

# 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.

September 2016

## The Passage of Time

Pastor Jay Weidner  
Laurium, Michigan

**A** FEW YEARS AGO, MY ONLY BROTHER came up from Virginia for a week. It's hard to believe that he's retired, it's hard to believe that he's old enough to be retired, and it's hard to believe that I'm old enough for him to be retired. We talked about how things were when we were younger and had some good laughs. On the weekend we had the opportunity to take a ride on an old train that featured a beautifully restored Copper Range Railroad car; number 25, a combination baggage and passenger car originally built in the very early 1900s.

The excursion was a treat; it was easy to imagine what it was like to ride in this car up to the Copper Country in Michigan from some other distant destination. In its day it was likely considered fast travel and while not first class, still was fairly comfortable. Yet, by today's standards, the ride would have been hot, tedious and miserable. Such is the passage of time. The past is past and not to be reborn.

Long before trains or retirement Moses spoke of time in the 90th Psalm. He didn't see it as nostalgic but arduous. He witnessed the passage of life as swift and fraught with difficulty.

When the manufacturer turned out the railcar it produced, they thought it was an amazing creation. Now it stands a silent witness to an age long past, restored to lost beauty but simply a museum piece. Often people opine about being able to turn the clocks back in time but that is impossible. God made it impossible. We don't go back, we go forward with purpose.

Our lives are not lived in the past but in the present with an eye to the future. As school begins anew this semester, it starts precisely that way: anew. It is new and fresh, in an age of computers and online communications that will be considered archaic in an age to come. So our eyes are not fixed on the works of human hands but on our God.

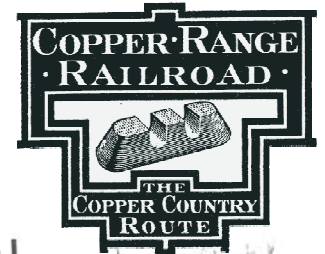
James Russell Lowell penned these words regarding the need to abolish slavery: "New occasions teach new duties; time makes ancient good uncouth; they must upward still and onward Who would keep abreast of truth." ("Once to Every Man and Nation") Our Lord gives us hope as we face each day in Him that we can trust Him to direct our path in the way He would choose. The ways of the past are not necessarily true and if we aren't careful we can be deceived into a mode of thinking that causes us to fall prey to a "Holy Nostalgia" that makes the race that we run harsh, moving on haltingly as with a limp. Only God and His Word remain eternal and unchanged. So Moses the man of God:

*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it. (Psalm 90:12-17)*

We are thankful with every new school year to engage in the study of God's Word and thankful for His promise of granting us wisdom through it. Every day He makes it new. Please continue to pray for us and support us as we go down the path He has given us to walk, as we do the same for you.

It was wonderful to see my brother and do some reminiscing but better still to think that we will spend eternity together in the Christ in whom we have placed our trust. Eternity. ~

Copper Range Railroad #25  
in Houghton, Michigan. 1934.



Ray W. Buhrmaster Collection

# Seek Those Things Which Are Above

Pastor Wayne Juntunen; Esko, Minnesota  
June 1970 CM

*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*

*Colossians 3:1-2*

**B**ECAUSE OF OUR CARNAL NATURE, we tend to be earth-bound. If, in truth, we are risen with Christ; that is, we are living and walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh, it follows that we are to keep seeking the things that are above. Our new birth is only the beginning of our walk of faith. God's desire is that we be transformed into the image of Christ. *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son...* (Romans 8:29). This does not take place automatically. It is a continuous and constant "seeking those things that are above."

What this means is all that Christ has achieved and won for us through His incarnation, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension. The life of a true believer in Christ is a day-by-day walk of intimate fellowship with Christ. The reason the Apostle Paul exhorts us to "seek" is because we still have this carnal nature that wants to live its own life apart from Christ. It is the battle that continually goes on between the "flesh and the spirit" as Paul wrote in *Galatians 5:17: ...the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.*

In order that we be victors in this strife, we need to continually be *looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith* (Hebrews 12:2). What this means in our real, ordinary, daily life is that we maintain an on-going life of prayer with our Savior. This prayer-life is not necessarily talking to Lord. Rather it is our "mind-set" in which we are mindful of all He has done for us, all His promises that are part of our inheritance in Christ, and a realization of His constant presence with us as we go through our daily tasks, plans and purposes, challenges, trials, stress, joys and sorrows.

