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“The Scripture cannot be broken.” John 10:35.

“Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my path.” Psalm 119:105.

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**“Thanks be unto
God for His
unspeakable
Gift!”**

—2 Corinthians 9:15





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To expose particularly the false teaching and practice of the various so-called "Lutheran" church bodies by comparing their teachings and practices with what is plainly recorded in the Word of God, in the Lutheran Confessions, and in the old orthodox Lutheran writings.

To expose false teaching and practice wherever it makes its appearance and to keep abreast of the current happenings in the church and among the nations as signs of the times.

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Thanksgiving Meditation in the *Venite* of our Matins Liturgy

— Psalm 95:1-7 (TLH, pp. 33-34)

Sad to say, the very existence of “Thanksgiving Day” as a federally-mandated, legal holiday, established by presidential proclamation and perpetuated by Congress, is a sure sign NOT of our nation’s *gratitude*, but, on the contrary, its gross *INgratitude* to God for all His blessings! That statement makes absolutely no sense at first hearing until we consider WHY a special day of thanksgiving had to be mandated at all! People who are *truly grateful* shouldn’t need to have one day out of 365 set aside *by law* as an opportunity for “thanksgiving.” Moreover, what really clinches it is the fact that, *in spite of this legal holiday* —created so that people can get off work and go to church with their families to give thanks unto God— most Americans (even those who regard themselves as “church-going” people) do NOT attend church on Thanksgiving Day! They’re too busy traveling, visiting, eating, drinking, resting, playing, and watching football games on T.V. —so busy *enjoying* all their blessings, their *temporal* blessings, of course, that they have no

time to give thanks for them! Hey, this is “Turkey Day” for most people; and the vast majority don’t even take time to offer a *prayer* of thanksgiving at their “Thanksgiving” table!! “*Where [indeed] are the nine?*” we hear Jesus ask in the Gospel Lesson appointed to be read on Thanksgiving Day. And we wonder if even one-out-of-ten —whether even one-out-of-a-hundred— of our countrymen was in church to hear it on the fourth Thursday in November!

By God’s grace, we Christians have *much* for which we should be thankful; and we have *special reason* to give thanks unto the Lord not only on Thanksgiving Day but every day of our lives. According to the title-text of this article, the text of the *Venite* in our Matins liturgy (*TLH*, pp. 33-34), it is not only because He is the only true God (v. 3), to whom alone our thanks is due; it is not merely because He is our “*Maker*” (vv. 5 and 6) and our Provider (v. 4) here in this world; but it is chiefly because He is “*our God*” (v. 7) and “*the Rock of our Salvation,*” (v. 1), and that by His grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith, we are His people (pastured in His precious Word) and “*the sheep of His hand*” (v. 7) — heirs of everlasting life in heaven (Cf. John 10:27-28)!

The Psalmist, as the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit, exhorts us to do what is “natural” for our New Man of faith, but a “pain in the neck” to our Old Adam of sin, in which “*dwelleth no good thing*” (Romans 7:18). He says: “*Oh come! ...Let us come before His presence!*” While we Christians should indeed pray “*everywhere*” (as St. Paul writes in the Thanksgiving Epistle Lesson, I Timothy 2:1-8), it is *particularly* fitting that we should render thanksgiving in God’s House, in “*the place where [His] honor dwelleth*” (Psalm 26:8). And the Psalmist even tells us **how** we should render our thanksgiving when he says: “*Let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms,*” that is, with **hymns** of praise; “*let us worship and bow down,*” humbly acknowledging our unworthiness of all His benefits toward us; “*let us kneel before the Lord our Maker*” as does a lowly subject begging the mercy of His noble king. —The **physical postures** themselves are, of course, a matter of Christian liberty; but the attitude of our **heart**— one of humility, penitence, gratitude and praise— is fully **expected** of those who have been the recipients of God’s gracious blessings. And, although “*He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust,*” as the Lord Jesus tells us in Matthew chapter five (v. 45), we Christians have **SPECIAL REASON** to give thanks unto the Lord.

“For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.” “The Lord,” Jehovah, whose name means “I am,” is “the true God,” writes Jeremiah, “He is the living God and an everlasting King” (10:10). He is the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three distinct persons in one divine being or essence, as He clearly reveals Himself to us in the Bible. And He is “above all gods,” the Psalmist tells us. “Our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands,” we read in Psalm 115; and God says of Himself through the Prophet Isaiah: “I am the Lord; that is My Name. And My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images” (42:8).

He and He alone is the God to whom our praises are due; He and He alone is the God to whom all glory is due; He and He alone hears and is able to answer our prayers. He and He alone is the God whom we are to “fear, love, and trust above all things” (Luther, *First Commandment*). He and He alone is the God whom we Christians have special reason to THANK for having “shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Corinthians 4:6) as He brought us “unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Timothy 2:4).

Moreover, we owe God our special thanks because He is “the Lord, our Maker,” the Psalmist tells us in our title-text. He created us and the world in which we “live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28), and He still preserves us and all His creatures with His all-wise, all-powerful, and benevolent providence. “The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works,” David writes in Psalm 145. “In His hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is His also. The sea is His, and He made it; and His hands formed the dry land.”

We shouldn’t be surprised at the ingratitude of the world (and even of our own countrymen) for the Lord’s manifold blessings. After all, just witness how many in their foolish ignorance —yea, in their willful ignorance (II Peter 3:5)— deny God’s creation of all things in favor of those preposterous theories of “evolution” palmed off as “fact” by fraudulent scientists “wise in [their] own conceits” (Romans 11:25). It’s not that people generally don’t know that God is “our Maker,” for “God hath showed it unto them,” Paul writes to the Romans, chapter one; “for [even] the invisible things of Him are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse; because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful” (vv. 20-21a).

But thanks be to God that by His grace “*through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God*” (Hebrews 11:3), and that we can confidently declare with Luther in the First Article of the *Apostles’ Creed*: “I believe that God has made me and all creatures, that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still preserves them... that He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.”

