# the Concordia Lutheran

"The Scripture cannot be broken." John 10:35.

"Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my path" Ps. 119:105.

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# "They Made Known Abroad The Saying That Was Told Them Concerning This Child!"

Luke 2:17

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**STATEMENT of PURPOSE**

To set forth in simple and plain language the pure doctrine of God's Word as taught by the true Lutheran Church in full accordance with the **Book of Concord of 1580** and the **Brief Statment of 1932.**

To show, **on the basis of Scripture,** what true Christians are to believe and how, out of love for their Savior Jesus Christ, they are to lead godly lives.

To furnish aids for Bible study and articles for Scriptural devotion and meditation.

To demonstrate, by our Scriptural stand, that our **Concordia Lutheran Conference** is not a sect or a false church body but that the congregations which form it confess, teach, and practice the Word of God in its full truth and purity and use the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. All who do this are the true visible Church on earth.

To seek out all who truly share our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice, and to urge the mutual public acknowledgment of such God-given unity. Thus we shall be able thereafter to practice a God-pleasing Church fellowship with them.

To show that we do not have among us a mixture of divergent teachings but that we are, by God's grace, "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

To set forth pertinent historical information which has a bearing upon the Church and to expose modern philosophical thought and the so-called scientific theories which contradict the Word of God.

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.

To be truthful and factual in our reporting and freely to correct any misinformation of which we are not aware and which has been called to our attention. Also to clarify any information or statement of doctrine or practice which may be unclear to our readers or which may create a wrong impression.

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# The President's Column

**"And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child!"**
Luke 2:17

In the last few weeks, I had the opportunity to talk with a pastor who is a member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). He expressed the concern that a Conference as small as ours could not effectively carry out the Great Commission of our Savior to "**go. . .into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,**" Mark 16:15. Such an objection is, of course, preposterous--to say the least! When our Savior ascended into heaven, there were only eleven apostles and a handful of believers. These men and women surely carried out the Great Commission of our Lord. The Apostle Paul affirms this fact in his Epistle to the Romans where he writes, "**But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world,**" (10:18). The size of a conference or synod does not determine whether or not the Great Commission is carried out, nor does it affect the ability to do this important work. Every time any member of our congregations talk with someone else about sin and grace; about man's perverse nature and the immaculate human nature of Christ; about man's inability to do anything good in God's sight and about Christ's perfect righteousness as our Substitute; about man's deserving of eternal punishment in hell and about Christ's perfect sacrifice on the accursed tree of the cross that all who believe in Him might not perish but have everlasting life--the Great Commission of our Lord Christ is being carried out! Every time any member of our congregations confesses his faith in the pure teachings of God's Word and lifts up his voice against false teaching and godless living in external Christendom, especially also in heterodox Lutheranism--the Great Commission of our God and Savior is being carried out! The Lord does not want us to "water down"

His Word in order to increase the membership of our congregations or Conference. He wants us to bring His Word in all its truth and purity to others wherever and whenever the opportunity presents itself, properly dividing Law and Gospel--presenting the Law in all its severity and the Gospel in all its sweetness. We then are **not** responsible for the increase in numbers but can confidently believe that the Lord, through His pure Word, will add to the Church daily such as should be saved. Large numbers and a great increase in membership does not necessarily indicate God's blessing upon a church body or congregation. It may indicate the very opposite, namely, a **compromise** between that which is plainly taught in the Bible and that which the vast majority of people in this world want to hear. The most precious jewel of God grace and blessing which can ever be bestowed upon a congregation or Conference is that, in these last evil days, the full truth of God's Word is still there being taught, upheld, and defended. Then we can be sure that it is God who gives us whatever increase in membership we enjoy--to the honor of His name alone!

On the other hand, the question of whether or not we as pastors and members of our Conference actually **do** carry out the Great Commission at all times, eagerly, willingly, boldly and joyously, is another question altogether. This is in the area of sanctification in which all Christians need to grow and there is no one and no church body which has more reason to carry out the Great Commission than **we** have, among whom, by God's grace alone, the Word of God in all its truth and purity is still being preserved, preached and taught.

