

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.

October 2018

Jesus: I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life

Pastor Nicholas Kandoll
New York Mills, Minnesota

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, one thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, with men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

Mark 10:17-27

IN THIS TEXT WE SEE A MAN value his wealth more than eternal life. We see a man seeking to “inherit” eternal life by his works. We notice that Jesus, out of love and mercy, sees through this man’s façade and reveals to him his sin. Jesus preaches the law, and gives him a commandment; and the man leaves saddened because he couldn’t bring himself to obey.

In reading an article online, I saw an unbeliever attempting to point out how inconsistent Christians are in following the Bible. This text was one of their main points. How is it that Christians can be against gay marriage but say it’s okay to be wealthy? The Bible says that the rich won’t be

saved! It may be easy for us as Christians to see through this argument, but for the unbeliever who doesn’t know the context this sounds convincing. Jesus is not saying that it is impossible for a rich man to be saved. We do see, though, that it is impossible for one who values this world and its material goods over eternal life to be saved. And that is the danger of putting stock in wealth over eternal things.



As Jesus says: Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (Matthew 6:19-21) What the author of the article didn’t understand is that it was not the rich man’s wealth that left him in an unsaved condition, rather his unbelief in the words of Christ. If one does not believe God’s Word they cannot be saved. This is very good news for us. As we live and breathe in America in this day and age, we are very wealthy.

Did you know that if you have two pairs of shoes you are among the top 10% in the whole world? Even if we are poor by our standards, if we have running water, we are better off than the vast majority of people who have ever lived! We are all rich, and as Jesus says it is difficult for one who is rich to be saved, for we do have the tendency to trust in our wealth for our security, rather than the Lord and His provision. As Christians we rejoice in the words of Christ: *with men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.* What comfort to the sinner! For it would be impossible for a sinner to be saved! One who has broken the righteous Law of God. But with God, it is possible, for He has made a way for our salvation: His dear Son Jesus Christ.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)

God’s peace.

The Kingdom of Grace

Alvin Holmgren

And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city. And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

Matthew 9:1-2

THE KINGDOM THAT JESUS CHRIST established here on earth is a Kingdom of Grace. It is in this kingdom that we received the favor of God. One of the most outstanding gospel proclamations is found in the gospel of Matthew, chapter nine, verse two—the words of Jesus to the paralytic: *Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.*

If the kingdom of God, the church, is to grow as Christ would have it grow, it must remain a kingdom of grace—where the Gospel is freely preached, where sins are proclaimed forgiven, for that is the very essence of the Gospel.

Using the light of the sacred Scripture we can safely conclude that there is no greater theme for our ministry than the grace of God that is revealed in the forgiveness of sins. Yet, it has become evident that the Lord's charge to His disciples to preach repentance and the remission of sins is diminishing and at times entirely overlooked. It seems to be much more acceptable today to enroll people as citizens of the kingdom of God by challenging them to make Christ the Lord of their life.

It appears that people are asked to make a decision for Christ and then walk full-grown into the kingdom of God without experiencing new birth. This is not the biblical way. The right way is to be born into the kingdom of God as Jesus called it in His conversation with Nicodemus. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)*

It is my prayer that in the lesson before us we will learn a deeper appreciation for the essence of the Gospel. Let us not follow the trend and think that we have become master of theology, and begin to look for something that would be greater and more impressive to our carnal minds. Let us not cease to thank God for the power that He has enclosed in the Gospel, and be reminded again by prophet Isaiah's exhortation recorded in the 51st chapter of his book of prophecy where he says: *Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.*

In the healing miracle referred to in the opening paragraph of this article, a paralyzed man was brought to

Jesus for healing. One thing was sure. He did not come on his own and without help. Four men brought him into the presence of Jesus. The house was full of people. They removed some tiles from the roof and lowered the man into the room where Jesus stood. Upon seeing their faith, Jesus began to speak to this helpless man.