When we pause but for a brief moment to take even the sketchiest inventory of our *temporal* blessings, how we Christians must marvel at the Lord’s bountiful goodness evident in everything we have and enjoy day by day! The children of this world, of course, credit themselves for such bounty, arrogantly claiming: “*My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth!*” (Deuteronomy 8:17). And our own *flesh* boasts the same! Yet the *New Man* within us gladly concedes that all these benefits are God’s gifts “*purely out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in [us]; for all which it is [our] duty to thank and praise, to serve and obey Him*” (Luther, First Article). O, therefore, “*let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.*”

And yet, all these *temporal* blessings and benefits are not the chief reason why we should give thanks unto the Lord. The CHIEF reason is that “*He is OUR God; and we are the people of HIS pasture, and the sheep of HIS hand.*” Merely to recognize God as God; to acknowledge His creation of all things; and to rely upon and even to appreciate His merciful providence, does not *make* us “*the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.*” Rather, this imagery in our text —the same imagery as in the 23rd Psalm and in Jesus’ picture of Himself as the “*Good Shepherd*”— speaks of our *spiritual* blessings because of which we are members of God’s own family and heirs of everlasting life. And how easy it is for us to lose sight of *those unspeakably great blessings* on a day when the temporal things are spread out before us on our Thanksgiving tables in such abundance!

When you are asked on Thanksgiving Day (IF indeed you are asked at all) to name some of the things for which you are thankful, don’t start out with the usual list of *temporal things* which even those may recognize who don’t “*know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (II Corinthians 8:9) — friends, good health, a decent job, a nice home,

medical insurance, and financial security with gold in your safe! How about the things that REALLY count —not just here in time but hereafter *in eternity*?? ...Shouldn't **you** as a **Christian** boldly declare concerning your **best** blessings: ● “I'm specially thankful that God had *mercy* on the likes of me, a poor, helpless, miserable, worthless sinner; that out of love for *my soul* He sent Jesus to be my Savior; that Christ *took my place* under God's Law, *obeyed it perfectly* in *my stead*, and *suffered* the punishment of *my guilt* —the pains of hell itself— as *my Substitute!* ● I'm so thankful to God that, because of what Jesus accomplished for me in satisfying His justice, God *forgave me* all my sins and *declared me* and all mankind *righteous* in His sight. ● I'm so grateful that God's Holy Spirit *informed me* about this wonderful news in the Gospel, *worked* in me the *faith* to believe it and rely upon it, and thus made me by faith God's own dear *adopted child* and *heir of heaven*. ● I dearly appreciate the fact that, by His grace, I am '*pastured*' as one of His dear '*sheep*' in God's precious Word day-by-day, so that my faith remains steadfast and unmoveable, and that, nourished and kept in the true faith by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, I cannot be '*plucked*' out of my Savior's flock by Satan or anyone else, but will remain '*a sheep of His hand*' even unto the end. ● And that's why I'm thankful to have a church of the pure Word, a faithful Pastor to '*watch for [my] soul*' (Hebrews 13:17), and dear brethren to exhort and admonish me from the Holy Scriptures and to provoke me to love and to good works (Hebrews 10:24-25)! ● Why, I could spend literally **hours** recounting the **spiritual blessings beyond price** which the Lord has so richly showered down upon me and my family!" —Indeed, "*what shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord! I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now in the presence of all His people! ...I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the Name of the Lord!*" (Psalm 116:12-14; 17).

THAT is the SPECIAL REASON we *as Christians* have to give thanks unto the Lord —not only on **Thanksgiving Day**, but every day of our lives!! It is thanksgiving for the **spiritual blessings** above all things that should set us apart from those who each year celebrate "Turkey Day," whose minds and hearts are fixed on the fleeting treasures and pleasures of this present world, who labor day in and day out for "*the meat which perisheth*" (John 6:27). —"O," therefore, "*give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, because His*

mercy endureth forever!” (Psalm 118:). “Let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our Salvation! Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms. ...For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand!”

All blessing, honor, thanks, and praise
to Father, Son, and Spirit,
the God that saved us by His grace—
all glory to His merit!
O Triune God in heaven above,
who hast revealed Thy saving love,
to Thee our thanks we render!

(TLH 377, 10, adapted)

— D. T. M.



“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneeth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.”

— Psalm 103:2-4



The Significance of Christ's Humility in His First Visible Advent

*Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,
meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.*

— Matthew 21:5

One of the themes that stands out so clearly during the Advent/Christmas season of the church year is the strikingly humble circumstances into which Jesus, the eternal Son of God, was born into this world in His first visible advent (coming). The Scriptures teach us that He was born while His earthly parents, in obedience to an imperial decree, were on a road trip away from their home town (Luke 2:3–6); and this, together with the fact that “*there was no room for them in the inn*” (v. 7b), resulted in the newborn Baby Jesus being laid in a manger

(a feeding trough for animals). It is hard to imagine a baby being born in a more humble situation. And while such a lowly birth might seem completely unbefitting the Lord God of the universe, yet it was, indeed, appropriate in light of the purpose for His incarnation, namely, to redeem the whole world of sinful mankind by a humble life and a humble death of perfect submission under the Law of God (Mark 10:45; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:7–8).

Though certain people on rare occasions did honor Him as a king (Matthew 2:11; 21:9), Jesus' outward, visible appearance was not that of an earthly king, let alone the King of all creation. With the exception of what transpired on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–2), His appearance did not reveal the fullness of the Godhead that always dwelt within Him (Colossians 2:9). Of course, the miracles that Jesus performed did display some quick flashes of His divine glory (John 1:14; 2:11); but because He did not appear to be anything but a humble man, those miracles often caught people by surprise, astounded and amazed them (Matthew 8:27; 9:8). When Jesus miraculously caused the nets of the fishermen to enclose such a large amount of fish that their ships began to sink, Simon Peter said to Jesus: “*Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord*” (Luke 5:4–9). Being struck with the realization that he was standing before the Lord of glory, Peter felt his complete unworthiness of being even in the presence of Christ. This is similar to how fear consistently gripped believers when holy angels appeared to them, even with cheerful tidings (Luke 1:12–13; 2:9–10; 24:4–5). Consider also how the Children of Israel in the Old Testament were filled with fear when God spoke to them directly from Mount Sinai, and how they asked Moses to speak to them instead. “*All the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die*” (Exodus 20:18–19). It should not, however, be thought that the main reason for Christ's humiliation was to make Him more “approachable.” Rather, the ultimate purpose was to redeem fallen mankind through His humble submission to the Law of God — the Law's requirements in His *active obedience*, and the Law's declared punishment in His *passive obedience*.