Why did the holy Apostles and other early Christians risk so much, yes, imprisonment, life and limb, for the sake of the Gospel? Did their faith somehow differ from ours? What was it that moved them to speak boldly of Christ and Him crucified for the sins of the world--besides the command of our Savior to do so? The answer, of course, is that these people were **filled with gratitude** for what the Lord Jesus had done for them personally. They were **thankful** for the saving faith and trust in Christ as their only Savior and Redeemer which the Holy Ghost had worked in their hearts through His Word, and **thankful** for what God had granted them in Christ Jesus, without money and without price, namely, the forgive-

ness of sins, peace of heart and mind, an abundant life with purpose and meaning in this world, and the certain hope of eternal salvation beyond the grave! The Apostle Paul expresses it clearly and succinctly when he says in II Cor. 5:14,15, "**For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead: And that He died for all, that the which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.**" Certainly, no one among us, whose heart has been changed by the love of God in Christ Jesus and is filled with thankfulness to the Lord, can hardly remain silent, for out "**of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaketh,**" Luke 6:45. Must we not show our gratitude, as did the Apostles in Acts 4:20 when they declared before the Council, "**We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard,**" and like the shepherds in the Christmas Gospel who "**made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child**?" Luke 2:17.

Indeed, the Christ Child would mean nothing to us were it not for what He had come to accomplish for our salvation, namely, by His perfect life in our place and His suffering the torments of hell as our Substitute--that all who believe in Him might not perish but have everlasting life, John 3:16. This is why the message of Christmas fills our hearts with thanksgiving and praise, and our tongues should express this wondrous message to others. The shepherds had heard the words from the herald angel, "**Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord,**" Luke 2:11. There are so many others still waiting to hear the message of their deliverance from sin and death through the Babe of Bethlehem. Even the fact that they may be members of some church does not at all mean that they have heard this message for "**many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many,**" Matt. 24:11. The need is great for people everywhere to hear the message which you have in your heart, which you hold so dear and precious, and for which you are so thankful. The Apostle Paul writes, "**With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,**" Rom. 10:10. Open **your** mouth! Do not hide the Light, which you have in your heart, under a bushel! (Matt. 5:15,16)

Consider also this: The fastest growing religious body on the face of the earth is **not** Christian but a cult. It is the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, commonly known as the Mormon Church. Don't let the name or the enticing TV advertisments of the Mormons deceive you. This cult is rabidly unChristian and antiChristian! Their members are **not** true believers in Christ who are heading for eternal salvation through faith in Him as their only Savior and Redeemer. They have no true God-pleasing gratitude in their hearts which comes only from the knowledge of the true God and the salvation which He has provided for all mankind through Jesus Christ our Lord. Yet, the Mormons obviously work harder at spreading their false teachings throughout the world than we who have the pure doctrines of God's saving Word. We are often hesitant even to mention the name of Jesus to others or to discuss His Word with relatives and friends who are not one in faith with us for fear of causing offense and disturbing outward peace. We are often fearful of speaking about our Savior with neighbors whom we know are not believers or are otherwise deceived by the morass of false doctrines taught by their church bodies--because they might think that we are fanatics! And so, too often we remain silent when it is our solemn obligation before God to bring the way of salvation to others. Isn't it strange that we, who by God's limitless grace, have been given it **ALL,** often times seem to be the **least thankful** for God's precious gifts to us and, instead of speaking to others about the love of God in Christ Jesus as we hear it in the Christmas message, are silent, except perhaps in our own church buildings and occasionally with our fellow Christians?

Brethren, it is **not size** which hinders us in carrying out the Great Commission of our Savior, but unnecessary fear: Fear of embarrassment. Fear of looking and sounding foolish in the sight of others. Fear for what the attitude of others might be toward us. And perhaps behind such fear is the lack of thankfulness to God for the Gift of His Son or a take-it-for-granted attitude toward the salvation wrought in us by God our Savior.

