

Christian MONTHLY

DEDICATED TO THE PROCLAMATION
OF THE WORD OF GOD



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

August 2024

80th Anniversary Edition

THE CHRISTIAN MONTHLY has been published for 80 years this month! Faithful pastors and teachers have written, our readership has waxed and waned, we've gone through changes in editors and style, and in this electronic age we are available online at www.christianmonthlyalca.org. May this publication continue to be dedicated to the proclamation of God's Word, and may it find its way into many of our homes. May the Good Shepherd continue to seek the lost, bind up the brokenhearted, and strengthen the sick.

The two opening articles from the first English language *Christian Monthly* follow, as printed in the 50th anniversary edition in August 1994:

Greetings

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

It is with a prayer to God, the giver of all good and perfect gifts, and from whom all true wisdom and understanding is received, that we have prepared and now present to you this first issue of the *Christian Monthly* in the English language. May this messenger of God's Word find its way and be welcomed into many homes. May it be a means by which the Good Shepherd of our souls will seek that which is lost, bring back that which is driven away, bind up that which is broken, and strengthen that which is sick. May the arrival of this messenger of peace be awaited for as eagerly as Noah and those who were in the ark with him, awaited the return of the dove sent forth to see if the waters were abated off the face of the ground. What tidings of rest and joy it brought when it returned with an olive leaf in its bill, by which Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. Likewise may this publication bring tidings of peace, rest, and joy like the mild, patient, and humble dove brought forth to Noah. As Noah put forth his hand and took the dove and pulled her into him, into the arc, so Christ will graciously preserve, help, and welcome those that fly to Him for rest. We pray that the Lord will bless our humble efforts in His name to the furtherance of His kingdom and the salvation of undying souls.

W. A. Karvonen

An English Christian Monthly (Excerpts)

Speak thou the things which becometh sound doctrine. Thus Paul exhorts Titus in the labors of the gospel to preach that they who hear might be "nourished in the word of faith and of good doctrine." *That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* Furthermore, in receiving these words of doctrine, which is the Word of God, we must know he who preaches or writes concerning it, *neither received it of man, neither was taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. That Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith: that we being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fullness of God.*

It is now proposed, that in the living Christianity of this visitation of grace, a Christian paper be published in the English language. Such is surely pleasing to God. And as His work, to the glory of His kingdom and the salvation of souls, it shall prosper providing that in the contents of this English paper will be found not only the writings of the young but also the witness of those who are old in faith and with sound understanding of the doctrine of Christ.

Watchfulness is especially necessary in this day of a multitude of false sects and doctrines, wherein the devil lies in wait to deceive even the elect if possible. When all around we hear the cry, "here is Christ, and there is Christ," may we find Him where He can be found—in the truth of His Word.

May we in all things be obedient unto His will, ever seeking to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, so that prophecy of Amos concerning the children of God would not be our portion: *Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I shall send the famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.*

Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.

By the hand of one young in faith, who needs the sincere milk of the Word.

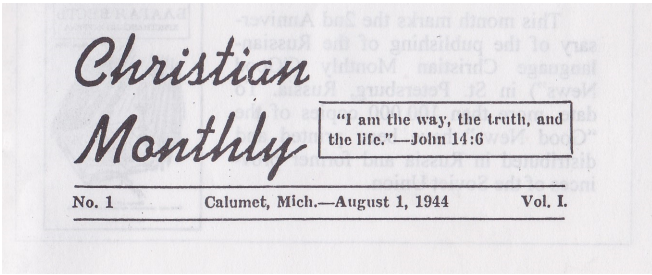
Carl Kulla

A Little Background of the *Christian Monthly*



Finnish-Language *Christian Monthly*:

The first official paper of the Apostolic Lutheran Church was published by the authority of the 1915 Big Meetings. It was called *Kristillinen Kuukausilehti* (Christian Monthly) and was published in the Finnish language from 1916 through 1962. The editors of this paper during this time were: C. J. Sacarisen, Matt Mattson, Evert Maatala, Jacob Uitti, Waino Karvonen, Emil Millen and Norman Saatio. The first issue was February (Helmikuu) 1916. The masthead of that issue is shown to the left.