In His *active obedience*, Jesus lived a life of sinless perfection under the Law that God had given to men. His earthly life was one of perfect humility because Christ, being God Himself, was above the Law (not

bound by its requirements); and yet, according to His human nature, *“He humbled Himself”* (Philippians 2:8) under the Law in order to redeem us. *“When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”* (Galatians 4:4–5). As a true human being, Jesus humbly took the place of everyone who has ever broken God’s Commandments (namely, all mankind) and completely submitted Himself to all the commands and prohibitions of the moral Law, which requires holiness in thoughts, desires, words and deeds. And as a result of His humble *active obedience*, accomplished vicariously for the world, all mankind is **objectively justified**, declared righteous by the Lord —Christ’s righteousness being imputed to them and canceling their guilt. *“As by the offense of one [Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One [Christ] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous”* (Romans 5:18–19).

In His *passive obedience*, Jesus suffered extreme pain, agony and death in payment for the sins of the world. There was perfect humility involved also in this because, possessing all the attributes of God, He could have easily prevented His human body and soul from enduring any pain at all; those that sought to harm Him could have been completely restrained. But, instead, Jesus allowed His enemies to treat Him in a most cruel and blasphemous manner. *“Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and others smote Him with the palms of their hands, saying, ‘Prophecy unto us, Thou Christ, who is he that smote Thee?’”* (Matthew 26:67–68); *“and many other things blasphemously spake they against Him”* (Luke 22:65). Withholding from Himself the full and constant use of His divine attributes according to His human nature, the only-begotten Son of God humbled Himself and allowed blatantly unjust and wicked people, infinitely weaker and more inferior humans, to inflict upon His true human body unimaginable pain. *“Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe and said, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ And they smote Him with their hands”* (John 19:1–3). Furthermore, He could have avoided death entirely if He had chosen to do so. But, instead, in order to redeem us, *“He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”* (Philippians 2:8). Foretelling His coming death, Jesus said: *“I lay down My life. ...No man taketh it from Me, but I lay*

it down of Myself” (John 10:17–18). Thus Christ willingly and most humbly drank the full cup of suffering as payment for the transgressions of all mankind. “*He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. ...The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ...For the transgression of my people was He stricken*” (Isaiah 53:5–8). Thus He became “*the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:2). And as the result of Jesus’ humble *passive obedience*, God’s wrath against sinful mankind was completely satisfied; Christ brought about reconciliation between God and men; and the whole world was justified in His sight (Romans 5:8–10; II Corinthians 5:19).

Of course, since He is true God, Jesus’ first visible advent could have included a show of His great power and glory. He could have demanded that all people serve Him and could have severely punished all who refused to humble themselves before Him. But He did not do that because He had not come to be served but to do the serving—even laying down His life as a ransom for our sins (Mark 10:45). How appropriate it was, therefore, that the circumstances attending His birth were so humble! “*Christ the Lord...lying in a manger*” (Luke 2:11–12)! “*Christ Jesus...being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant*” (Philippians 2:5–7). Such humility was also demonstrated when He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday in meekness and lowliness riding upon the colt of an ass (Mark 11:1–11). And that notable event had been specifically foretold in a detailed Messianic prophecy recorded by inspiration of the Holy Ghost through the pen of the Prophet Zechariah, in which the Christian Church is told to rejoice greatly in the coming of her humble Savior-King. “*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is just and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass and upon a colt, the foal of an ass*” (Zechariah 9:9).

Christ’s *state of humiliation*—in which, according to His human nature, He did not always and fully use the divine attributes that belonged to Him from all eternity (John 17:5) and had been communicated to His human nature (Matthew 28:18; John 5:26–27)—began at the time of His incarnation, when the eternal Son of God was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Virgin Mary (Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:35) and “*was made flesh*” (John 1:14). Furthermore, the humility of Christ was only possible because of His human nature, since the nature of God cannot

be changed or humbled (Malachi 3:6). However, the humiliation itself should not be identified with, or defined as, Christ becoming a true man. For, indeed, He is still a man even now, as He will be for all eternity; but He is no more humbled. After accomplishing the redemption of the world, Jesus entered into His *state of exaltation*, in which the Second Person of the Trinity, also according to His human nature, not only possesses, but now fully and constantly uses all the divine attributes (Ephesians 1:20–23; Philippians 2:9–11) that belong to God the Father and God the Holy Ghost. So then on the Last Day, when Christ returns in His second visible advent to judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31) according to His Word (John 12:48), it will be in glory (not humility) and in power (not in weakness). “*When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory*” (Matthew 25:31). “*Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory*” (Luke 21:27).

Even though His *state of humiliation* was long ago in the past, and even though there will be no more humbling in the future for our Lord Jesus Christ, it is important for us still to remember and meditate upon the significance of His humility—the humility that was so clearly demonstrated in His first visible advent (His birth in Bethlehem). As has already been mentioned, Christ accomplished His entire work of redemption (both His *active* and *passive* obedience) by humbling Himself under the Law of God, by bearing and by satisfying both its holy demands and its dreadful curse as our Substitute.

But an additional point that should not be overlooked is that the Bible directs us to the humility of Christ as a pattern that we are to follow in our lives. The Apostle Peter writes: “*Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously*” (I Peter 2:21–23). And St. Paul emphasizes the humility of Christ as a model for us, showing us how to manifest humble, unselfish love in our dealings with one another. He writes: “*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant*

and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:3–8). Remember also how Jesus exhorted His disciples to follow His example in their loving, humble service toward one another, saying: “Ye call Me Master and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. ...A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:13–15, 34–35).

May the Lord bless us all with profitable meditation upon our Savior’s humility as we focus upon His first visible advent, so that we grow in our appreciation for all that He did and endured to save us from our sins, and so that we are moved, out of gratitude for His love toward us (I John 4:19), to follow His example of humble, unselfish love toward our neighbor (vv. 10-11)!

— P. E. B.



See, my soul, thy Savior chooses
weakness here and poverty;
in such love He comes to thee,
nor the hardest couch refuses;
all He suffers for thy good
to redeem thee by His blood.

(TLH 96, 2)

Our Great Privilege to be Lights in the World



“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

— Matthew 5:16

“Privilege” may be defined as a special right or advantage granted or available only to a particular person or group of people, a benefit granted and enjoyed which is not available to others. Our title-text declares that, as true believers in Christ Jesus, we Christians enjoy a great privilege: To be lights in the world!