Since it is in Christ that *we live, and move, and have our being* (Acts 17:28), seeking the things where Christ is enthroned in all authority, power and glory ought to be the most natural thing for us to do as His redeemed bride.

"Seeking" implies our desire and longing for Christ to be our first and foremost love. It is a Holy Spirit passion for Christ's power and influence to have dominion in us and over us in all we do and say.

The primary reason for this "seeking" is simply the fact that apart from Christ *we can do nothing* (John 15:5). The opposite truth is that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). This being true, Satan, the world, and our own flesh and blood form a powerful triad to hinder us from such a total surrender to our Lord and King.

The Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is seeking throughout this wide world for those *whose hearts are perfect toward him* (2 Chronicles 16:9). We so easily sing, "Lord, you are my All in all." Is it truly so for all or any of us? Is it possible that we worship the Lord with our lips but our hearts are far from him? (Matthew 15:8).



O Lord, forgive us for pretending we love You above all things! Wash us in the blood of Jesus for not thinking about, and failing to seek those things that are above! Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us! Rekindle in our hearts a passionate desire for all Your riches in Christ, and move us to diligently, consistently and faithfully desire that Your presence and power would dominate our lives! We thank You, Father, that You desire to reveal Yourself to us and others that all men would know You are the one and only true God to whom belongs honor and wisdom, and glory and power now and forever, Amen!



*The Penitent Saint Peter*

Donato Creti

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

**W**HEN I COME TO BE UNITED TO THEE with all my being, then there will be no more pain and toil for me, and my life shall be a real life, being wholly filled by Thee. But since he whom Thou fillest is the one Thou liftest up, I am still a burden to myself because I am not yet filled by Thee.

Woe is me! Lord, have pity on me; my evil sorrows contend with my good joys, and on which side the victory lies I do not know. Woe is me! Lord, have pity on me. Woe is me! Behold, I do not hide my wounds. Thou art the Physician, I am the sick man; Thou art merciful, I need mercy...

My whole hope is in Thy exceeding great mercy and that alone. Give what Thou commandest and command what Thou wilt. Thou commandest continence from us, and when I knew, as it is said, that no one could be continent unless God gave it to him, even this was a point of wisdom to know whose gift it was. For by continence we are bound up and brought back together in the One, whereas before we were scattered abroad among the many. For he loves Thee too little who loves along with Thee anything else that he does not love for Thy sake, O Love, who dost burn forever and art never quenched. O Love, O my God, enkindle me! Thou commandest continence; give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt.

Augustine of Hippo



# Love and Trust the Lord!

Pastor Rod Johnson  
Laurium, Michigan

*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

*Matthew 22:37-39*

*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

*Proverbs 3:5-6*

**T**HERE ARE MANY LESSONS TO BE LEARNED as we study the Holy Scripture. They all begin with trust and love toward God. For us to rely upon the Bible, we must believe and thereby know that it is the inerrant Word of the Lord. Trusting the Word is essential to obtaining wisdom, for by it we know the Christ! Thus we see from the proverbs above that when by God's grace we come to love and trust the Lord, we can rely upon the result: He shall direct our ways!

The Lord knows that we often have worries and fears that make us anxious about many things. So Jesus said, *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.* (Matthew 6:31, 33-34)

What is it to trust? It is simply to rely or depend upon! To trust in the Lord is to commit your way unto Him, taking refuge in Him. *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.* (Psalm 71:1) In the text proverb, we are shown the blessing of the Lord as He directs us in His paths, when we acknowledge Him, not leaning upon our own understanding. Life becomes very simple—the basics bring contentment because of godliness, as the blessings of God's grace.

Trusting in the Lord's guidance and wisdom results in *health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.* (Proverbs 3:8) The blessing of the Lord to those who live in love, peace, and joy with contentment, is health to both the body and soul.