May it be the earnest prayer of all the members of our Conference that God would work anew in each of us a heartfelt gratitude for the blessings of forgiveness and peace which He

has so graciously bestowed upon us through faith in Christ Jesus, and that He would continue to strengthen our faith through His Word and grant us true boldness that we also, like those shepherds who first heard the glorious message of the Christmas angel, make "**known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child,**" Luke 2:17.

May God grant unto each of you a joyous holiday season and a blessed New Year in and through Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Yours in the Christ Child,
Mark W. Dierking, President

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**A New Year's Prayer**

May ev'ry plan and undertaking
This year be all begun with Thee;
When I am sleeping or am waking,
Still let me know Thou art with me.
Abroad do Thou my footsteps guide,
At home be ever at my side.

And may this year to me be holy;
Thy grace so fill my ev'ry thought
That all my life be pure and lowly
And truthful, as a Christian's ought.
So make me while yet dwelling here
Pious and blest from year to year.

And grant, Lord, when the year is over,
That it for me in peace may close;
In all things care for me and cover
My head in time of fear and woes.
So may I wnen my years are gone
Appear with joy before Thy throne.

-TLH 120:2,4,6.

## PASTOR DAVID G. REDLIN RECEIVED INTO FELLOWSHIP BY THE CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

On October 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, 1990, all of the pastors of the Concordia Lutheran Conference, appointed as a Colloquy Committee by your President in accordance with our Constitution (IV,2b), examined the Rev. David G. Redlin of Tucson, Arizona, in the light of our confessional position in matters of doctrine and practice. The colloquy was held at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Seattle, Washington. It is with great joy that I carry out the constitutionally-mandated responsibility of announcing to you the results of that colloquy. Pastor Redlin, formerly a member of the ministerium of the WELS (Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod) and presently the pastor of Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church in Tucson, Arizona, declared himself to be in full agreement with our Scriptural position and, on the basis of his confession and a thorough examination of his position, we, too, were able to extend to him the right hand of fellowship.

Pastor Redlin and his congregation left the WELS and have been independent for nearly five years. During the past two years, Pastor E. R. Stallings, of our sister congregation in San Antonio, Texas, had been meeting and discussing various aspects of doctrine, especially in the area Church and Ministry, with Pastor Redlin and also, at their request, with his congregation. Pastor Redlin was also able to attend several sessions of our last two conventions and had been studying with his congregation "A Sketch of the Doctrinal Position of the CLC." Pastor Redlin stated at the colloquy that his congregation is also in full agreement with our doctrinal position. Recently his congregation in Tucson has begun the procedures outlined in our Constitution toward making formal application for membership in our Conference.

May the Lord of the Church, our dear Savior Jesus Christ, graciously bless this professed agreement and fellowship founded on His Word alone, and preserve as a cherished blessing the precious bond of unity which He has accomplished among us.

**"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,"** Psalm 133:1.

Mark W. Dierking, President

# The Crosses that the Christian Bears Are Evidence of God's Love for Him

The Rev. David T. Mensing
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II.

In the first part of our essay, we considered the **nature** of the crosses that the Christian bears; and we noted how closely linked they are to the cross of the Savior, whose holy precious blood, shed in anguish on the tree of the cross, sufficed to purchase our release from sin, death and Satan. Now that we are, by adoption, the children of God by faith in Christ's merits, we are privileged to bear the "**marks**" or scars of the Lord Jesus branded into our flesh as reminders of the price He paid for our redemption. (Galatians 6:17)