In studying our title-text we note how it is connected to the immediate context by the little word “so.” *“Let your light so shine...”* (Matthew 5:16a). The previous two verses provide the connection: *“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house”* (vv. 14-15). Mark well what the Savior declares His own to be: *“Ye are the light of the world!”*

How are we to understand this clear designation in reference to what He says of Himself in John 8:12, namely, “*I am the light of the world*” (John 8:12)? Jesus Himself provides the answer in the words that follow: “*I am the light of the world. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*” The Savior is the Bringer of saving grace and truth (John 1:17b). The Savior is “*the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*” (John 1:9), as “*the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). The Gospel or Good News of His wonderful, vicarious work as the Redeemer of the world gives to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death the knowledge of salvation through the imputed righteousness and remission of sins that He merited and won for all mankind (See Luke 1:77-79; I John 2:2). The Psalmist declares: “*For with Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light shall we see light*” (36:9). Enlightened by the Gospel and so gifted with genuine, saving faith in Christ, Christians become light-bringers, light-bearers to their fellow sinners, so that what God has done for believers by bringing them to saving faith through the Gospel of Christ may also be done unto them: “*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” (II Corinthians 4:6).

The Savior gives us a common example from everyday life and the use of light in a house: A lighted candle is not hidden but placed on a candlestick with the intended result, its ultimate purpose, being met, namely, that “*it giveth light unto all that are in the house*” (Matthew 5:15). The light of Christ is intended for all, as God’s grace is universal (Titus 2:11); and the benefit of Christ’s redemption is intended for the whole world (I John 2:2; I Timothy 1:15). The Savior’s “Great Commission” to the Church sets forth His will that believers share the “*light*” of salvation with all mankind (Matthew 28:18f; Mark 16:15-16); for the whole world sits in darkness, in desperate need of enlightenment (Psalm 82:5; Isaiah 9:2-3; Acts 26:16-18; Colossians 1:12-15; Ephesians 5:8-9). As Christians our purpose is clear: To reflect the light of Christ, His saving Gospel of grace, to others. Enabled by God-wrought faith, worked, strengthened and preserved in us by the effectual power of the Gospel, we have the great privilege to be light-bearers to others, to shine!

How do we shine? How do we bring light? We have a concrete example in John the Baptist, the God-appointed forerunner of Christ, of whom it is written: “*The same came for a witness, to bear witness of*

the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light” (John 1:7-8). How did John bear witness of Christ that men might believe? He was the living epitome of Christian testimony, as the Apostle Peter exhorts also us to render it in I Peter 3:15: “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”

How so? To the impenitent, to the smug and self-satisfied, to the work-righteous and proud, John preached *the Law* in all its bitterness to destroy their self-trust! He testified of their evil, unmoved by the fear or favor of men! He identified sin and brought the condemnation of the Law to all who lived in sin (Matthew 3:7; Mark 6:18). The common people heard him preach repentance, as he called upon them to confess their sins; and the Pharisees, Sadducees and even King Herod heard him as well! As light-bearers we must expose sin: *“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”* (Ephesians 5:11). Unless a sinner has been unmasked as such by the uncompromising mirror of the Law and given the convicting knowledge of his sin, guilt and well-deserved, just damnation, he is not ready to hear and receive the Gospel! Today, as always, the correct, clear and unmitigated preaching of God’s Law is opposed on every side. As Christians we must quit ourselves, that is, stand up and fight, as men, not as cowards. Our flesh tempts us to find all sorts of plausible excuses for avoiding the declaration of the Law in all its fierceness and bitterness! The carnal mind whispers, “Use caution! Don’t be so harsh! Wouldn’t a soft approach be less likely to cause an adverse reaction?” Under the guise of wisdom and prudence, we are tempted to justify what is really driving any hesitation on our part to speak up in reproof and correction of sin: Fear of a “bad reaction”! Put away the fleshly fear, the selfish cowardice of the Old Man! Do not put your light *“under a bushel”* (Matthew 5:15)! Unless you shine the light of God’s Law on a person, he will never see his need of forgiveness and salvation! Our Lord told the woman at Jacob’s well outside of Sychar in Samaria the “hard truth” of her life (John 4:16-18). When He exposed sin, as He did also for the rich young ruler, He did so out of love for the sinner’s soul (Mark 10:17-22)! Love *“rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth”* (I Corinthians 13:6). Fallen human nature does not seek the light but shuns it: *“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reprov’d”* (John 3:19-20). So

we light-bearers must bring light to those who shun it, who close their eyes to it, and who flee from it, foolishly imagining that they can escape it (Matthew 23:33-36; Romans 2:3; etc.)!

And John the Baptist is also an excellent example of *Gospel* preaching. He brought the light of Christ to penitent sinners! He clearly proclaimed the person and work of the Savior: “*The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’*” (John 1:29). As his father, Zacharias, foretold, John gave the people what they needed most: “*And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace*” (Luke 1:76-79).

Our singular privilege is the greatest favor that one poor sinner can do for another: To shine the light of the saving Gospel upon them, so that, through the power of the Holy Ghost, those poor souls may be converted and saved from the eternal darkness of hell (Matthew 25:30)! Every Christian has the privilege, right and duty to do the work of an evangelist, to do what Christ on the road to Damascus told Saul of Tarsus what he would do as His ambassador: “*To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me*” (Acts 26:18). To declare that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of all mankind, to declare: “*Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12), is also to face bitter opposition by the world, by Satan and by one’s own sinful flesh! Such preaching is deemed “*foolishness,*” and those who preach it are considered “*nothings*” (I Corinthians 1:18, 28). Christians receive the same hatred and murderous, malicious treatment as their Savior endured because of this Gospel truth (See John 15:18 – John 16:4)! In the cause of the Gospel, “*all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*” (II Timothy 3:12). What should our God-wrought, Gospel-generated attitude be as Light-bearers? The Apostle tells us: “*Do all things without murmurings and disputing, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life, that I may rejoice in*

the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain” (Philippians 2:14-16). We carry the only saving light, holding it forth as a blazing torch in the midst of spiritual darkness (not unlike the darkness in Egypt — so thick that it “may be felt,” Exodus 10:21), the plague of unbelief engulfing the world! We are to do all things that God wants us to do without any grumbling or complaining, crucifying the flesh daily, thinking only of the benefit we have in Christ, and, moved by the great gratitude created in us by the Gospel, wanting others to receive the gracious gift of full and free salvation that we have been given! “Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Hebrews 12:2-3).

We confess Christ *before men* (Matthew 10:32), not ashamed of Him or of His Words (Law and Gospel) before an evil and adulterous generation (See Mark 8:38)! The purpose is stated by the Savior in our title verse: *“that [men] may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”* Our entire life is to be a doxology to our heavenly Father, for Jesus’ sake: *“Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”* (I Corinthians 10:31b). *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him”* (Colossians 3:17). *“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen”* (I Peter 4:11).