English-Language *Christian Monthly*:

The *Christian Monthly* was first published in the English language in August 1944. The initial eight-page periodical explained the intent of the magazine: “It is with a prayer to God, the giver of all good and perfect gifts, and from whom all true wisdom and understanding is received, that we have prepared and now present to you this first issue of the *Christian Monthly* in the English Language. May this messenger of God’s Word find its way and be welcomed into many homes. May it be a means by which the Good Shepherd of our souls will seek that which is lost, bring back that which is driven away, bind up that which is broken, and strengthen that which is sick.” (W.A. Karvonen). The masthead of the first edition is shown above.

A different Bible verse was printed on the front cover of each issue until January 1970. Since then, the cover has been graced with *Psalms 119:105: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* The December 1993 issue had the first two-color cover and was also the first to state: “Dedicated to the Proclamation of the Word of God.” A full-size, full-color cover design was first printed in the January 2008 issue. Various covers are pictured below. Which eras are familiar to you?



Ten different editors have served since the inception of the *Christian Monthly*. These are the years that they served:

W. A. Karvonen	Aug 1944—May 1948	Helmi Kivisto	Aug 1962—Mar 1975
E. A. Millen	Jun 1948—Oct 1950	Alvar Helmes	Apr 1975—Jun 1995
Carl Kulla	Nov 1950—Apr 1952	Alvin Holmgren	Jul 1995—Mar 1999
Kenneth Hendrickson	May 1952—Jun 1958	Linda Mattson	Apr 1999—Dec 2007
Helmar Peterson	Jul 1958—Jul 1962	Lois Matson	Jan 2008—Present

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:9-16

His Work in Us

C.O. Rosenius

Day by Day with God; Volume 2, Number 24

The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works.

Psalm 104:31

OF COURSE, EVERYBODY LOVES WHAT he has made himself! Much more than the Lord, all the works of whom are sheer beauty and perfection. Think deeply over this fact. Because it brings with it tremendous comfort! Will God not be satisfied with what He has made Himself? He must surely rejoice in His own works! But what and where are His works? Is it the devil in hell? God preserve us! In his present shape he is his own master. Are they the angels in heaven? Not even they! In the covenant of works they have themselves earned their gloriousness and gained their crowns as the result of a struggle. Are they then the self-righteous with their own merits and virtues? Never! Those are their own works and they will themselves be responsible for them. Where then do we find the works of the Lord which are His delight?

Where a publican smites upon his breast, saying: God, be merciful to me a sinner (Luke 18:3). Where a Bartimaeus cries by the highway side: Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me! Where a woman from Canaan speaks about the dogs and the

crumbs, and a contrite and brokenhearted Mary Magdalene washes the feet of Jesus with her tears. Where a Paul exclaims happily: I obtained mercy (1 Timothy 1:13), and an Asaph: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none on earth that I desire beside thee (Psalm 73)." And when a Simon Peter begins to falter in his speech when he says: "Lord, that knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee (John 21:17)."

Yes, there, where such things take place! Where stony hearts become changed into soft clay in His hand, and faces hard as steel into wax, so that He can impress His image thereon. Where souls who have never asked for the Lord now



begin to thirst for the living God as the hart panteth after the fresh water. Where the righteous began to coo like doves on the ruins of their righteousness; and the wise began to consider their wisdom foolishness. Where poor sinner began to weep at His feet, and condemned evil-doers gladly dare to invoke Him as their Defender against the accuser.

There, there are His works! And where His works are, there is His delight. His delight, then, is among the children of men; and that among poor repenting sinners. In them He delights. On them He feasts His eyes. Does not a friend of nature delight in a beautiful landscape? Does not the one who has planted a vineyard rejoice at the sight of its blooming and fruitfulness? Even thus the Lord has His delight in the garden He has planted on earth with His blood of atonement and His Spirit.

Does not the new creation in a sinner delight His eye? He cannot look enough at it, because it is His work. He says to His dove open "Let me see thy countenance for thy countenance is comely (Song of Solomon 2:14)." "But," you say, "this describes His dove, the pious, lovable souls. In them He can have His delight. Not in me and those like me, because I am an abominable sinner!" What are you saying? Does God merely delight in your piousness? Can you please God by your own works? Have you thrown away the truth so full of comfort, that "the Lord shall rejoice in His works!" that we have been made well pleasing in His dear Son, and not in ourselves? But you say: "I find sheer sin and impurity within myself. Is this the work of the Lord?" The very fact that you find sheer sin and impurity within yourself is the work of the Lord. The sin is not the work of the Lord, but the fact that you feel it

within yourself. That is not the work of nature, nor of the devil. The inspiration declared by the serpent: "Ye shall be as god," has filled the whole of our human nature with self-idolatry. Therefore a contrite and sorrowful spirit is such a work of the Lord that God and His angels rejoice in it. It is the work of the Lord that brings lost sons and daughters into the arms of the Father, that drives the sinner to the mercy seat to wrap himself in the righteousness of Christ, "the best robe" (Luke 15:22). Here is the greatest delight and joy of the heart of God! The one who has put on Christ is holy and glorious before God, even if in himself, and in his own eyes, he is a most abominable sinner. ~