Now in Part Two we examine in particular the **purpose** of the Christian's crosses, namely, **why** our dear heavenly Father lays them upon us if indeed He loves us so dearly. Satan, the source of many of our trials and tribulations, and of **ALL** temptations to **evil**, would of course have us dwell upon that very word "**if**", rather than fix our eyes of faith upon the salutary purpose of our crosses. He cunningly challenged the **Savior's** only-begotten Sonship with the Father and His very divinity with that same little word: "**IF Thou be the Son of God...**"--"**IF Thou be His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased...**, **why** is He permitting You to go hungry here in the wilderness? **Why** would He keep you from demonstrating Your divine power in jumping from this Temple turret? **Why** would He want to deprive You of all the wealth and glory I offer you?" (Matthew 4:1-11) And this **devil**, this **liar**, yea, this "**father of lies**" from the beginning, creeps up to US in the midst of tribulation and attacks **US** as well, saying: "**IF** ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, **why** does He cause you to suffer so? **YEA, HATH GOD SAID, 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth'**? You, my naive Christian sufferer, have been **had**! You are indeed a first-class chump and sucker if you honestly believe that God **loves** you!! He surely has a strange way of showing it!"

Indeed, the very same distresses are often encountered by Christians and unbelievers alike here in this world--calamities and catastrophes of all sorts which we recognize as the visitation of **God**'s wrath and displeasure, punishment and retribution, upon the wicked. "**Woe unto the wicked**!" writes the prophet Isaiah (3:11); "**It shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him.**" And Paul writes to the Romans, chapter 2, verses 8 and 9: "**Unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness: Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.**" But the devil uses this very fact that the afflictions of the believers and unbelievers are, **outwardly** at least, **indistinguishable** from one another, as a source of doubt, misgiving and even despair to the suffering Christian. Satan would thereby endeavour to convince him that, in spite of his justification by God's grace for Christ's sake through faith, God is **still angry** with him and holds his sins against **him.** Thus the devil not only tries to **weaken** the Christian's confidence in the love of God to poor sinners for Jesus' sake; but he wants to **destroy** the individual Christian's faith altogether and to convince him that God **hates** him rather than loves him, that God is **punishing** him instead of having forgiven him, that God is dealing with him according to His **justice** and has withdrawn from him His mercy!! Such lying, tempting and conniving on the part of Satan belongs to the Christian's cross, to that temptation which God permits the devil to visit upon him (as he did upon Job) to test and refine his faith. But it is certainly a chastening that "**for the present seemeth to be GRIEVOUS**" and a source of **FRUSTRATION** to the Christian, as he seeks to determine what **good purpose** God could possibly intend thereby.

To be sure, we Christians are still sinners in whose "**flesh dwelleth no good thing**" (Romans 7:18), and by whose sins and iniquities we have "offended (God) and justly deserve (His) temporal and eternal punishment." (General Confession) Thus recognizing our inability, because of the flesh, to refrain from sin and work only righteousness, we cry out with Paul in utter frustration: "**O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death**?" (Romans 7:24) When we then are visited with trials and tribulations, afflictions and burdens, we are tempted to wonder whether they are not in

fact the just punishments of a righteous and angry God! Indeed **they are NOT!** For as penitent sinners, humbly clinging to Christ's merits for forgiveness and salvation, Paul says, "**we have PEACE with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**" (Romans 5:1) Thus the crosses, trials, tribulations and chastisements which He lays upon us **must** have an altogether **different purpose,** a purpose not flowing from divine wrath (which has been removed from us in justification), but from the heavenly Father's **loving intention** to discipline us, as any responsible and loving Christian father would discipline his child. For in Hebrews 12:7, the verse immediately following the keynote text of our essay, the holy writer says: "**If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with SONS; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not**?" Let us therefore explore just **how** our heavenly Father "chastens" us, disciplines us with His Law, in order to bring about in us, as the end result of this process, "**the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.**" (v. 11)