The Bible tells us that the work-righteous do what they consider to be “good works” for a purely carnal reason, namely, to be seen of men for the praise of men (See Matthew 6:1, 5, 16; 23:5 ff.). If they think that they thereby also please God, they delude themselves. True Christians, according to their New Man, do good works only to show God’s grace in Christ, so that God, who works all good (John 15:5; James 1:15) within and without, in will and performance (Philippians 2:13), might receive *all* the glory: *“That no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord”* (I Corinthians 1:29-31). The Apostle Paul demonstrates this when he speaks of the work that God wrought in and through him: *“But by the grace of God I am what I am;*

and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (I Corinthians 15:10). Paul gave all the credit to God and to the grace that God bestowed upon him through the Gospel. The Christian does this as a matter of course, in his New Man, always giving all the credit to God for every good thing. In everything a Christian does, his New Man wants others to say: “Look what *God* hath wrought!” The purpose and goal of letting our light shine before men is to have others acknowledge what Psalm 118 says: “*O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, because His mercy endureth forever. ... I will praise Thee, for Thou hast heard me and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it*” (vv. 1, 21-24). To give our heavenly Father the glory due Him requires genuine faith of the heart, God-wrought saving faith, confidence in God’s mercy for Christ’s sake. So our Christian confession serves this ultimate evangelical purpose: The conversion of sinners. Conversion only occurs when God’s Holy Spirit creates it by means of His Word — properly-speaking, by the Word of the Gospel: “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Romans 10:17).

Our actions must support what we testify as a consistent witness to the truth. For example, when the Apostle Peter and others failed to support the true doctrine with right practice, we hear how the Apostle Paul was moved to correct him: “*But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, ‘If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?’*” (Galatians 2:14). Their behavior was not consistent with their doctrinal profession! We are to walk uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel!

One of the greatest offenses to the unbelieving world is the terrible example set by those claiming to be children of God but acting like children of Satan, thereby blaspheming God’s holy name (see Romans 2:1-3, 17-24). No true Christian will indulge in and continue in sin in gross despol of God’s grace (Romans chapter six)! In our day in particular we see the prophetic warning come to pass: “*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, in-*

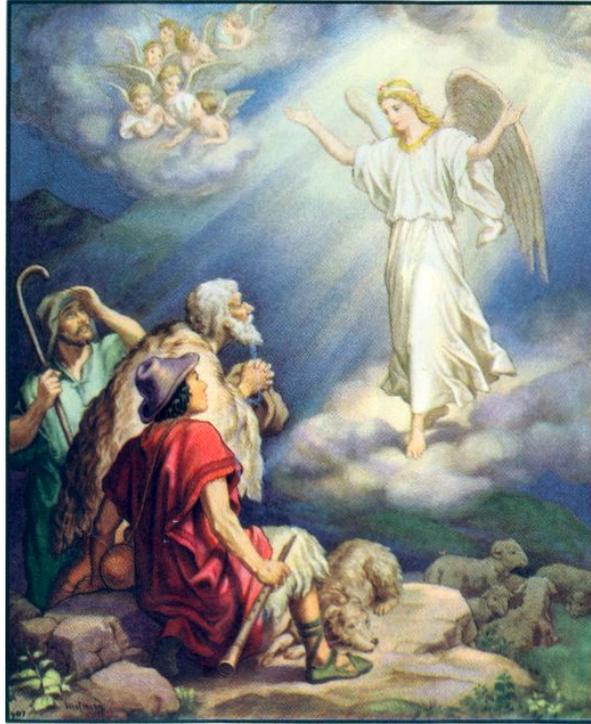
continent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of Godliness but denying the power thereof. From such turn away” (II Timothy 3:1-5). Mark well the last verse! Such people have “*a form of Godliness;*” they *claim* Christianity! But their profession is sheer hypocrisy! Such behavior is the exact opposite of what our title-text calls for! For men see their *evil* works, done under the guise of “Christianity,” and *blaspheme* the heavenly Father and profane His name (1st Petition, *Lord’s Prayer*)! Indeed, Christ’s good name is dragged through the mud, as it were, by those claiming to do God religious service while behaving like those who “*know not God*” (I Thessalonians 4:5)!

Moreover, in striving to be like the world, so many so-called Christians within the outward “Church” condemn and vilify true doctrine and practice, condemning the true and consistent followers of Christ in their evil zeal for the praise of men! They would rather be “politically correct” than doctrinally sound (II Timothy 4:3). In fact, we often feel compelled to explain to others what *kind* of “Lutherans” we are, lest they think we might be modernists and libertines like so many that comprise entire Lutheran sects, judging by their practice. Look what false doctrine and loose practice have done to Lutheranism in the world today! Luther would barely recognize church bodies that bear his name! The same must be said of Christianity in general — as Scripture foretells what still happens today! Isaiah condemns those who pervert the truth, saying: “*Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!*” (5:20).

As true disciples of Christ, we are the light of the world; “*but evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived*” (II Timothy 3:13). Spiritual darkness surrounds us on every hand. But God’s Word, “*the Holy Scriptures*” that bear witness to Christ, the Light of Life, have made us “*wise unto salvation.*” God’s Word provides us with all we need for our faith and for our life (See II Timothy 3:15-17)! In Christian meekness and humility, in true fear, love and trust in our heavenly Father through faith in Christ, may we ever be both motivated and empowered to will and do of God’s good pleasure: “*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven*” (Matthew 5:16).

— E. J. W.

*“Oh, Come, Let Us Adore Him,
Christ, the Lord!”*



“For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ, the Lord! And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

— Luke 2:11-12

Imagine yourself for just a moment sitting with those shepherds of Bethlehem on a grassy hillside tending their flock of sleepy sheep. It is late at night, and the shepherds are tired from their day’s work. The grass is wet with dew; the crisp night air, in spite of its stillness, pierces through their cloaks; and the shepherds move yet closer to the glowing coals of the watch fire, trying to keep warm. It is so quiet there on the meadow under that clear, star-speckled sky, that the slightest complaint from a sheep or lamb would be a startling disturbance. Yet, barring the

intrusion of a hungry wolf on the prowl, this night should be peaceful enough and should pass as easily as most.