The first words spoken by Jesus were these: *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.* Who knows how long this man had been in that state of helplessness? The Lord did, and perhaps his friends also knew how long he had been afflicted with that crippling disease. But Jesus also knew how long he had been under conviction because of his sins. The Lord knew



how long the man had been helpless and in search of release from the burden of sin that Jesus knew was resting upon him. Although he was helpless, he was not hopeless. If only I can get to Jesus, must have been his daily prayer. And he was fortunate that he had friends who knew Jesus. Now, how can we bring a seeking soul to Christ? We do have proper means available to us. In the first place, there is power in prayer. We can share our faith with them—we can speak of our own

spiritual experiences. We can make known to them how Christ, through His boundless grace, imparts faith and healing. Like the paralytic, we too have heard the words of Jesus: *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.*

With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. (Romans 10:10, 17)

When Jesus appeared to His disciples on the evening of His resurrection, He said unto them: *Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained. (John 20:21-23)*

Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (Matthew 18:18-20) ~

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. (1 John 4:9-11)

His [humankind's] greatness rests solely on the fact that God in His incomprehensible goodness has bestowed His love upon us. Man is not valuable because he loves God. Man is valuable because God loves him.

Helmut Thielicke

The Word of the Lord Saves

Lars Levi Laestadius

So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.

John 4:46-54

We heard that the king's servant believed, because he saw that his son was released from death through Jesus' word. But of Jesus' words - *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe* - sounds also that the king's servant would not have believed in the Son of God if this wonder had not happened. Of this servant of the king the prisoners of unbelief may now take an upbuilding example for themselves and examine themselves according to it, first in his unbelief and secondly in his faith.

For sure there is reason to rebuke the parents because they do not believe in the Son of God before they see some wonder happen. When they come to pray Jesus (asking) that He would come and help their children from spiritual and eternal death, they are not able to believe that their son will be healed in this world before they see that the son will be snatched like a firebrand from the shackles of the death. When they by their prayers carry their sorrowless children to Jesus, they can not believe that the great Lord of life and death has still power by His Word to wake up those sorrowless children from the grave of the spiritual death before they see the great wonder happen.

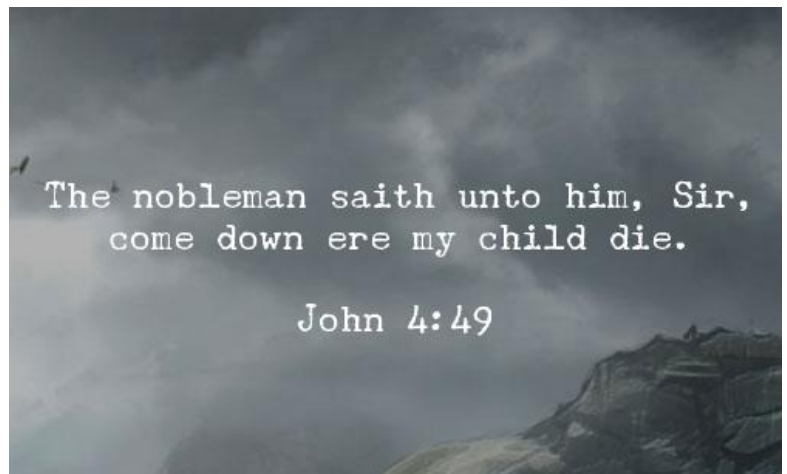
I know that the Christian parents who have that blessed desire that they soon will see the Great Crossbearer and thorn-crowned King face to face, have such desire that even their children would become released from the death into life, so that even they would become rescued from the eternal death. The parents desire to see their children sitting in Jesus' lap and lean their heads to Jesus' breast. That is why the parents carry by their prayers their children to Jesus hoping that He would put His hands on them and bless them.

But in this time the parents scarcely can believe that Jesus by His word is still able to wake up their children from the spiritual death. Jesus rebukes you, parents, because of that unbelief and says: *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe*. And as you have been like the king's servant in unbelief, be also in faith as the king's servant when you see your children be saved from the eternal death. When you see

that the spiritual ague has left your children, believe also that the Son of God has power to save by His Word your children from the spiritual and eternal death.