First, however, a word is in order concerning the proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel in the matter of God's chastisements. As we confess in the exposition of the Small Catechism, "the Law curbs to some extent the coarse outbursts of sin," also for the Christian in his flesh, "shows us our sins" and our need for a Savior, and "teaches us Christians what works we must do to lead a God-pleasing life." Consequently, within the scope of the **LAW,** we find God's "**rebuke**", "**correction**", "**chastening**" and "**instruction**" as He disciplines us, as well as all those visitations which are "**grievous**" instead of "**joyous**": "**Chastenings**", "**afflictions**", "**trials**", "**tribulations**", "**infirmities**", and "**temptations**". **The Law itself can work in us nothing good whatever.** Works motivated by the **Law** are **not God-pleasing,** since they flow not from **faith** but from **fear;** and the Law itself, as well as the vicissitudes of life, do not in themselves work sanctification. They do, however, **contribute** to sanctification, as the Law **serves the Gospel** by leading men into **God's Word**--as our "**schoolmaster,**" bringing us unto (or **up to**) Christ (Galatians 3:24). Properly-speaking, only the Gospel works **faith, sanctification, peace, fruitfulness** and **righteousness.** For the Gospel comforts us with "**the good news of our salvation in Jesus Christ,**" teaching us "**what God has done and still does for our salvation,**" showing us "**our Savior and the grace**

**of God,"** and consoling **"sinners who are troubled in their minds because of their sins."**

Thus it is the **Gospel,** for which our hearts have been prepared by the Law, which confirms to us the blessed fact that **"we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,"** (Galatians 3:26) **"...and, if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."** (Galatians 4:7) It is the **Gospel** which points the suffering Christian to the "silver lining" of his chastisements, saying: **"Behold, what manner of LOVE the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!"** It is the **Gospel** which takes the grievous chastenings and afflictions and trials and rebukes of the Law and turns them to our **benefit,** yielding **"the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."** (Hebrews 12:11)

Let us now take several passages which describe various crosses of the Christian and see in them how those crosses serve as the heavenly Father's disciplinary rebuke, correction, training and instruction, and how, when the **suffering believer** is directed to the comfort of the Gospel, they redound to his great blessing as the manifestation of God's fatherly **love.** The following are just a few examples, cited out of the hundreds of passages which speak of the Christian's crosses, to illustrate the important Law and Gospel elements in chastisements, and how our heavenly Father uses them:

a) **"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent!"** --Revelation 3:19

Crosses are God's **rebuke** of us because of our sins -- a function of His **Law** to curb our flesh, show us our sins, and discipline us with grievous chastenings. **BUT** it is His **love** in Christ that works **zeal,** genuine, earnest, Godly **sorrow** over our sins and sincere **repentance** which clings to Jesus for forgiveness. Thus the end result yields **"the peaceable fruit of righteousness."**

**b) "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you."** --I Peter 4:12

When the heat is on, so to speak, and our faith is being tried or tested in the furnace of affliction, the "dross" or

slag in our molten metal floats to the surface--our imperfections, weaknesses and sins--in a process painful to our flesh. Without the knowledge and comfort of the Gospel, we would surely wilt, faint, yea, perish in the heat of God's smelting furnace. **BUT** because we are the "**beloved**" children of God, which assurance we have only in the **Gospel,** we recognize the trial not as "**strange**" but as beneficial for the strengthening and purifying of our faith.

c) "**Lest I should be exalted above measure..., there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.... And (the Lord) said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.**" --II Corinthians 12:7 & 9

In this instance of Paul's "**thorn in the flesh,**" the purpose of the cross he had to bear was to **humble** him. The affliction was "**grievous,**" the manifestation of God's Law, **and,** at the same time, "**the messenger of Satan**" to plague Paul. By **itself,** the affliction would have driven Paul to **despair,** and Satan would have won a victory by snaring the Apostle in the sin of pride and self-esteem. But God's **grace,** mediated only in the precious **Gospel,** would be enough to grant the strength necessary for Paul to **survive** the chastening and to rely more perfectly upon "**the power of Christ.**" (v. 9b)

d) "**It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes.**" --Psalm 119:71

Here the purpose of the affliction laid upon the Psalmist was to drive him to the **Gospel,** to the "**statutes**" which alone work "**good**", which alone "**yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness.**" **Without** it, he could not have regarded the affliction as an advantage and benefit, but would have chafed under the cross and perhaps lost his faith entirely!