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Exodus 20:8

FOR THE WORD OF GOD is the sanctuary above all sanctuaries, yea, the only one which we Christians know and have. For though we had the bones of all the saints or all holy and consecrated garments upon a heap, still that would help us nothing; for all that is a dead thing which can sanctify nobody. But God's Word is the treasure which sanctifies everything, and by which even all the saints themselves were sanctified. At whatever hour, then, God's Word is taught, preached, heard, read or meditated upon, there the person, day, and work are sanctified thereby, not because of the external work, but because of the Word, which makes saints of us all.

Therefore I constantly say that all our life and work must be ordered according to God's Word, if it is to be God-pleasing or holy. Where this is done, this commandment is in force and being fulfilled.

Large Catechism

Eighty Years!

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children all around the globe,

This is the 80th year that the *Christian Monthly* has been published. God has blessed the beginnings of the booklet. He has continued to bless us with willing people to send in articles and those who do the work to make it available for us to read.

This publication is for everyone, young and old alike. We can all read it for instruction and encouragement for our Christian walk. Some of the articles may be difficult for you children to understand. But as you grow and learn more about God, Jesus, and what being a Christian means to you, I encourage you to pick up a copy or nowadays go on the computer and read it and see if there is something in it for you.

I would like to ask that if anyone young or old has a story of something God has done in your life, or a poem or even a special quote, that you would feel free to share it. It may encourage another.

You young ones are special people and I pray that we adults would care deeply about your souls and teach you about God being first and foremost in your life, as that is the foundation you want to have your life built on. We need to keep you in mind and send words of encouragement and instruction that will help you in your Christian walk. Keep loving the God who dearly loves you and paid a great price for you, when He sent His only Son to die – FOR YOU! and all mankind.

**This little booklet is for you and for me;
Open it up, dear ones, and see
The precious words written upon the pages—
God's Word being revealed as it has for ages.
The letters are written by willing hands
From here in America and other lands.
Let's read about God and Jesus, His Son—
Encouraging words for the old and the young.
Quotes from Luther and our forefathers of long ago,
Letters and poems from those we don't know.
Whatever is written, the intent is the same;
The reason for that is, God's Word doesn't change.
I pray that we'll all be reading;
I pray for those who will write;
Let's pray that God's Word keeps shining
And shedding its comforting Light.**

****A note to Christian parents and other believers who are grounded in faith and truth:**

We have a great responsibility to the young Christians. They will reach the age to be confirmed and will begin taking part in the Church. They are the next generation who we pray will stand strong in faith and continue to lead and take care of the Church. They will have their struggles along the way. We must encourage them and recognize them. They need that and will need it. Not one of us is better than the other. We're all in this together. Let brotherly love continue.

I pray that God's Word will still go out and bring joy, comfort, peace and salvation to all who love the Lord and desire to one day live in that glorious heavenly home one day. Children, don't ever forget that JESUS LOVES YOU!

In God's peace.

Christ: the Tested, Testing Stone

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

Isaiah 28:16

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Romans 9:30-33

CHRIST IS A TESTED STONE, that is, distressed and afflicted, or He is a testing stone, that is, a stone by whose shape all other stones are tested, so that we may be conformed to the image of the Son of God (Rom. 8:29). As Christ was polished, hewn, and squared by the promise, by death and the cross, so we, in His image, should become well polished by such suffering and such a cross. Therefore it behooves all the godly to be thoroughly tested by cross and persecution. For this reason the flesh which shrinks from the cross remains unpolished in its desires and unsuited to this stone.

Martin Luther

Within the Veil

Horatius Bonar

Excerpts, Christ the Healer

And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

John 10:23

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.

Hebrews 10:12

SEE HIM, THEN, in these two different conditions: 1. walking in Solomon's porch; 2. seated at the right hand of God.