One of the most difficult areas of trusting the Lord in our lives is to commit our tithes and offerings to Him. This, we

often think, may affect acquiring our daily bread, our ability to have what we want, and therefore it will diminish our pleasures of life. So we "lean upon our own understanding" and attempt to manage our money according to our own wisdom. But the Lord says, *Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.* (Proverbs 3:9-10) It is also written, *Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.* (Ecclesiastes 11:1-2)

With our limited understanding or ability to see into the future, we are prone to worry and fear. But the blessing of the Lord promised here is that He will provide for our needs even as we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." He is faithful! What blessings do we lose when we untrustingly rely upon our own judgment? We will never know, because we did not receive them! *But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully... God loveth a cheerful giver.* (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)

The Lord Jesus teaches us: The world will know that you are My disciples because you love one another. Our willingness to share with others is a vivid display of love. Providing the financial means to minister the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others is a key expression of love, as it clearly displays to them the loving concern for their needs of body and soul. Thus the Psalmist wrote, *And let them (the redeemed) sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.* (Psalm 107:22)

*And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.*

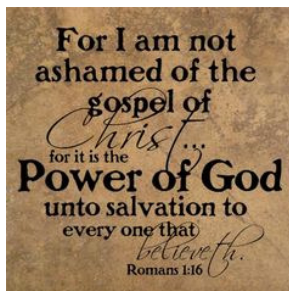
*Luke 6:31-32*

*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.*

*Isaiah 26:3-4*

*O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.*

*Psalms 84:12*



*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

*Romans 1:16-17*

**N**OTICE THAT IN VERSE 17, Paul says that "the righteousness of God" is revealed. So God shows His righteousness to men. But God is not foolish. If men did not need God's help, He would not waste His time giving it to them. Every time people are converted, it is because God has come to them and overcome their ignorance by showing the Gospel to them. Without this, they could never save themselves. No one in all human history has thought out by himself the fact of God's wrath as it is taught in Scripture. No

one ever dreamed of getting peace with God through the life and work of a unique Savior, the God-man, Jesus Christ. In fact, the Jews rejected Christ in spite of all the teaching of their prophets. It seems that the very goodness that some Jews and Gentiles reached stopped them from seeking God in His way—because they were determined to do things in their own way. So, the more "free will" tries, the worse things become!

*Martin Luther, On the Bondage of the Will*

# God Is Merciful and Judgment Is His

Gwen Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children all across the lands,

Hello again. I hope you are well today. We heard a sermon recently that spoke of God's mercy and His judgment. The Bible shows these two attributes of God also, and I want to briefly share of a few of these accounts.

God is a loving God, and He also is a God who will and can pour out His wrath on those who do not believe. Let's take a look at the Bible and you will see God's power to do as He will.

**Genesis 6:13:** *And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.* God instructs Noah to build an ark. Noah does, and when the ark is finished, at least two of every living creature, Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives enter it and God shuts them in.

**Genesis 7:1:** *And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.* God sent 40 days and 40 nights of rain, and the world is destroyed by this flood. All the people that remain are Noah and his family. When the water dries off the earth, and the ark comes to rest once again on dry ground, Noah and his family come out of the ark and begin life on earth again. God had **mercy** on eight souls, and God's **judgment** came upon the rest of the people in the world and they were destroyed.

Here is another account from **Numbers 16**. Moses and Aaron were leading the children of Israel out of Egypt. There were certain men in the company of people that rebelled against Moses and Aaron and were angry that they were taken away from a wealthy land to this desert place. These men and their families began their own kind of worship and God did not like this one bit. Moses went to talk to them and told them to meet the following day with their censers of incense at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. They met there as Moses instructed.

The Lord then spoke to Moses and Aaron and told them to walk far away from these people and the ground they stood on, as God was going to destroy them. Moses and Aaron did so and God made the earth crack open and swallow all those men and their families, their houses, and all that belonged to their leader Korah. Then the earth closed up again, and just like that those who did not please God perished.

God showed His **mercy** unto Moses and Aaron who had been called by God to be the leaders and He showed His powerful **judgment** on those who went against Him.

You kids probably know about the battle of Jericho. The harlot Rahab hid the spies that Joshua had sent into the city to see what kind of city it was. Joshua and the Israelites were planning their attack on this city.