e) "**Remember Thy Word unto Thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope! This is my comfort in my affliction, for Thy Word hath quickened me.**" --Psalm 119:49-50

This passage is an outstanding example of the relationship of the Law and the Gospel in Christian cross-bearing! The affliction **itself** was discouraging, perhaps even

frightening, reminding the Psalmist of his unworthiness of any good at the hand of God; for he was a **hopeless** case, without **comfort,** and by nature **dead** in trespasses and sins. What did God accomplish by the affliction? He drove the Psalmist to His precious "**Word**", **the Gospel,** upon which his **hope** was to be built, which gave him **comfort** when the affliction distressed him, which **quickened** him, that is, made him **alive** unto **salvation** through faith in Jesus and **alive** unto **righteousness** as the fruit of his saving faith. Without the "**Word**" of the Gospel, there would have been despair instead of "**hope;**" there would have been no "**comfort**" in his affliction; there would have been no life to come forth "**from the body of this death**" (Romans 7:24).

Each one of our listeners and readers can continue this study for himself in connection with his individual Bible reading to see how consistently the Lord, our dear heavenly Father, lays crosses upon His children with only the most **blessed** and **noble PURPOSE** in view: Correction, rebuke, discipline and trouble as functions of the **Law;** and comfort, hope, peace and joy, as well as increase in holiness of living and all other Christian virtues, alone by the precious **Gospel, "the power of God unto salvation."** Only because of the **Gospel** are we "**in all these things more than conquerors through Him that loved us,**" ..."**for whom the Lord LOVETH He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth,**" always "**for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.**" (Hebrews 12:10b)

Knowing now the **purpose** of our crosses, whatever they may be, knowing the blessed relationship between God's Law and His precious Gospel in yielding "**the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby,**" we Christians now face the prospect of approaching and bearing the crosses that are set before us and laid upon us by our heavenly Father. **What shall be our attitude** toward our afflictions, trials, tribulations, chastisements, discouragements, doubts and fears? And **how shall we muster the strength to shoulder them and to bear them** with courage, "**considering them an honor and precious adornment**"? This shall be the theme, the question of challenge, to be considered in the Third Part of our essay.

# Around the World

*with editorial comment*

*by M. L. Natterer*

Ever since its development in the 1940s, radiocarbon dating has been a vital tool for historians and paleontologists trying to pinpoint the ages of everything from ancient animal bones to prehistoric human settlements to Egyptian mummies. By measuring the decay of the natural radioactive isotope carbon 14, which almost all organisms ingest while they are alive, scientists can estimate how long it has been since an animal or plant died. But those estimates, while valuable, are also known to be somewhat uncertain. Geologists at the Lamont-Doherty Geological Laboratory in Palisades, N.Y., offered firm evidences of just how uncertain. Writing in Nature, they showed that some radiocarbon dates may be off by as much as 3,500 years - possibly enough to force a change in current thinking on such important questions as exactly when humans first reached the Americas. Carbon 14 levels in the air - and thus the amount ingested by organisms - are known to vary over time, and that can affect the results of carbon dating.

**"Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord"**, Jer.17:15. Those who trust in the wisdom of man and act as though such wisdom were infallible because they may be regarded as being experts in their particular field, are building upon sinking sand! **"Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes"**, Isaiah 21:5. **"Great men are not always wise"**, Job 32:9. When this carbon dating first appeared on the scene it was presented as though its accuracy was totally reliable. Now we read that such is no longer the case. Like a drowning man grasping at anything within reach, the so-called wise of this world grasp at anything to support their theories of the evolution. Although the Bible does not give us the precise age of the earth, it certainly does tell us that God created the world in six ordinary days, Gen. 1. We dare not measure God's wisdom and almighty power by a human yardstick! Man's assumptions, theories, and conclusions may change, but God does not change. What a comfort for us Christians to know that our faith is built upon a solid rock - God's Word! **"Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him"**, Psalms 2:12.

