

Crumbs – Good News for the Diaspora!

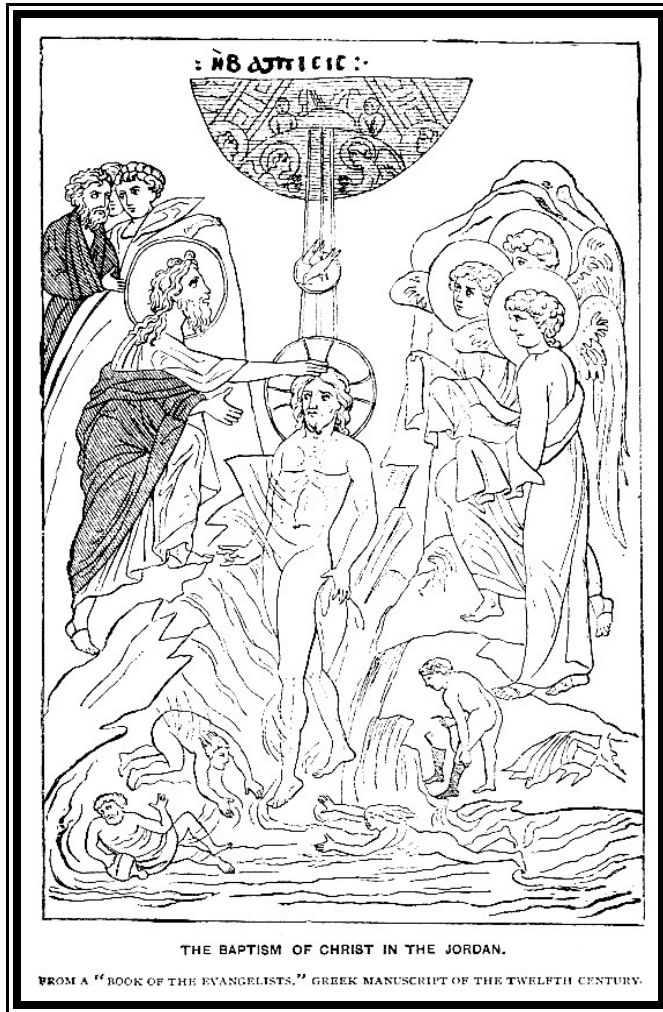
SUNDAY.

Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. – Matthew 3:2.

When Jesus entered upon His thirtieth year, John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” Jesus has come! Realize your sinful ruin, and believe in Him, your Savior, – that was his meaning. There was a great commotion among the people. All flocked to see John. They confessed their sins and were baptized by John for the remission of their sins for Jesus’ sake, who now had appeared. John then taught them how to serve God with the simple works of faith which their calling and station required of them. But when he saw many self-righteous Pharisees and wicked Sadducees come to his baptism, he said to them: “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance; and think not to say within yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father’; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore, every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into His garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” (Matt. 3:1-12.)

The kingdom of heaven is near – very near at hand – for us, too. We must repent and believe in the Savior, and seek forgiveness of sins in the Word and in Baptism and in the Lord’s Supper. Then we must bring forth fruits suitable for repentance. But woe to the self-righteous and wicked who depend on mere outward church-membership! Christ, who, through the means of grace, gives the fire of the Holy Ghost unto true faith, will finally purge His congregation of such hypocrites, and judge them.

PRAYER. – Lord God, Heavenly Father, I pray You, through Christ, Your dear Son, my Savior, do at all times graciously bestow on me Your Holy Spirit through Your Word and Sacrament, that in true repentance I may realize my sin, and take comfort – in true faith, in my Savior – and bring forth fruit appropriate for repentance, and hereafter be saved, through the same, my



A Devotional for the
Week of Sunday After New Year.

Savior, Your dear Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn 307.

LORD, we confess our numerous faults,
How great our guilt has been:
Foolish and vain were all our thoughts,
And all our lives were sin.

But, O my soul, forever praise,
Forever love His name,
Who turns thy feet from dangerous ways
Of folly, sin, and shame.

‘Tis not by works of righteousness
Which our own hands have done,
But we are saved by sovereign grace
Abounding through His Son.

