayer. Thanksgiving includes gratitude. In fact thanksgiving is but the expression of an inward conscious gratitude to God for mercies received. Gratitude is an inward emotion of the soul, involuntarily arising therein, while thanksgiving is the voluntary expression of gratitude.

Thanksgiving is oral, positive, active. It is the giving out of something to God. Thanksgiving comes out into the open. Gratitude is secret, silent, negative, passive, not showing its being till expressed in praise and thanksgiving. Gratitude is felt in the heart. Thanksgiving is the expression of that inward feeling.

Thanksgiving is just what the word itself signifies—the giving of thanks to God. It is giving something to God in words which we feel at heart for blessings received. Gratitude arises from a contemplation of the goodness of God. It is bred by serious meditation on what God has done for us. Both gratitude and thanksgiving point to, and have to do with, God and His mercies. The heart is consciously grateful to God. The soul gives expression to that heartfelt gratitude to God in words or acts.

Gratitude is born of meditation on God's grace and mercy. *The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. (Psalm 126:3)* Herein we see the value of serious meditation. *My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD. (Psalm 104:34)* Praise is begotten by gratitude and a conscious obligation to God for mercies given. As we think of mercies past, the heart is inwardly moved to gratitude.

"I love to think on mercies past,
And future good implore;
And all my cares and sorrows cast
On Him Whom I adore." (Phoebe H. Brown)

Love is the child of gratitude. Love grows as gratitude is felt, and then breaks out into praise and thanksgiving to God: *I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. (Psalm 116:1)* Answered prayers cause gratitude, and gratitude brings forth a love that declares it will not cease praying: *Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. (Psalm 116:2)* Gratitude and love move to larger and increased praying.

Paul appeals to the Romans to dedicate themselves wholly to God, a living sacrifice, and the constraining motive is the mercies of God: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Romans 12:1)* Consideration of God's mercies not only begets gratitude, but induces a larger consecration to God of all we have and are. So that prayer, thanksgiving and consecration are all linked together inseparably.

Gratitude and thanksgiving always looks back at the past though it may also take in the present. But prayer always looks to the future. Thanksgiving deals with things already received. Prayer deals with things desired, asked for and expected. Prayer turns to gratitude and praise when the things asked for have been granted by God.

As prayer brings things to us which beget gratitude and thanksgiving, so praise and gratitude promote prayer, and induce more praying and better praying.

E. M. Bounds

When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Psalm 126

There Was a Time: An Advent Poem



There was a time when there was no time,
When darkness reigned as king,
When a formless void was all that there was
in the nothingness of eternity,
When it was night.
But over the void and over the night Love watched.
There was a time when time began.
It began when Love spoke.

Time began for light and life, for splendor and grandeur.
Time began for seas and mountains, for flowers and birds.
Time began for the valleys to ring with the songs of life,
and for the wilderness to echo with the wailing of wind
and howling of animals.
And over the earth, Love watched.

There was a time when time began to be recorded.
A time when Love breathed and a new creature came to life.
A new creature so special that it was in the image
and likeness of Love
Of Love who is God.
And so man was born and the dawn of a new day
shone on the world.
And over man, Love watched.

But there came a time when the new day faded.
A time when man who was like God tried to be God.
A time when the creature challenged the Creator.
A time when man preferred death to life and darkness to light.
And so the new day settled into twilight.
And over the darkness, Love watched.

There was a time of waiting in the darkness.
A time when man waited in the shadows,
And all creation groaned in sadness.

There was waiting for Love to speak again—
for Love to breathe again.

And kings and nations and empires rose and faded in the shadows.
And Love waited and watched.

Finally, there came a time when Love spoke again.
A Word from eternity—a Word

Spoken to a girl who belonged to a people not known by the world
Spoken to a girl who belonged to a family not known by her people
To a girl named Mary.

And all creation waited in hushed silence for the girl's answer.

And Mary spoke her yes.

And Love watched over Mary.

And so there came a time when Love breathed again
When Love breathed new life into Mary's yes.

And a new day dawned for the world

A day when light returned to darkness,
when life returned to dispel death

And so a day came when Love became Man—
a mother bore a Child.

And Love watched over Love—a Father watched His Son.

And, lastly, there came a time when you and I
became a part of time.

Now is the time that you and I wait.

Now we wait to celebrate what the world waited for.

And as we wait to celebrate what was at one time,
we become a part of that time

A time when a new dawn and a new dream and a new creation
began for man.

And as a part of time, Love waits and Love watches over us.

Joseph Breighner

**To every thing there is a season,
and a time to every purpose under the heaven...**

Ecclesiastes 3:1

LIFE AND LIBERTY

Jesus said that He had come so that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly (John 10:10). He gave the promise to His disciples that if they would continue in His Word, they would know the truth and the truth would make them free (John 8:31-32).