Anti-Gypsy hatred surfaces once more in Eastern Europe. Gypsies number around 10 million and live largely as outcasts in the nations of Eastern and Western Europe. They are almost universally regarded as dishonest, backward, unwashed, lazy, and devious. In World War II, Hitler exterminated 500,000 of them. Even today, the Gypsies of Europe are natural scapegoats. When crime rates soar, the blame often falls on the Gypsies. When turmoil grips an entire society, pushing hatred and prejudice to the fore, Gypsies stand among the first victims. That appears to be the case in Eastern Europe today. According to reports reaching Western capitals, the revolution that swept away communist rule in Eastern Europe unleashed not only democracy but also an ugly streak of intolerance against minority groups, among them Jews and Gypsies. No restraint on anti-Gypsy flare-ups is likely, given the wide-spread loathing felt for Eastern Europe's scattered Gypsy community. Police in Budapest have made no effort to remove graffiti appearing on city walls that call for a "Gypsy-free area" and that urge the citizenry to "come with us and kill the gypsies." In Romania, a gypsy who complained that a police car had hit his daughter was charged in Bucharest with throwing the child in front of the vehicle. Unemployment is rife and nobody can deny that the Gypsies are responsible for a lot of minor crimes. Although they account for only 5 percent of Hungarian population, 55 percent of prisoners in Hungarian jails are Gypsies.

Historians tell us that Gypsies originally came from India, migrating eventually into Romania, Hungary, Spain, France, Russia, England, and even the United States. No matter in which country they reside, they seek to maintain their identity by observing their customs and traditions. It is most unfortunate that the Gypsies and Jews are being made the scapegoats and are so shamefully mistreated in the various European countries. Ever since the Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden it is one of man's sinful traits to excuse himself and to blame someone else. (See Gen.3:12,13). God's Word teaches that "**All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God**", Romans 3:23. The Gypsies and the Jews also have souls for which the Savior died and we should, therefore, seek to point them to the Lord Jesus who is the Savior and Redeemer of the WORLD!

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An astounding new university study of more than 1,000 people is offering the best proof ever of life after death. "We spoke to people who actually died and were brought back to life by emergency medical procedures - and they provide proof that your soul, mind and personality continue to exist even after death", declares Kimberly Sharp, assistant professor of social work at the University of Washington, in Seattle. "They all say the afterlife is full of love and beauty. They

are engulfed by a supreme being and have joyful reunions with relatives and friends who have died earlier. "People who have had near-death experiences, or NDEs, are never afraid of dying again." Sharp worked for 10 years with adults in a hospital trauma unit and children in a pediatric cancer center and interviewed more than 1,000 NDE patients.

That the Lord may grant a glimpse of heaven to a believer before his death is certainly His prerogative. We need but think of Stephen who, when he was being stoned to death, **"looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God",** Acts 7:55. But we dare not forget that we Christians are not to look for such visions. Our faith must always rest upon the Word of God which assures us that **"he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life"**, John 3:36. One problem with some of these reports of near-death experiences is the fact that there are those who do not believe in Jesus who also lay claim to similar experiences. The second part of John 3:36 is either forgotten or simply brushed aside, namely, **"and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."** Eternal damnation awaits all those who are not the dear children of the heavenly Father through faith in Christ as their Savior. Thus any so-called beatific visions to those who do not believe in Jesus must come from him who seeks to destroy the souls of men with his lies, John 8:44, and lead them into everlasting destruction. On the other hand, the beauty of heaven and the joy and peace we Christians shall experience are simply beyond the powers of our comprehension on this side of the grave. Should not this encourage us to be on our guard, faithfully using God's Word and prayer, that no man take our crown? (Rev.3:11)

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British carnivores and vegetarians are chewing over the Scriptures in an argument about whose diet enjoys divine sanction. Britain's agriculture minister, John Gummer, started the flap by declaring that "the Bible tells us that we are masters of the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field, and we very properly eat them." "If the Almighty had wanted us to have three stomachs, I am sure He could have arranged it, but He chose to make us omnivores instead," said Gummer, a member of the Church of England's governing General Synod. He declared himself fed up with "deeply undemocratic food faddists" who make a religion of their diets. The Vegetarian Society took issue with Gummer, referring to Isaiah chapter 66 verse 3: "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that

offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood." Linda Farmer, assistant to the society's manager, also pointed approvingly to the first chapter of Daniel, in which the prophet "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the the portion of the king's meat." After 10 days, it was recorded, Daniel and his companions "appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat."