1. *Walking in Solomon's porch.*—He walks there as the Substitute; our Substitute as truly as when he groaned in Gethsemane or died on Golgotha. As one consenting for a season to be shut out from the presence of God that we might enter and dwell in that presence for ever, He stands, or sits, or walks outside the sanctuary. Thus it is that He bears our banishment: He takes upon Him not merely the penalty of suffering and death, but that of exclusion from the house and home of God. That penalty He has endured: that exile He has undergone: that distance He has experienced: and all this as the Substitute, bearing what we should have borne, in order that we might inherit all to which He could lay claim. Through means of this substitution of the Son of God in the room of the exiled sinner, that sinner finds free access to the innermost shrine of heaven, the very presence of the Father. And the Father's message to each banished one is, enter in! Stand no longer afar off; despair no more, as if the gate were closed. Behold, it is open, wide open! Go in, and find peace, love, friendship, acceptance, through Him, to whose finished work of glorious substitution the Father is bearing such blessed testimony! Why should we depart from the living God, seeing the Son of God has removed all reason for our departure? Why remain in alienation, seeing here is that which has taken away all the hindrances in the way of friendship? Why remain afar off, seeing God asks you to come in? Why stand outside, seeing God says, COME IN?

Nor is it bare liberty of entrance that has been secured; as if the door had been reluctantly thrown open, and the way grudgingly cleared for us. Such is the efficacy of our Substitute's life and death, that we have BOLDNESS to enter into the holiest (Hebrews 10:19). We need not hide ourselves in the thicket; we need not run away from God; we need not, in terror and uncertainty, steal slowly and sadly back to our Father's house; we need not wait, nor doubt, nor suspect, nor distrust; we may go at once, and go boldly, to God, on the

simple security given to the sinner by the work of the divine Sin-bearer. That work has not simply made it possible for God to receive us but secured our reception. It has not simply unbarred the gate but flung it open, as widely open as God Himself could fling it, or as any sinner needs that it should be flung. Nay, it has sent out messengers of peace and messages of love, assuring us not only of a welcome when we return but of God's sincere desire that we should do so. It has not merely removed the restraints of grace which the Law imposed and set it free to pour itself out freely; but it has made grace a righteous thing; so that now love is righteousness, and righteousness is love.

It is not possible to imagine greater freeness for the sinner, in his going to God, than has been provided by the vicarious life and death of Him who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (Romans 10:4) Nothing can be freer, safer, surer, than the new and living way (Hebrews 10:20). O men and friends, and fellow-exiles, we beseech you to turn back on your way of peril and sin. Turn back, lest ye perish! By the death of Him who died the sinner's death, by the life of Him who lived on earth the sinner's life of banishment, we entreat you to bethink yourselves and turn your footsteps toward your Father's still-open home.



2. *Look at Him within the veil, at the Father's right hand.*—He remained on the outside while here; He has entered in at last, and that not into the earthly sanctuary, the mere figure of the true, but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us. When outside here on earth, He was our substitute; now when within, in heaven, He is our representative. He has gone up and gone in for us. He carries us in along with Him, and gives those who accept His substitution and representation the same privilege of nearness and fellowship as He has Himself. As our High Priest, he communicates between us and God. As Intercessor, He pleads our case. As Representative, He has so identified Himself with our persons that we are lost sight of under His shadow. The Father sees Him in us, and us in Him. All our imperfection is lost in His glorious perfection; and we, in being presented to the Father, are presented as part of His glorious self; all our uncomeliness for ever merged in the infinite comeliness of the beloved Son.

From the moment that faith linked us to His cross, and identified us with His person, we became inseparable. In no aspect could God view us, save as part of His Son—nay, wholly

one with Him. And this connection, though now one of faith, is ere long to be one of sight. When He who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4). His second coming will be the visible completion of the wondrous identification which faith at first accomplished. Resurrection will bring out, more fully than either life or death, the mysterious oneness between the body and the Head. One cross, one death, one grave, was ours; for His cross was ours, His death ours, His grave ours. So, one glory, one crown, one kingdom, one city, one inheritance shall be ours hereafter; for all that He has is ours. He, one with us, took our place of exile outside the veil and bore our shame, our suffering, our death. We, one with Him, get His place of nearness to the Father, within the veil, and entrance to the many mansions of the eternal house; receiving the life, the love, the blessing, the eternal gladness which He has purchased for us, and which He so freely, so lovingly, presents to each one who is now afar off, each banished child

of Adam, each prodigal of the earth, wandering in the far country, without a home or a Father, without a sanctuary, and without a God.