While the spies were in the city, Rahab hid them on the roof of her house so the soldiers of the city could not find them, and she helped them escape safely. While the spies were in her house she asked that they would save

her and her household when they attacked the city. It was promised by the spies that she would be safe.

Rahab gathered her father's family that lived in the city and told them what was going to happen. She told them they would be saved if they stayed with her in her house. If any were to go out they would die.

The day came when the Israelites marched around the city one time each day for 6 days, and on the 7<sup>th</sup> day they marched 7 times around the city. They were instructed to shout a great shout, and the priests blew on their trumpets, and the walls of Jericho came tumbling down.



*The Seven Trumpets of Jericho* James Tissot  
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

But wait! what about Rahab and her household? Ah, Rahab's house did not fall down. Yes, she and her family were safe and were brought out of the city.

What about the rest of the people in the city? Sadly, the city was burned and the people destroyed. **Joshua 6:21:** *And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.* It was a sad end for all who lived there, except Rahab who helped the spies. Rahab and her family remained living with the Israelites from that day on.


Once again we see the power of God and what He wills to do or not do. His **mercy** was granted to Rahab and her father's house and wrathful **judgment** was on the rest of those living in the city.

**Romans 9:15:** *For he (God) saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

**John 3:17:** *"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world (to eternal judgment); but that the world through him might be saved.*

In summary of these accounts, it is important that you children understand that those to whom God showed mercy, received it by FAITH. Those who perished did so because they did not believe, so they received God's eternal judgment.

We are not saved because we are good people who do a lot of good things, but we are saved by GRACE alone through FAITH, NOT of our works or we may fall into boasting about all our goodness. ~



# What Is a Hymn?

Edith Margaret Clarkson

From "Perspectives" June 1987 ©Faith Alive Christian Resources. Used by permission.

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Colossians 3:16*

A hymn is an expression of worship—our glad and grateful acknowledgement of the "worth-ship" of Almighty God, our confession of our own creatureliness before our Creator, our bowing before His transcendence. Hymns are a celebration of who and what God is and of what He has done—songs of praise, thanksgiving, and joy in God. Christians sing hymns because our God is worthy to be praised.

It follows, then, that the words of a hymn are of the utmost importance. Good music must accompany them, but its highest office is to strengthen and enhance the message of the words. The best tunes are those that best help worshipers experience the text of the hymn; for it is the words, not the music, that decide the worth of a hymn.

What, then, constitutes a good hymn text? Watts and Wesley set the norm long ago, and their standards have never been surpassed. Today's hymns must be in our own language, idiom, and metaphor, but our main thrust will not be substantially different from theirs. I suggest that good hymns have six general characteristics:

*Good hymns are God-centered, not man-centered—looking upwards, not inwards.* They have loftiness of concept, and dignity and reverence of language. They adore the eternal Godhead for who and what He is, worshiping Him for His holiness, wisdom, power, justice, goodness, mercy and truth. They praise Him for His mighty acts—for creation, preservation, redemption; for guidance, protection, provision; for the means of grace and the hope of glory. They offer petition suitable to their theme; they praise, worship, nourish, encourage, teach, exhort, inspire and rejoice in Christian community. Good hymns are not subjective; they are free from introspection. When man enters the picture, it is to acknowledge the darkness of his own sinful nature in the presence of such a God, to seek His mercy, and to grasp more closely His redeeming grace.

*Good hymns are doctrinal in content and theologically sound, rooted solidly in the Word of God.* Christian leaders should be more aware of the doctrinal content of the hymns they choose than many of them are, for many hymns in common use today contain theological errors or untruths. All too often attractive or well-known tunes are allowed to take precedence over truly biblical texts, and our congregations absorb false doctrines unwittingly. For as Erik Routley has written, "A congregation's disposition towards right belief or away from it is subtly influenced by the habitual use of hymns... The singing congregation is uncritical; but it matters very much what it sings, for it comes to believe its hymns. Wrong doctrine in preaching would be noticed; in hymns, it may come to be believed." The worshiping congregation with a good and wisely used hymnbook, however, is constantly instructed and blessed as the great doctrines of the faith are brought before it in review: so truth is kept vernal. The doctrine of good hymns is neither myopic nor overblown, but true to the Word of God and to the experience of the average believer. It is practical in nature, designed to help worshipers respond to God's truth and so to live better Christian lives.