While Adam and Eve prior to their fall into sin were indeed vegetarians (Gen. 1:29), we observe that such was no longer the case with them and their descendants. The Lord reminded Noah that "**every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you**", Gen. 9:3. When the angels visited Abraham and Sarah a calf was prepared for them and they did eat. Gen.18:7,8. Which animals the Israelites were forbidden to eat was told them by the Lord in Exodus, chapter 11. The Vegetarian Society's reference to Isaiah 66, verse 3, is readily explained by the immediate context in which the Lord shows His displeasure at the **mere outward** worship of the Jews. In the case of Daniel he would not defile himself with the king's meat because in some way it obviously was connected with idol worship, probably being consecrated to an idol, I Cor. 10:18-20. To eat meat or not to eat meat is a matter of a Christian's personal liberty. Read I Timothy 4:1-5 and Colossians 2:16. The Savior tells us that "**not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man**", Matt. 15:11.

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John E. List thought he was ensuring salvation for his wife and children by killing them 18 years ago, according to a confession letter released by prosecutors. "At least I'm certain that all have gone to heaven now," List wrote in a 1971 letter to his Lutheran pastor. "If things had gone on who knows if that would be the case." In the five page letter List wrote to his pastor, Rev. Eugene A. Rehwinkel, he said, "I know that many will only look at the additional years that they could have lived but if finally they were no longer Christians what would be gained? Also, I'm sure many will say, 'How could anyone do such a horrible thing?' - My only answer is it isn't easy and was only done after much thought." Police found the bullet-ridden bodies of List's wife and children lined up on the floor of the ballroom in their 18-room Westfield, N.J. mansion when they entered the house Dec.7, 1971. They also found the body of List's 84-year old mother, upstairs. List, arrested in Richmond, Va. in June, argues that he is innocent because of his mental state at the time the slayings occurred. At the time he wasn't earning enough to support his family, and was near bankruptcy. He also worried

about what his daughter's aspirations as an actress "might do to her continuing to be a Christian." And he was upset that his wife said she wanted to remove her name from the church rolls.

The above reminds us of the Apostle Paul's words in Romans, chapter 3, ..."**(as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just**" (v.8). Dare we steal as long as we give what we have stolen to the poor? Dare we murder as long as we seek to attain what we consider to be a laudable goal? Such faulty reasoning smacks of the Jesuit principle: "The end justifies the means." Man's sin-perverted reason thus seeks to justify and excuse his transgression of GOD'S law! And "**sin is the transgression of the Law**", I John 3:4. Whatever is contrary to His Law is sin and "**the wages of sin is death**", Romans 6:23. No wonder the Apostle declares that those who hold they they can do evil that good may come will bring upon themselves a just punishment. We Christians must learn to submit ourselves to the Will of our dear heavenly Father for Jesus' sake. He has determined the hour of our death and He forbids us to take that prerogative unto ourselves!

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If our blessed Lord and Maker hated men,
Would He then be of flesh partaker?
If He in our woe delighted, Would He bear
All the care of our race benighted?

He becomes the Lamb that taketh sin away
And for aye full atonement maketh.
For our life His own He tenders and our race,
By His grace, meet for glory renders.

Dearest Lord, Thee will I cherish. Though my breath
Fail in death, Yet I shall not perish,
But with Thee abide forever there on high,
In that joy which can vanish never.

--Paul Gerhardt, 1653

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