If you would believe it, you would have more powers to speak to, advise and exhort your children to become Christians. Oh, what a joy you would have, dear parents, if you were able to gather all of your children in your lap and carry them in front of God and say: Here I am, and the children You gave me. Oh, what a joy the parents might have had, when Jesus took their children in His lap and blessed them! It is pleasant to the parents to see that their children are sitting in the lap of the Heavenly Parent. It is almost impossible to believe that the Son of God is able to heal such children who have newly died in sin, or hardened so that they do not any more listen to their natural parents at all, but go headlong to hell.

But the king's servant had the lack of faith, and the other parents maybe have the lack of faith, too, because they want to see wonders happen in their children before they believe that the Son of God is able to heal them. Pray now, all parents, that the Lord would increase your faith when you come to Jesus to pray that He would heal your children before they die eternally. Pray that you would see your children sitting in the lap of the Creator and leaning their heads toward Jesus' breast and receive His blessing. Then you can with joy and rejoicing come to the judgement and say: Here I am, and the children You gave me. Amen. ~



And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Hebrews 2:13-18



Miracles

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children far and near,
Hello everyone! I hope you are well.
Do you believe that God still does miracles? I know He does. Each day you wake up, a miracle has happened. God gives all we need and watches over us. He cares for His own and has promised to be with us all the way to the end of life. I want give you some verses to look up and see if you can find the answers to several of Jesus' miracles that are recorded in the Bible in the New Testament.

John 2:1 Jesus was at a marriage in Cana, and they ran out of wine. There were 6 stone pots there that each held about 22-33 gallons of liquid. Jesus ordered those pots to be filled with _____, and they were filled to the brim. Jesus then told the helpers to dip some out and take it to the governor of the feast. When the governor tasted it, he did not taste _____, but it was _____. This was Jesus' first miracle.

Matthew 15:30 Great crowds of people followed Jesus as He walked around and taught. They were amazed at the miracles and especially of healing. What 4 kinds of troubles are listed that Jesus healed? _____, _____, _____, _____. There were many others also, and Jesus healed them.

Luke 8:22-24 Jesus and His disciples got into a boat and Jesus wanted them to go to the other side of the lake. As they sailed, Jesus fell asleep and there came down a great _____ of _____ on the lake. The disciples were so afraid and thought they were going to die. They went and woke Jesus. Jesus _____ the wind and the raging water: and they _____, and there was a _____.

Mark 5:22-24; 35-43 There was a ruler named _____ and his 12 year old daughter was so sick that she died. Many of Jairus' friends came to mourn with him. When Jesus came to this ruler's house He heard the people crying and there was much noise. Jesus told them that she was not dead, but just sleeping. The people did not believe Him and just laughed at Him. Jesus wanted all the people to go out of the house, and then He took her by the hand, and she _____.

Luke 7:12-15 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead _____ carried out, the _____ of his mother, and she was a widow (her husband had died): and much people of the city was with her. And when the _____ saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, _____. And he came and _____ the bier (coffin): and they that bare (carried) him stood still. And he said, _____, I say unto thee, _____. He that was dead _____ up and began to _____. And he delivered him to his _____.

John 21:4-6 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, _____, have ye any meat? They answered him, _____. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the _____ side of the ship and ye shall _____. They cast therefore, and now they were not _____ to draw it (pull it in) for the _____ of _____.

JESUS DID SO MANY MORE MIRACLES that it would take a lot of paper to write them down. Many more miracles were not even recorded in the Bible because it would make such a huge Bible, and Jesus did not see it necessary for us to know everything. He just allowed us to have enough, and through that we can know that He was so great and awesome in power. Jesus could do anything and can still do anything if it is His Father's will. He sits on the right hand of God, and He is ever ready to come to our aid in our times of need.

I hope you children can see miraculous things happening even in your own lives. These things can very often be small, but they still are miracles when you realize you had no part in how a situation turned out.

I pray you all have a good safe year in school. I always say: Do your best, you'll be blessed. Respect your teachers and those who are in authority over you. That is what God and Jesus would want you to do. ~

The Life of Luther

Gustav Koenig

The Life of Luther in Forty-Eight Historical Engravings

Luther's Troubles and Penances in the Convent

All the accounts of Luther's monastic life concur in representing him as tormented by the terrors of conscience, and as endeavoring to allay them by the severest penances and mortifications.