—Suddenly, without warning, the sky is ablaze with blinding light, with “*the glory of the Lord,*” with a *holy* brightness that terrifies the shepherds! Could it be that the day of God’s judgment has come upon them?? They look up and see a figure standing in that light, a heavenly messenger who beckons for their attention to what he is about to say. “*Sore afraid,*” the shepherds brace themselves for the worst, as they no doubt anticipate the pronouncement of God’s just anger against them because of their sins.

The angel speaks with a clarity of a heavenly trumpet, but also with the sweetness of a shepherd’s pipe: “***Fear not!***” he says. “*Don’t keep cringing and shrinking back in terror at what my message might be. Don’t hide your face from the light of God’s glory because of your sins and your unworthiness before Him.*” What could this holy messenger be about to say that would make them less fearful of God’s justice?? What could possibly change things that drastically for the shepherds, that instead of quaking at this sight, they should now put away their fear and hearken calmly to the rest of the message?

“*Behold, I bring you GOOD tidings of great JOY,*” the angel continued. **Good** news? Great **joy**? A **Gospel** message to **US**?? Those poor, humble shepherds needed some good news at that —not just good news about sheep prices, or about the political situation with the Roman occupation, or about the economy and heavy taxes— although most people, even in those days, would probably have welcomed that kind of news. No, this was to be a **far better** kind of news, because this news was to soothe away the “*fear*” of God’s justice! These “*good tidings*” were to calm the guilt-ridden heart and to replace grave terror with “*great joy*”! Oh, how those shepherds, those Old Testament believers in the coming, promised Messiah, had been waiting, yea, longing for just this very news!

And what about **US**, my dear readers? Do **WE** *long* for the “*good tidings*” of the Gospel? When in the mirror of God’s holy Law we see ourselves as **He** sees us —vile, perverse, rebellious and vain sinners by nature. And when that Law *indicts* us as His **enemies** and pronounces the sentence of **eternal death** upon us according to our *own deserts*, do we long for that promised Savior, as did the shepherds on Bethlehem’s fields?? Oh, if **not**, then we must take yet another look into that perfect

mirror and come to the inevitable realization that, on the basis of our works, no *peace with God* can ever be effected, no *truce* can be made, not even an *approach to God* is possible for us by nature, because even the best things we do as Christians reek like garbage in His holy nostrils as far as earning His favor is concerned! The Bible says that “[*We*] are all gone aside; [*we*] are altogether become **FILTHY**; there is **NONE** that doeth good, no, not one!” (Psalm 14:3). Oh, we need some good news, all right, just like those humble shepherds, quaking and “*sore afraid*.”

But, whatever that good news is, is it intended also for us poor **Gentiles**?? Or is it just for God’s “chosen people,” the **Jews**, or just for those trembling **Jewish** shepherds to whom this message was announced? Listen to the angel’s unmistakable words, dear convicted and contrite sinner: “*I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to ALL PEOPLE!*” Yes, that includes also **you** and **me**! —We, whose forefathers were not God’s chosen people, whose barbaric, idolatrous ancestors did not have the sacred Oracles of God, the Holy Scriptures of the **Old** Testament – or those of the **New** Testament– to point them to the Savior — yes, **WE TOO** are the intended recipients of these “*good tidings*,” thanks be to God and His unmerited grace! How **our** hearts, **too**, burn with hopeful anticipation, as we perk up our ears with the shepherds of old to hear what that “*good news of great joy*” is all about. “*For unto YOU is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ, the Lord!*”

In that one simple sentence of our title-text, the Christmas angel brings not only the tidings themselves, but the sure and certain proof that this Babe is in fact the promised **Messiah**, the Anointed One of God, that He Himself is **God**, manifested in the flesh. — “*Born*”—the miracle of miracles that God should become man to take **our place** under the Law (Galatians 4:4-5), and to give **His** life a ransom for **our** sins (Matthew 20:28)! — “*This day*”—**now**, today, an accomplished **fact** and no longer just a promise to look forward to. The Messiah was actually here on this earth, just as the prophets had foretold! — “*In the City of David*”—“Of what significance is **that**??” we might ask as Gentiles, as “outsiders” not versed in the Scriptures of prophecy. But those shepherds knew. Not only were they presumably from the City of David themselves, the town of Bethlehem, the ancestral home of King David, from whose line the Messiah was to come. But they well knew the prophecy of Micah, chapter 5, verse 2: “*But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose*

goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” The promised Messiah, the eternal Son of God Himself “*from everlasting*” was to come forth from that little, seemingly insignificant town of Bethlehem just to fulfill sacred prophecy! This was indeed the proof that the shepherds could readily **see** and **understand!**

“A **SAVIOR**” —not just an earthly Rescuer from the Romans, for that would not be good news to “*all people*,” but only to the **Jews**. **This** Savior is the very **source** of “*good tidings of great joy*” to **all people**, of **all times**, and of **all places** — sinners like you and me! He is the Savior of our sin-corrupted souls, as well as of our bodies, the ransom-price of our redemption, of whom the Prophet Isaiah wrote some 700 years before: “*He was wounded for OUR transgressions, He was bruised for OUR iniquities,... and with His stripes WE are healed. The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of US ALL!*” (Isaiah 53). **That**, my dear fellow-sinners, is a **SAVIOR** worthy of the name; for **He** saves from **sin, death** and the **devil** —a feat that could never be accomplished by a mere man, for the Bible tells us of human beings: “*The redemption of their soul is precious!*” (Psalm 49:8).

And this Babe of Bethlehem is not just **any** Savior, for the angel calls Him “*Christ*,” that is, the **Messiah**, the One chosen of God to save His people from their sins, “*whom GOD hath set forth*,” writes the Apostle Paul, “*to be a propitiation [that is, a **payment**] through faith in His blood*” (Romans 3:25). This was the “*Branch*” that God Himself had promised to raise up unto David, the King that was to “*reign and prosper*” over the hearts of men with His righteousness to cover their sins (Jeremiah 23:5). —“*Good tidings*”?? “*Of great joy*”?? Oh, indeed, of joy **unspeakable**, both to the leaping hearts of the shepherds and to ours as well!

And the crowning word in this brief sentence of joy now comes forth: “*Which is Christ, **the LORD!***” This, too, had been foretold; for the Prophet Jeremiah had written: “*This is His name whereby He shall be called: **THE LORD, our Righteousness***” (23:6). This was no mere man-Savior, no mere human being chosen for a special task, as was John the Baptist, the Savior’s forerunner. But this was “*the Lord*” (cf. Isaiah 42:8), **Jehovah** Himself, as we confess in the Nicene Creed: “The only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.” — This was “**Immanuel**,” “**God with us**” (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23).