*Good hymns have words of beauty, dignity, reverence, and simplicity.* Whether their theme is one of lofty exultation or a simple expression of trust, good hymns are chaste, precise, and lovely in their utterance. Their language is clear and concise. They are never glib, never pat, never extravagant, never trite; they are always true. Emotionally warm and fervent, they are never sentimental. They speak beautifully, feelingly, compellingly, and with restraint of the things of God. They do not transgress the limits of good taste in concept, word, or setting. They cannot give offense.

*Good hymns are adult in word and tone.* They do not insult intelligence by requiring us to sing immortal truths in childish or unsuitable modes of expression, or to sloppy, sentimental tunes. While remaining true to the Gospel, they contain nothing to embarrass or bewilder outsiders, but rather will speak to them of a deep, sincere, vital experience of God. Their figures of speech will be in keeping with the worth-ship of God and will have meaning for the contemporary Christian.

*Good hymns display precision and finesse of poetic technique and expression.* They will have a single theme and organic unity. They move from a bold and arresting attack in the opening line, through a definite progression of thought, to a clear and decisive climax. No extraneous thought may intrude for the sake of a rhyme or rhythmic pattern. Rhymes and rhythms are interesting, original and correct. The declamation (union of words with music) is accurate. Meters may be varied but will be conservative enough that good tunes, capable of being well sung by average congregations, may be written for them. Good hymns should be short enough to be sung in their entirety, in order that the full impact of their sequence may be experienced. They should be free of irrelevant refrains which detract from the main thought.

*Good hymns turn the heart heavenward.* They rejoice in the unity of believers and the communion of saints. The best hymnists have recognized more clearly than most of us that the people of God are one. They take their place with the warring, suffering, and triumphing Church universal, identifying with the saints of long ago as readily as with those of today. The hymns of such writers sing often, and with deep delight and longing, of the soul's true home.

What constitutes a good hymn? Good hymns are not the result of desire or ambition, but are an outgrowth of spiritual life. They are not based on feeling but on eternal verities, not centered on man but on God.

Writing a hymn is more than using certain techniques correctly. It is a matter of looking on the face of God, of worshiping in His presence, of embracing His will, of accepting His cross and living under its daily obedience; then, having learned the disciplines of good writing, of singing His grace. True hymnwriters have not sought primarily to write hymns, but to know God: knowing Him, they could not help but sing. Theirs are the hymns that have lived through the ages and will live far into the future. It is this kind of hymnwriting we need today if our generation is to contribute anything of real worth to the Church's treasury of worship and praise. ~



# The Kingdom of Christ

Martin Luther

*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 9:2

**T**HESE WORDS SHOW AND CONTAIN in brief what the kingdom of Christ is, namely, this sweet voice, these motherly and fatherly words penetrating our inmost soul: "Thy sins are forgiven." In no other sense are we to view the kingdom of Christ, so far as it is understood, than how we are to live before God. As you, beloved, well know that our highest duty is rightly to establish the conscience that we may know how we stand before God and our neighbor. Therefore we must also hold fast to these words and become accustomed to the expression: "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven," and like sayings of which the Gospel is full.

From this it follows that the kingdom of Christ is realized where nothing but comfort and the forgiveness of sins reign not only in words to proclaim it, which is also necessary, but also in deed, for He did not only speak these words into the ear of this sick man, but He also forgave his sins and comforted him. This knowledge is proper for us Christians to know. It is indeed easily and quickly said and heard, but when it comes to the test the light is early extinguished, and Satan soon leads us astray. I have before often said and will always say that you should beware and properly learn the character and nature of the kingdom of Christ, for you know how reason is inclined in its every movement to fall from faith and from this knowledge to works. But here you see no works at all, no merit, here there is neither command nor law; there is nothing more than the offering of Christ's assistance, His comfort and His grace. Only kindness meets the man sick of the palsy.

Therefore, if the kingdom of Christ is to grow, we must keep out of it with the law, and not be busy with works; for it is not in harmony with it to say, "Go out and run hither and thither and atone for your sins; you must observe and do this and that, if you will be free from sin," but directly without any work and law, out of pure grace, your sins are forgiven. Therefore, it is beyond the sphere of the kingdom of Christ to urge the people with the law.