The blessings of true life and Christian liberty are unknown to the world. Yet the unbeliever thinks that he is leading an enjoyable life and is a free person. He is satisfied with his life when it fulfills purely human desires, whether those desires are the evil lusts of our lower nature or the attainment of certain exalted goals which are held in esteem in the world. He thinks he is free and capable of directing his daily affairs. The quality of his life is based on his own personal success or failure.

Generally the unbeliever considers the believer as being under some peculiar sort of bondage which deprives him of life's enjoyments.

Our ties to Christ are not bonds against our will... but the strong cords of Christ's love.

Little does he realize that it is he who is not free but is under such confining bondage that he has not even begun to experience the true pleasures of life. He is not aware that his very attitude is evidence of the fact that he is a bond-servant of Satan, sold under the power of sin (Romans 7:14). He disregards the teachings of Scripture which show that by the offense of one—Adam—judgment has come upon all men unto condemnation (Romans 5:18). This does not mean that all men are totally indifferent to the will of God and openly, by overt deeds, or even secretly, transgress His Law without concern. Still, we all carry the seed of original or inherited sin; this is the source of all actual sin. Under the Bible light, which shows that the Law of God is spiritual and requires absolute obedience, all men must forfeit any form of self-defense and stand silent and guilty before God (Matthew 5:21-22, 31-32, Romans 3:19).

The true and abundant life spoken of by Jesus begins only when we have become new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians

5:17). In this experience we are led to despair of all our own efforts to please God; we cease laboring to obtain righteousness by the fulfillment of the Law (Romans 7:4). We die to the Law (or to our own works) and become united with Christ so that His life is formed in us (Galatians 2:20). We have become partakers of His resurrection, and thereby obtain the life that our Lord calls abundant (Romans 6:5). In this new life, we enjoy a freedom of heart and conscience that enables us to have fellowship with God as His children (Romans 8:15, 1 John 1:3).

In this exalted fellowship we live in Christ (Acts 17:28), having already been made partakers here in this world of the gift of eternal life (Colossians 1:27). God's love has taken possession of our hearts (1 John 4:19). We can come freely to the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16) and we may also have boldness in the day of judgment (1 John 4:17). Fear has been cast out (1 John 4:18) and we rejoice because there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit (Romans 8:1).

Our ties to Christ are not bonds against our will as supposed by the unsaved, but the strong cords of Christ's love which are stronger than death, for many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it (Song of Solomon 8:7). This glorious liberty which we have in Christ enables us to say with Simon Peter, *Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. (John 6:68-69)*

As free children of God, we exclaim with St. Paul, *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)*

*Pastor Alvin Holmgren
Seattle, Washington
Archived February 1984*

In Transition: (from front cover): We ask for your understanding as we transition to a full color 8.5" x 11" publication. The new format will begin with the January 2012 issue. Thank you for your patience. Please visit christianmonthllyalca.org on or after January 1st for more information.

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THE REAL GOSPEL

- * It is true that we are sinners—but Christ has suffered for us.
- * It is true that we deserve death—but Christ has died for us.
- * It is true that we are guilty debtors—but Christ has paid our debts with His own blood.

This is the real Gospel! On this let us lean while we live. To this let us cling when we die. Christ has been lifted up on the cross, and has thrown open the gates of heaven to all believers.

J.C. Ryle

Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

Psalms 30:10-12

2012 ALCA CONVENTION

The New Ipswich, New Hampshire, congregation invites you to attend the 104th Annual Convention of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America. Devotional Services will be held Thursday, July 12, through Sunday, July 15, 2012, at the Mascenic Regional School in New Ipswich, NH. As more information becomes available it will be posted on the ALCA website alconvention.com and on our website alcnewipswich.org.

We pray for God's blessings on this event and look forward to meeting you here for this time of fellowship.

*Karl Somero, Chairman
2012 Convention Committee*

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Solitary Prayer

I love to steal awhile away
From every cumbering care,
And spend the hours of closing day
In humble, grateful prayer.

I love in solitude to shed
The penitential tear,
And all His promises to plead
Where none but God can hear.

I love to think on mercies past,
And future good implore,
And all my cares and sorrows cast
On God, Whom I adore.

I love by faith to take a view
Of brighter scenes in heaven;
The prospect doth my strength renew,
While here by tempests driven.

Thus, when life's toilsome day is o'er,
May its departing ray,
Be calm at this impressive hour,
And lead to endless day.

Phoebe H. Brown

~~~For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD; and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

Jeremiah 29:11-14