And the mystery of Jesus' incarnation and humiliation is also declared by the angel, for the "sign" he gives to the shepherds, the identifying mark by which they would be able to recognize "**God manifest in the flesh**" (I Timothy 3:16) was that they would find this Babe "*wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.*" Think of the immensity of this news: "A Savior, **Christ**," the **Messiah**, "*the Lord*," **God** Himself, was to be found in the lowliest of poverty-stricken conditions, —with nowhere to lay His precious head but upon rough hay, —with nowhere to make His bed but in the feeding trough of common farm animals, —with nowhere to call his home but a rude stable! What a miracle indeed, that "*though He was rich, yet for [our] sakes He BECAME poor, that [we] through His poverty might be RICH!*" (II Corinthians 8:9b).

Is it any wonder then that the angels of God, sinless though they are and thus unable, in the truest sense, fully to appreciate the magnitude of this gracious gift of God, though they desire to "*look into*" it and to understand why Christ had to suffer for God's glory and for man's salvation (I Peter 1:11-12) — is it any wonder that these celestial beings burst forth with a heavenly song of praise— multitudes of them, filling the sky above the awe-struck shepherds? "*Glory to God in the highest,*" they sang, "*and on earth peace, good will toward men*" (Luke 2:14). Yes, glory to **God**, whose love and mercy to sinful mankind in Christ Jesus made this gift and its glad tidings a reality! No credit for any of it is due to miserable mankind, wallowing in their sins, shame and utter helplessness. For the Bible tells us: "**God was in Christ RECONCILING the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them**" (II Corinthians 5:19). This was **God's doing alone**, and **all glory** was due to Him alone!

And what was the **RESULT** of this glorious **reconciliation** in and through the precious Babe of Bethlehem? "**Peace on earth**," the choirs of angels sang —not earthly peace which lasts only for the brief interval between wars and rumors of wars— but real, lasting peace on earth, "**peace with God**" through His forgiveness of our sins; —and "**good will toward men**" God's good will toward us, not ours to Him, lest we puff ourselves up to be our own Saviors! No, God's good and gracious will toward us caused Him to reconcile us "**unto Himself**," to send His only-begotten Son to be the price of our redemption, so that His perfect justice was thereby satisfied, and that, by faith in our Redeemer, Paul writes to the Romans, chapter 5, verse 1, "*we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" **THAT** is the peace of which the angels sang on that first Christmas night: "Peace on earth and mercy mild; God and sinners **reconciled!**" (TLH 94).

Is all of this really “good news” to **YOU**, my dear reader? Do you feel so weighed down with the guilt of sin that these words of the Christmas angels really mean something to **YOU personally** in your heart of hearts? Do **you**, by God’s grace, with those humble shepherds on Bethlehem’s fields, **long** to hear those “*good tidings of great joy*” again and again in the precious Gospel of salvation, realizing full well that the Babe of Bethlehem is your only way to God in heaven? Oh, then take these “*good tidings*” into **your** heart **by faith**, trust them as God’s own reliable message of “*peace*,” **His** peace and **His** good will, **His** everlasting mercy and grace “*unto you*,” as well as to **all people!** And then hasten with those shepherds of old to the manger bed in Bethlehem’s stall, shouting aloud in the words of that cherished Christmas hymn: “**Oh, come, let US adore Him, CHRIST THE LORD!**” — Hasten to the manger bed of the **sweet Gospel** where your Savior lies **FOR YOU!** Take Him up into **your** arms of faith and hold Him fast to **your** trembling breast, and pray with Dr. Luther:

“Ah, dearest Jesus, Holy Child,
make Thee a bed soft, undefiled
within **my** heart, that it may be
a quiet chamber kept for Thee.”

(*TLH* 85, 13)

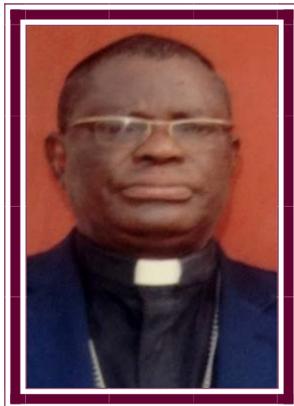
— **D. T. M.**



In memoriam...

✝ Pastor Allenson Karibi Asawo ✝

“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.” — Hebrews 13:7



Our almighty God, in His all-wise providence and at the time appointed by Him according to His grace in Christ Jesus, has summoned out of this vale of tears to Himself in heaven the soul of another of our dear brother pastors in Nigeria. **The Rev. Allenson Karibi Asawo** was the beloved Pastor of **St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church** in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria; and his presence will be sorely missed.

Pastor Asawo, by God’s grace alone His humble and faithful servant, was born on March 15, 1949, in Abalama-Asalga to Mr. and Mrs. Allen Asawo, both of whom preceded him in death. He originally prepared for a secular career at the University of Science and Technology in Port Harcourt. But in 1995 he began his preparation for the Lutheran ministry at Abonnema in the theological training program of the *Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations in Nigeria*. Upon the successful completion of his theological studies, he was called to be the pastor of St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church in Port Harcourt, where he was ordained and installed on December 27, 2003, and served as its shepherd and Christ’s ambassador for almost twelve years until his death.

Pastor Asawo succumbed to only recently-diagnosed prostate cancer, complicated by a long history of hypertension, and died at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital in the early evening hours of Thursday, November 26th. The Lord in His mercy did not permit Brother Asawo to be tried and tested beyond his ability in humble, childlike faith to endure those chastisements; but, true to His promise, He made a way to escape them (I Corinthians 10:13), as He does for all His dear children, and received our brother into the peace and rest of

heaven, where in God's presence he now experiences only "*fulness of joy [and] pleasures*" at *[His] right hand forevermore* (Psalm 16:11).

Pastor Asawo is survived by his beloved wife, Lolo, and six grown children. The care of St. Matthew's congregation in the vacancy of its pastoral office is being undertaken temporarily by brother pastors in the F. L. C. N. until the congregation is able to call another shepherd. In the meantime we commit the Asawo family and the dear brethren of St. Matthew's to the tender, loving care of our Savior, who promises them and all of us: "*Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*" (John 14:27).