He says in one of his writings:

I too, formerly, when a monk, was much holier than I am now as to outward forms, repeated more prayers, watched more, fasted more, vexed my flesh: in short, my whole life was very godly in the eyes of others, though not so in my own; for I was much troubled and afflicted. Now, on the other hand, I eat and clothe myself as others do, nothing marked or singular appears in my life. Then, when I was a monk, I did nothing else than waste my time, wear out my health, and wound my conscience with seeking justification by works; so that even now it can scarcely be healed. For, in addition, to nature, in which the boasting of works is inwrought, I acquired the habit and custom of looking at my own works and dignity. Now, however, I know for certain, that one lesson, one Lord's Prayer, is more efficacious and more approved by God and all those liturgies which I mumbled over through those fifteen years; because I know that I am heard.

The more I ran and desired to come to Christ, the further He receded from me. After confession and saying mass, I never could be at peace in my mind; because the conscience cannot gain any firm consolation from works.

I wished to be a holy and pious monk and prepared myself with great devotion for mass and prayer. But when I was most devout, I went a doubter to the altar; a doubter I came back from it: when I had made my confession, I doubted; when I had not made it, I was in despair. For we were under the notion that we could not pray, and should not be heard, unless we were quite pure and sinless, like the saints in Heaven; so that it would be much better to give up praying, and to something else, then thus vainly to repeat the name of God.

Thus by and by I became the most miserable man upon earth; day and night I howled and was in despair, and no man could help me. In such way was I bathed and baptized in my monkery, and had the true sweating sickness: God be praised that I did not sicken unto death, or I should long ago had been at the bottom of hell with my monkery. For I knew Christ no more, except as a severe judge, from whom I desired to fly, and yet could not escape.

Luther Restored by Music

Luther had a very strong love for music, and its power over him was great. When he was afflicted with a fit of melancholy, he used to seek comfort therein. Seckendorf (p. 21) says, that "once, when he had shut himself up in his cell for a couple of days, without admitting any one, Edensberg, with some young musicians, knocked at the door, and, obtaining no answer, broke it open. There they found him lying in a fainting fit, and brought him back to life, not so much by medicine or food, as by a 'concert of music.'"

Luther speaks of this power of music saying:

One of the most beautiful and noblest of God's gifts is music. Satan is a great enemy of it, so that one can drive away many temptations and evil thoughts by means of it. The devil cannot make head against it. It drives away the spirit of melancholy, as we see in King Saul. Music is the best solace to a man in sorrow; it quiets, quickens, and refreshes the heart. It is a gift of God, not a human gift. Hence it drives away the devil, and makes folks cheerful; at the sound of it, one forgets all anger, lust, pride, and other vices. We see how David and all the saints clothed their godly thoughts in verses and song.

Luther Comforted by an Aged Monk

Melanchthon says that Luther often related that he was greatly comforted by the discourse of an old man in the college at Erfurt, who, when he talked to him about his internal conflicts, spoke much to him of faith, and referred him to the Creed, in which we declare our belief in the remission of sins. This article he interpreted, as not merely declaring the belief that some persons will contain forgiveness, but as a Divine commandment that we should each of us believe our own sins to be forgiven.

Mathesius tells the same story. "While he studied and prayed in the convent day and night, chastening and wasting his body by fasting and watching, he was very uneasy and sorrowful, and even his masses gave him no comfort. Then God sent him an old brother in the content for a confessor who comforted him heartily, and directed him to the gracious forgiveness of sins, as it is proclaimed in the Apostles' Creed, and taught him, out of St. Bernard's sermons, that he was to believe, with regard to himself, that our merciful God and Father, by the one sacrifice and blood of His Son, had obtained the forgiveness of all sins, and caused this to be declared by the Holy Spirit in the Apostolic Church by the words of the Absolution. This was a living and mighty comfort to his heart; and he often spoke of his confessor with great honor and hearty thankfulness." ~