It is to this *innermost* place in the heaven of heavens, this *innermost* glory above, that the Lord invites the *outermost* of the sons of men, the *farthest off* of all earth's far-off wanderers. In love He took the lowest place that He might invite us to the highest. In love He went to the farthest circle of banishment that this earth knows, in order that, by bearing that banishment, He might bring us into the very center of divine fellowship, and nearness, and heavenly gladness—to the very bosom of the Father, out of which He Himself had come seeking the lost and devising means whereby his banished should be restored. Ah, surely there is not anything in our banishment that should lead us, for one moment, to prefer it to our Father's presence, nor anything in the distant land of exile to make us refuse for it the paradise of God! ~

The Two Chief Works of God

Apology to the Augsburg Confession

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Colossians 2:13-15

AND THEN IN COLOSSIANS 2:14 it is said that Christ blots out the handwriting which through the Law is against us. Here also there are two parts, the handwriting and the blotting out of the handwriting. The handwriting, however, is conscience, convicting and condemning us. The Law, moreover, is the word which reproveth and condemns sins. Therefore, this voice which says, I have sinned against the Lord, as David says, 2 Samuel 12:13, is the handwriting. And wicked and secure men do not seriously give forth this voice. For they do not see, they do not read the sentence of the Law written in the heart. In true griefs and terrors this sentence is perceived. Therefore the handwriting which condemns us is contrition itself. To blot out the handwriting is to expunge this sentence by which we declare that we shall be condemned, and to engrave the sentence according to which we know that we have been freed from this condemnation. But faith is the new sentence, which reverses the former sentence, and gives peace and life to the heart.

However, what need is there to cite many testimonies since they are everywhere obvious in the Scriptures? Psalm 118:18: The Lord hath chastened me sore, but He hath not given me over unto death. Psalm 119:28: My soul melteth for heaviness; strengthen Thou me according unto Thy word. Here, in the first member, contrition is contained, and in the second the mode is clearly described how in contrition we are revived, namely, by the Word of God, which offers grace. This sustains and quickens hearts. And 1 Samuel 2:6: The Lord killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up. By one of these, contrition is signified; by the other, faith is signified. And Isaiah 28:21: The Lord shall be wrath that He may do His work, His strange work, and bring to pass His act, His strange act. He calls it the strange work of the Lord when He terrifies, because to quicken and console is God's own work. [Other works, as, to terrify and to kill, are not God's own works, for God only quickens.] But He terrifies, he says, for this reason, namely, that there may be a place for consolation and quickening, because hearts that are secure and do not feel the wrath of God loathe consolation.

In this manner Scripture is accustomed to join these two, the terrors and the consolation, in order to teach that in repentance there are these chief members, contrition, and faith that consoles and justifies. Neither do we see how the nature of repentance can be presented more clearly and simply. [We know with certainty that God thus works in His Christians, in the Church.]

For the two chief works of God in men are these, to terrify, and to justify and quicken those who have been terrified. Into these two works all Scripture has been distributed. The one part is the Law, which shows, reproveth, and condemns sins. The other part is the Gospel, i.e., the promise of grace bestowed in Christ, and this promise is constantly repeated in the whole of Scripture, first having been delivered to Adam [I will put enmity, etc., Genesis 3:15, afterwards to the patriarchs; then, still more clearly proclaimed by the prophets; lastly, preached and set forth among the Jews by Christ, and disseminated over the entire world by the apostles.]

For all the saints were justified by faith in this promise, and not by their own attrition or contrition.

The Suffering Servant

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF the Suffering Servant? The prophet Isaiah wrote four poems (songs/psalms) in his prophecy regarding the Lord's Servant who would come to do the will of His Father.

The first is written in *Isaiah 42:1-4*:

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Matthew's gospel applies these verses to Jesus (Matthew 12:17-21).