But we receive such things only with the ear and on the tongue, and it enters not into the depth of the heart, for sin at all times still hangs about our necks; it clings firmly to us, as St. Paul speaks in Romans 7:18-19, and Hebrews 12:1. But in death we will experience it. Some contend that it is not enough for us to preach only faith and love. They say, "You must do better and climb much higher." How high then must I climb? This filth now enters nearly every community where the Gospel has just been planted. These tares of Satan will also come to us, as I have often warned you. Take heed that you remain sound in your knowledge, in the true doctrine of Christ, for this knowledge and light is soon lost.

The fanatics soon torment us with works, and profess to have a nobler spirit; they urge and insist upon our doing something first of all, and permit faith and love to be

overlooked. This of course is not of the Holy Spirit. Christ first takes possession of the conscience, and when it is right in faith toward God, then He also directs us to do works toward our neighbor. But He first highly extols faith and keeps works in the background. This they cannot understand. The kingdom of Christ consists in finding all our praise and boast in grace. Other works should be free, not to be urged, nor should we wish by them to become Christians, but condescend with them to our neighbor. Thus we should hear this Gospel to hold fast to its expressions so that they may be written in our hearts, that this light, this Word and lamp may truly shine in us, by which we can judge all other doctrines. Thus He says to the man sick with the palsy, "Thy sins are forgiven." These and similar words are to be taken to heart and meditated upon, since they are nothing but pure grace, and no work, by which the conscience is oppressed and forced to do something.

Thus, with these words you must protect yourselves against false teachers.

We have now sowed a little of the Word, and this the devil cannot stand, for he never sleeps; the worms and the beetles will come and infect it. Yet so it must be; Christ will prove his Word and examine who has received it and who not. Therefore let us remain on the right road to the kingdom of Christ, and not go about with works and urge and force the works of the law, but only with the words of the Gospel which comfort the conscience: Be happy, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven. ~



Healing the Sick William Brassey Hole  
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

A poem  
Psalm 51

O Thou that hear'st when sinners cry, Though all my crimes before Thee lie,  
Behold them not with angry look, But blot their mem'ry from Thy book.  
Create my nature pure within And form my soul averse to sin:  
Let Thy good Spirit ne'er depart, Nor hide Thy presence from my heart.  
I cannot live without Thy light, Cast out and banished from Thy sight:  
Thine holy joys, my God, restore, And guard me that I fall no more.

Isaac Watts

# Daily “Conversation”

Lois Matson  
Yacolt, Washington

The word “conversation” is used differently today than it was in King James English. If I say, “I had a conversation with my neighbor,” you understand that I had verbal communication with my neighbor. I had talked with my neighbor.

It was not so in times past. An old English definition of “conversation” from dictionary.com says:

## 6. **Obsolete. behavior or manner of living.**

The word that is translated “conversation” in the KJV is the Greek word *anastrophe* (pronounced an-as-trof-ay'). *Stong's Concordance* defines this word as “dealing with other men, conduct, life, behavior, manner of life.”

*Easton's Bible Dictionary*, published in 1897, says that “conversation” is never used in Scripture in the sense of verbal communication. Here is that definition:

**Conversation:** generally the goings out and in of social intercourse (Ephesians 2:3; 4:22; RSV, “manner of life”); one's deportment or course of life. This word is never used in Scripture in the sense of verbal communication from one to another (Psalms 50:23; Hebrews 13:5). In Philippians 1:27 and 3:20, a different Greek word is used. It there means one's relations to a community as a citizen, i.e., citizenship.

**S**o, OUR CONVERSATION IS LITERALLY our manner of living, how we conduct ourselves, how we behave. This includes how we talk, of course, but conversation in KJV language, is a whole lot more than words. It's our way of life, what we do, what we say, how we act.

What is the testimony of a non-believer? How do they live? According to Scripture, the daily life of the children of wrath—their conversation—is filled with evil desires, corruption, vanity and futility.

*Ephesians 2:2-3: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

*Ephesians 4:22: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.*

*1 Peter 1:18-19: Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

What is the testimony of a Christian? What does our daily conversation look like? How do we live? How should we, as believers, conduct ourselves? The Scripture gives exhortation to holy, faithful living, to a life of love and purity, humility and wisdom.