Communion with Christ

John Chrysostom

And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

Matthew 14:32

BEFORE THIS THE DISCIPLES HAD SAID, *What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him,* (Matthew 8:27) but now it is not so. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, *Of a truth thou art the Son of God.* (Matthew 14:33) Do you see how by degrees he was leading them all higher and higher? For both by His walking on the sea, and by His commanding another to do so, and preserving him in jeopardy; their faith was great from then on. For then indeed He rebuked the sea, but now He does not rebuke it, in another way signifying His power more abundantly. Wherefore also they said, *Of a truth thou art the Son of God.*

What then? Did He rebuke them on their so speaking? No, quite the contrary, He rather confirmed what they said, with greater authority healing such as approached Him, and not as before. And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole. (Matthew 14:34-36) For neither did they approach Him as before, dragging Him into their houses, and seeking a touch of His hand, and directions from Him in words; but in a far higher strain, and with more of self-denial, and with a more abundant faith did they try to win themselves a cure; for she that had the issue of blood taught them all to be severe in seeking wisdom.

And the evangelist, implying also that at long intervals He visited the several neighborhoods, says, *And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased.* But yet the interval, so far from abolishing their faith, made it even greater, and preserved it in vigor.

Let us also then touch the hem of His garment, or rather, if we be willing, we have Him entire. For indeed His body is set before us now, not His garment only, but even His body; not for us to touch it only, but also to eat, and be filled. Let us now then draw near with faith, every one that has an infirmity. For if they that touched the hem of His garment drew from Him so much virtue, how much more they that possess Him entire? Now to draw near with faith is not only to receive the offering, but also with a pure heart to touch it; to be so minded, as approaching Christ Himself. For what, if you hear no voice? Yet you see Him laid out; or rather you do also hear His voice, while He is speaking by the evangelists.

Believe, therefore, that even now it is that supper at which He Himself sat down. For this is in no respect different

from that. For neither doth man make this and Himself the other; but both this and that are His own work. When therefore you see the priest delivering it unto you, account not that it is the priest that does so, but that it is Christ's hand that is stretched out.

Would you do honor to Christ's body? Do not neglect Him naked; do not honor Him here [in church] with silk garments, but outside neglect Him perishing of cold and nakedness. For He who said, "This is my body," and by His Word confirmed the fact, this same One said, *I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat... and ...Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me* (Matthew 25:42, 45)." For this one indeed

needs not coverings, but a pure soul; but that requires much attention. Let us learn therefore to be strict in life, and to honor Christ as He Himself desires. For to Him who is honored that honor is most pleasing, which it is His own will to have, not that which we account best. Since Peter too thought to honor Him by forbidding Him to wash his feet, but his doing so was not an honor, but the contrary.

Even so, honor Him with this honor, which He ordained, spending your wealth on poor people. For God has no need at all of golden vessels, but of golden souls. ~

And when they were come into the ship,
the wind ceased.
Then they that were in the ship came
and worshipped him, saying,
Of a truth thou art the Son of God.
Matthew 14:32-33

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. Title of Publication: Christian Monthly; 2. Publication Number: 0009-5494; 3. Date of Filing: September 13, 2018; 4. Frequency of Issue: Monthly; 5. Number of Issues Annually: 12; 6. Annual Subscription Price, \$12; 7. Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: PO Box 2126, Battle Ground, WA 98604; Contact Person: Anders Sundqvist; Telephone (360) 896-7344. 8. Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: PO Box 2126, Battle Ground, WA 98604. 9. Name and Address of Publisher: Apostolic Lutheran Book Concern, PO Box 2126, Battle Ground, WA 98604; Editor: Lois Matson, PO Box 2126, Battle Ground, WA 98604; Managing Editor: Lois Matson, PO Box 2126, Battle Ground, WA 98604. 10. Owner: Apostolic Lutheran Book Concern, PO Box 2126, Battle Ground, WA 98604. 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities: None. 12. Tax Status: Has not changed during preceding 12 months. 13. Publication Title: Christian Monthly. 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data: September 2018. 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation: a. Total Number Copies Printed: Average Number of Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months, 150; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 150. b. Paid Circulation: 1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions: Average, 90. Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 83. 2) Paid In-County Subscriptions: Average, 16; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 16. 3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, and Counter Sales: Average, 0; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 0. 4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: Average, 14. Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date: 12. c. Total Paid Distribution: Average, 120; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 111. d. Free Distribution by Mail: 1) Outside-County, 0; 2) In-County, 0; 3) Other Classes, 0; 4) Free Distribution Outside the Mail: Average, 0; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 0. e. Total Free Distribution: Average, 0; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 0. f. Total Distribution: Average, 120; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 111. g. Copies Not Distributed. Average, 30; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 39. h. Total: Average, 150; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 150. i. Percent Paid: Average, 100%; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 100%. 16. Electronic Copy Circulation: a. Paid Electronic Copies: Average, 0; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 0. b. Total Paid Print Copies + Paid Electronic Copies: Average, 120; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 111. c. Total Print Distribution + Paid Electronic Copies: Average, 120; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 111. d. Percent Paid: Average, 100%; Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 100%. 17. Publication of Statement of Ownership: October 2018. I certify that all information above is true and complete.