The second is *Isaiah 49:1-6*; these are verses 5-6:

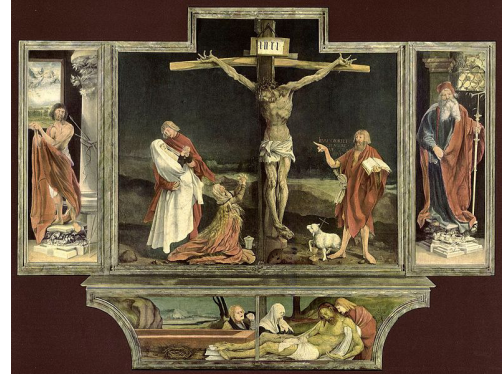
*And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, **that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.** Luke's gospel puts verse 6 into Simeon's mouth... Jesus is the Light to enlighten the Gentiles (Luke 2:32).*

The third song is *Isaiah 50:4-11*, but these are verses 4-7:

The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem, as Luke 9:51 records.

The fourth and longest song is *Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12*: *Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider. Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised*

and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But 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. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.



Isenheim Altarpiece

As foretold by Isaiah, and as testified in each of the gospels, Jesus the Suffering Servant was stricken, smitten and afflicted. For you and me.

God be praised for His obedient Servant-Son who brought salvation to the ends of the earth! ~

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Made a Curse for Us

Martin Luther

*For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. **Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:** for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

Galatians 3:10-14

PAUL DOES NOT SAY THAT Christ was made a curse for Himself. The accent is on the two words “for us.” Christ is personally innocent. Personally, He did not deserve to be hanged for any crime of His own doing. But because Christ took the place of others who were sinners, He was hanged like any other transgressor. The Law of Moses leaves no loopholes. It says that a transgressor should be hanged. Who are the other sinners? We are. The sentence of death and everlasting damnation had long been pronounced over us. But Christ took all our sins and died for them on the Cross... *and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:12)*

All the prophets of old said that Christ should be the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, blasphemer that ever was or ever could be on earth. When He took the sins of the whole world upon Himself, Christ was no longer an innocent person. He was a sinner burdened with the sins of a Paul who was a blasphemer; burdened with the sins of a Peter who denied Christ; burdened with the sins of a David who committed adultery and murder, and gave the heathen occasion to laugh at the Lord. In short, Christ was charged with the sins of all men, that He should pay for them with His own blood. The curse struck Him. The Law found Him among sinners. He was not only in the company of sinners. He had gone so far as to invest Himself with the flesh and blood of sinners. So the Law judged and hanged Him for a sinner.

In separating Christ from us sinners and holding Him up as a holy exemplar, errorists rob us of our best comfort. They misrepresent Him as a threatening tyrant who is ready to slaughter us at the slightest provocation.

I am told that it is preposterous and wicked to call the Son of God a cursed sinner. I answer: If you deny that He is a condemned sinner, you are forced to deny that Christ died. It is not less preposterous to say, the Son of God died, than to say, the Son of God was a sinner.

John the Baptist called Him “the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” Being the unspotted Lamb of God, Christ was personally innocent. But because He took the sins of the world His sinlessness was defiled with the sinfulness of the world. Whatever sins I, you, all of us have committed or shall commit, they are Christ’s sins as if He had committed them Himself. Our sins have to be Christ’s sins or we shall perish forever.

Isaiah declares of Christ: “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” We have no right to minimize the force of this declaration. God does not amuse Himself with words. What a relief for a Christian to know that Christ is covered all over with my sins, your sins, and the sins of the whole world. ~

Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.

Isaiah 43:10-11

BUT LEST THESE WORDS, *For I am, and before Me there is no other God, nor shall be after Me*, be made a handle for blasphemous presumption, as proving that the Son is not God, since after the God, Whom no God precedes, there follows no other God, the purpose of the passage must be considered. God is His own best interpreter, but His chosen Servant joins with Him to assure us that there is no God before Him, nor shall be after Him. His own witness concerning Himself is, indeed, sufficient, but He has added the witness of the Servant Whom He has chosen. Thus we have the united testimony of the Two, that there is no God before Him; we accept the truth, because all things are from Him. We have Their witness also that there shall be no God after Him; but They do not deny that God has been born from Him in the past. Already there was the Servant speaking thus, and bearing witness to the Father; the Servant born in that tribe from which God’s elect was to spring. He sets forth also the same truth in the Gospels: *Behold, My Servant Whom I have chosen, My Beloved in Whom My soul is well pleased*. This is the sense, then, in which God says, *There is no other God before Me, nor shall be after Me*. He reveals the infinity of His eternal and unchanging majesty by this assertion that there is no God before or after Himself. But He gives His Servant a share both in the bearing of witness and in the possession of the Name of God.

Hilary of Poitiers