According to our latest information from Nigeria, funeral arrangements are still pending. Pastor Asawo's presence will be greatly missed by his family, his brother pastors, the sheep and lambs of his flock, and by the wider fellowship of the F. L. C. N. and of our Conference; and we share with all of them their tears in this bereavement (Romans 12:15). At the same time, however, all of us together rejoice in Pastor Asawo's salvation by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, and look forward to our own blessed departure to be with Christ, with him, and with all true believers in that "*far better*" home in heaven (Philippians 1:23).

*"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord
from henceforth! Yea, saith the Spirit, that
they may rest from their labors; and their
works do follow them." —Revelation 14:13*

—**Pastor David T. Mensing**
Concordia Lutheran Conference President
and Chairman of the Committee on Missions

Churches in Fellowship

ORTHODOX LUTHERAN CHURCH OF EKATERINBURG

Ekaterinburg, Russia

The Rev. Roman G. Schurganoff, Pastor

P. O. Box 27

620039 Ekaterinburg, RUSSIA

E-mail: Schurganoff@mail.ru

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Olu-Ama (Kula), Nigeria

(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Abule Egba, Lagos, Nigeria

(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Idama, Nigeria

The Rev. Innocent Karibo, Pastor

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Idama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Abalama, Nigeria

The Rev. Elison B. Agborubere, Balaiyi Thompson and Bateim Bestman, Pastors

Thompson Compound Abalama

Abalama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. CLEMENT'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Elem-Sangama, Nigeria

The Rev. Timothy Biobele Aaron, Pastor

St. Clement Lutheran Church,

Elem-Sangama Arch-Deaconry

Elem-Sangama, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

76 Abba Street, Mile 1 Diobu

Port Harcourt, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Kula, Nigeria

(Pastoral Vacancy at present)

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Kula, Rivers State, NIGERIA

ST. PAUL'S NYEMONI LUTHERAN CATHEDRAL

Abonnema, Nigeria

The Rev. Nimi B. Fyeface and

The Rev. God'stime E. D. Douglas, Co-Pastors

P. O. Box 123

Abonnema, Akulga, Rivers State, NIGERIA

E-Mail: njohnfyeface@yahoo.co.uk



Directory of Member Congregations

www.concordialutheranconf.com

GOOD SHEPHERD EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH On the Web at:
4090 S. Melpomene Way, Tucson, AZ 85730 GoodShepherdLutheranChurchTucson.com

Worship Service 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 a.m. Telephone (520) 721-7618

The Rev. DANIEL P. MENSING, Pastor
550 North Harrison Road, Apt. 11107, Tucson, AZ 85748 Pastor: (520) 448-8694
E-mail: goodshepherdlutherantucson@gmail.com

PEACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH On the Web at:
Central Avenue at 171st Place, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 PeaceEvLutheran.com

Sunday School & Bible Class 8:30 a.m.
Worship Service 10:00 a.m. Telephone: (708) 532-4288

The Rev. DAVID T. MENSING, Pastor
17151 South Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913 Pastor: (708) 532-9035
E-mail: pastormensing@yahoo.com

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH Telephone: (541) 258-2941
Sixth and Tangent Streets, Lebanon, OR 97355

Sunday School & Bible Class 10:00 a.m.
Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

The Rev. PAUL E. BLOEDEL, Pastor
483 Tangent Street, Lebanon, OR 97355 Pastor: (541) 258-2941
E-mail: revbloedel@gmail.com

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH On the Web at:
5350 South Fountain Street, Seattle, WA 98178 StLukes-CLC.com

Sunday School & Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m. Telephone: (206) 723-1078

The Rev. EDWARD J. WORLEY, Pastor
9658 – 54th Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118 Pastor: (206) 723-7418
E-mail: revworley@comcast.net

NOTE: Services are also held in **Victoria, British Columbia** on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Please call the Pastor for current location.

Worship Service 7:00 p.m.
Adult Bible Class 4:30 p.m.
Adult Catechism Class 8:30 p.m.

ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH On the Web at:
22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411 StMarksEvLutheran.com

Adult Bible Class 3:00 p.m.
Worship Service 4:00 p.m. Telephone: (708) 757-6859

The Rev. DAVID J. MENSING, Pastor
22012 Torrence Avenue, Sauk Village, IL 60411 Pastor: (708) 655-7549
E-mail: d_mensing@hotmail.com

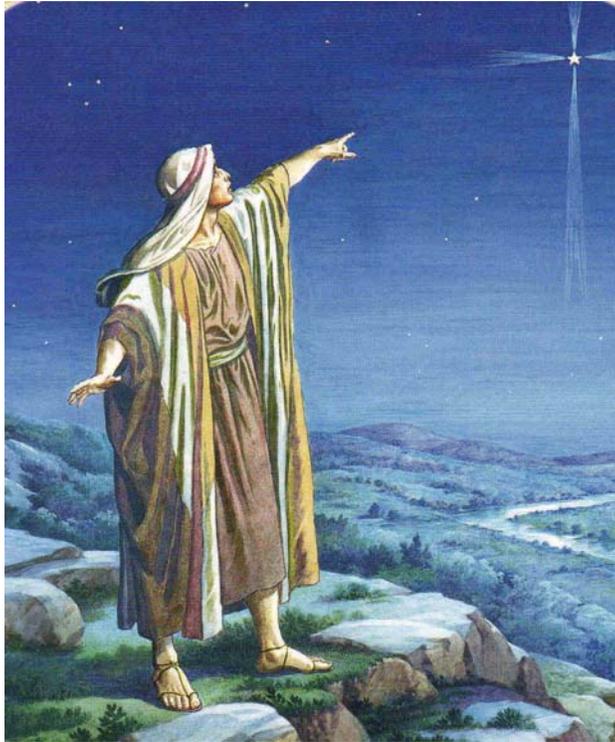
TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH On the Web at:
300 North Ridgeland Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302 TrinityEvLutheran.com

Sunday School & Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Worship Service 10:15 a.m. Telephone: (708) 386-6773

The Rev. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor
233 North Cuyler Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302 Pastor: (708) 386-4145
E-mail: robertjlietz@gmail.com

“I am the Light of the world. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.”

— John 8:12



The Savior is the Bringer of saving grace and truth (John 1:17b). The Savior is “*the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*” (John 1:9), as “*the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). The Gospel or Good News of His wonderful, vicarious work as the Redeemer of the world gives to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death the knowledge of salvation through the imputed righteousness and remission of sins that He merited and won for all mankind (See Luke 1:77-79; I John 2:2).

***For with Thee is the fountain of life;
in Thy light shall we see light” —Psalm 36:9***

(Excerpted from “*Our Great Privilege to be Lights in the World,*” p. 187ff.)