Anders Sundqvist, Business Manager

Moralistic Therapeutic Deism

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Romans 8:1-11

There's a type of "spirituality" prevalent in the evangelical world today that does not properly divide Law and Gospel, and does not discern the fallen state of mankind and his need for a Savior. The term "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism" was coined by Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton in the book *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. Smith and Denton interviewed several thousand American teenagers and found that the great preponderance of youth believe the same thing about God, and it's not what the Christian Church teaches. From Wikipedia, the five main points of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism are these:

- A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
- God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
- The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
- God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
- Good people go to [heaven](#) when they die.

The "moralistic" part teaches that as long as we live a good, moral life we'll go to heaven; the "therapeutic" part is that our life goal is to be happy and to feel good about ourselves; and the "deism" part involves a grandfatherly "god" who will give us what we want and not bother about anything else.

What a horrifying state of affairs!

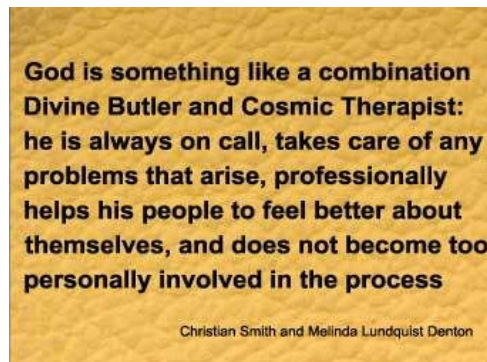
In His Word, the God of the Old and New Testaments has given specific requirements in His Law. Rather than simply living a good, moral life, our God demands ABSOLUTE PERFECTION. Because of our first parent's fall into sin, we inherit original sin along with our DNA, so even if we live morally upright lives, we're not good enough to stand before God's judgment seat. But He made a way, a much better way than moral living: God Himself came to Earth veiled in human flesh. He lived the perfect life, and died the perfect death, to make us His own. He paid the sin debt we could not pay.

Rather than being happy and feeling good about ourselves, God has promised that in this world Christians will have trouble. Jesus Himself said, *In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.* (John 16:33) The eighth chapter of Romans speaks of the "sufferings of this present time" and that we "groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies."

God is not a senile, grandfatherly "god" who bestows a pat on the head for good deeds. Our Almighty Father creates with His Word, brings life from death, takes sin seriously, and will mete out punishment for the same. He is more concerned about our eternal state than we are, and He calls us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

The only remedy for Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is the proper teaching of Law and Gospel. May we hear the demands of God that we have failed to keep, and the remedy for that failure: Jesus Christ for us in Word and Sacrament.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Timothy 1:17)



Christian Monthly Vol. LXXIV—No. 10

Subscription Rate: 1 Year

US: \$12 (Washington residents add your local sales tax)

Canada: \$18 (US money order only) Foreign: \$25

Send articles for publication to:
Lois Matson, Editor
Email: cm@apostoliclutheran.org
Phone: (360) 904-6951
Postal Mail to:
CHRISTIAN MONTHLY
PO Box 2126
Battle Ground, WA 98604 USA