*1 Timothy 4:12: Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

*Hebrews 13:7: Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*

*James 3:13: Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.*

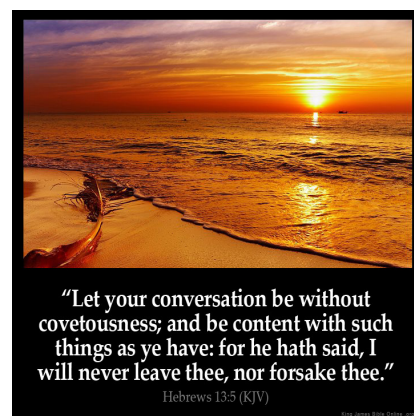
*1 Peter 1:15-16: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

*1 Peter 2:11-12: Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles...*

*1 Peter 3:1-2: Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.*

*2 Peter 3:11-13: Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

Our daily lives witness to the goodness of God. He has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, and He has poured His mercy on us richly through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Let our conversation—both in spoken word and in manner of life—reflect the light of Jesus to the dark world around us. ~



“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Hebrews 13:5 (KJV)

## Christian Monthly Vol. LXXII—No. 9

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](mailto: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](mailto:books@apostoliclutheran.org)

## Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

[www.apostoliclutheran.org](http://www.apostoliclutheran.org)

Western Mission: [western@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:western@apostoliclutheran.org)

Eastern Mission: [eastern@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:eastern@apostoliclutheran.org)

Foreign Mission: [foreign@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto: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.

## God's Exceeding Grace

Pastor Chuck Bylka  
South Range, Michigan

*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*

**Romans 5:12-18**

**I**N THE FIFTH CHAPTER OF HIS LETTER to the church in Rome, the Apostle Paul gives us a clear picture of the nature and the magnitude of God's grace. God shows us kindness and mercy even though we do not deserve it. *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (v. 6) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (v. 8) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (v. 10)*

Five times in this chapter, the Apostle Paul uses the phrase "much more" in describing the power of God's grace in comparison to the curse of Adam. No matter how overwhelming the effects of sin may be, the grace of God exceeds it by far. Martin Luther says "Were hell a thousand times more, and death ten thousand times more, it would all be but a spark, a mere drop compared with Christ's Resurrection, victory and triumph."

Instead of being held captive by sin, we are set free by God's forgiveness. Instead of living a life of ungodliness, we are given the righteousness of Christ. Instead of being enemies of God, we have received the adoption of sons. Instead of death there is resurrection and life. Christ has overcome everything for us. May God grant us grace to look beyond our sufferings and by faith, lay hold of the finished work of the Risen Lord, Jesus Christ.

*So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**1 Corinthians 15:54-57**

**W**HOSOEVER WANTS TO KNOW GOD and His will correctly, should go the right way, by which he will not be offended, but improved. The right way is Christ the Lord, when He says: *No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.* Whoever, then, wants to know the Father correctly and come to Him, let him come to Christ first, and learn to know Him, namely, thus: Christ is the Son of God and almighty, eternal God. But what does the Son of God do? He becomes man for our sake, He becomes subject to the Law, in order to redeem us from the Law, He permits Himself to be crucified and dies on the cross, in order to pay for our sins; and He arises from the dead, in order to make, by His resurrection, an entrance into eternal life, and bring help against eternal death; and He sits at the right hand of God, in order to be advocate for us and to give us the Holy Ghost, by whom we may be ruled and led and kept against every temptation and suggestion of the devil. That means to know Christ rightly.

When, then, this knowledge is good and firm in the heart, then begin and ascend into heaven and figure it out thus: Since the Son of God has done this for the sake of men, what follows with regard to the heart of God in its attitude toward us men, since His Son does this out of the Father's will and command? Surely thy own reason must force thee to say: Since God has given His only-begotten Son for our sake, and for our sake has not spared Him, He surely can have no evil designs toward us. It is not His will that we should be lost, since He seeks and uses the supreme means to help us to life. In this way we may come to God in the right manner, as Christ Himself preaches, *John 3:16: God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Paul Kretzmann, The Popular Commentary of the Bible