Address subscriptions, payments,
and Book Concern orders to:
Anders & Clara Sundqvist, Managers
THE BOOK CONCERN
PO Box 2126
Battle Ground, WA 98604 USA
Phone: (360) 896-7344
Email: books@apostoliclutheran.org

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

www.apostoliclutheran.org

Western Mission: western@apostoliclutheran.org

Eastern Mission: eastern@apostoliclutheran.org

Foreign Mission: foreign@apostoliclutheran.org

The *Christian Monthly* (ISSN 0009-5494) is published monthly for \$12 per year by the Apostolic Lutheran Book Concern, 19113 NE 144th Street, Brush Prairie, WA 98606. Periodical permit paid in Brush Prairie, Washington.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: PO Box 2126, Battle Ground, WA 98604

General Disclaimer: The material in the *Christian Monthly* is reviewed for scriptural soundness and to ensure that it does not conflict with the teachings of the ALCA. Publication does not imply that other material by included authors has been so approved.



HAVE YOU MOVED? Please notify the Book Concern of address changes. We must pay return postage on undelivered mail.

Luther's Prayers

Martin Luther

Submitted by Ralph and Barbara Somero; New Ipswich, New Hampshire

No. 195—PRAYER OF A SOLDIER

Dear God, you see that I must go to war. I would surely rather keep out of it. I do not rely and trust in the righteous cause, but upon your great mercy. I will not wage war against you, neither will I be in an army that robs God of the things that are God's. O heavenly Father, here I am employed as you will in this work and service of my ruler. My first loyalty is to you; then to him, for your sake. I thank you that by grace and mercy you have placed me in this work. I am sure that it is not sinful, but righteous, and that it is obedience according to your will. I have learned through your gracious word that our works cannot help us and that no one is saved by being a warrior. I will in no way rely on my obedience and work as a soldier. But I will sincerely do this work as a service to your will. Enable me to believe with all my heart that only the innocent blood of your dear Son, my Lord Jesus Christ, obediently shed for me according to your gracious will can redeem and save me. In this faith I will stay here, wage war, do all that has to do with war, and if need be, die. Dear God and Father, preserve and strengthen this faith in me through your Holy Spirit. Amen. I commend my body and soul unto your hands. Amen.



(After this, pray the Lord's Prayer and then cheerfully unsheathe the sword and wield it in the name of God.)

No. 196—FOR THE FAMILY—Submitting to God's Ordinance

Dear God, I learn of you that marriage was instituted by you, and it is pleasing to you. Therefore, I yield to your word. I shall be reconciled to whatever you permit to take place in this estate. Amen.



No. 197—FOR GOD'S GUIDANCE IN FINDING A DEVOUT HUSBAND OR WIFE

Dear God, you did institute marriage. Give me, your imperfect child, a devout wife (husband), so that I may live honestly and peaceably in true love, and that my will may be hers (his) and her (his) will be mine. Choose for me one with whom I may serve you, and by faith and prayer overcome any trials of married life. Amen.

Jesus Christ, the Last Adam

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. (1 Corinthians 15:20-26)

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. (1 Corinthians 15:45)

All humanity has been redefined by the finished work of Jesus Christ. All humanity has been given a new identity, and that identity is completely founded on that finished work. So we understand that by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Paul is really letting us know that salvation has been given, that righteousness has been given, that forgiveness of sins has been given. Ultimately what he tells us is that the human race itself has been given a new beginning point. It's something that gets shared throughout many of his epistles, and it gets repeated in a different way this time, but it's really the same exact thing that he shares in the book of Romans and in other places. He says that at one point in time the human race was known by Adam—and the fall of Adam—but from this point on, the human race will no longer be known by the first Adam (which we learn from the New Testament), but rather the human race will from this point be known by the last Adam. When he says "the last Adam" he's talking about Jesus Christ. This is the whole point: that Jesus Christ is now the single human being that defines all humanity. He is the single human being that defines our value, our worth before God. He is the One who lets us know exactly where our standing is, and that standing is etched in eternity itself. By the blood of His Son Jesus Christ, God has marked us as His children. He has marked us as His own. He has named us "children of God."

Pastor Travis Seppala; Greer, South Carolina