‘Tis from the mercy of our God
That all our hopes begin;
‘Tis by the Water and the Blood
Our souls are washed from sin.

‘Tis through the purchase of His death
Who hung upon the tree,
The Spirit is send down to breathe
On such dry bones as we.

Raised from the dead, we live anew;
And justified by grace,
We shall appear in glory too,
And see our Father’s face.

MONDAY.

Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. – Acts 2:38.

In the days when John preached and baptized, as shown yesterday, Jesus came from Galilee to John and the Jordan to be baptized of him. But John forbade Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?” And Jesus, answering, said unto him, “Let it be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he let Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting upon Him; and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

(Matthew 3:13-17.)

On sinless Jesus rested the sin of the whole world. Therefore He was baptized, even as once He was circumcised, for the remission of sins which, by His suffering and death, He would merit for Himself, that is, for the whole world. And so the Father was well pleased with Him, His dear Son. And the Holy Ghost came upon Him, according to His human nature, for the performance of His great work. – And what about our Baptism? We have been baptized into Him, into His merit, and have received forgiveness of sin. When we were baptized, the Holy Ghost came, entered our hearts, and effected in us the new birth of children of God. God the Father then said to every one of us: “Thou art my beloved child in whom I am well-pleased.” And in true repentance, that is, in true confession of sin and in a living faith, we must always comfort ourselves with our Baptism. So help us God!

PRAYER. – I give thanks to You, O Lord, Triune God, for my blessed Baptism. There You, Lord Jesus, did become my own with all Your merit. There You, Lord Holy Ghost, did create faith within me and make me a child of God in Christ. And there You, God the Father, did graciously receive and proclaim me Your dear child. Grant now, O merciful God, that in faith I may hold fast to such grace obtained in Baptism, and living and dying as Your own, may enter eternal life. Amen.

Hymn 401, 1.

To Jordan came our Lord, the Christ,
To do God’s pleasure willing,
And there was by Saint John baptized,
All righteousness fulfilling;
There did He consecrate a bath

To wash away transgression,
And quench the bitterness of death
By His own blood and passion
He would a new life give us.

TUESDAY.

He was in all points tempted like as we, yet without sin.
– Hebrews 4:15.

After His Baptism, Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterwards an hungered. And when the Tempter came to Him, he said: “If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” But He answered and said: “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Then the devil taketh Him up into the Holy City, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him: “If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down; for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee; and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.” Jesus said unto him: “It is written again, ‘Thou shalt not tempt the Lord, thy God.’” Again the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and saith unto Him: “All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.” Then saith Jesus unto him: “Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him alone shalt thou serve.’” Then the devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him. (Matthew 4:1-11.)

In, and together with, our first parents we were tempted by the devil, and fell into sin. To make restitution for all this, our Savior, being the Substitute of all mankind, was in all points tempted like as we, yet without sin. In His holy human nature He truly felt how Satan tempted Him to doubt God, haughtily to tempt God, and to serve the devil in vainglory. But He armed Himself with the Word of God and did not sin – no, not with the faintest thought and desire. This we should consider and believe, and account it our righteousness, since God wants to impute to us what the Savior did for us.

PRAYER. – O my Savior! In Adam and Eve, and in a thousand ways myself, I have fallen into temptation, but You have overcome all temptations. I am a miserable sinner; You are without spot – holy and righteous. Your righteousness is my righteousness, wherein I stand before God. Most heartily do I give thanks to You, that You have done this and much more for me, a poor sinner, and so did make amends for my evil condition. Help me by Your Holy Spirit that in faith I may always take comfort in this blessed fact, and rejoice therein against all terrors of an evil conscience, O You, Lord Jesus, blessed Conqueror of Satan. Amen.

Hymn 310, 6. 7.

The Son His Father did obey, | And, born of virgin-mother,
He came awhile on earth to stay, | That He might be my brother,
His mighty power He hidden bore, | A servant’s form like mine, He wore,
To lead the Devil captive.

He spake to me: “Hold fast by me, | I am thy rock and castle;
I wholly give myself for thee, | For thee I strive and wrestle;
For I am thine, and thou art mine, | Henceforth my place is also thine.
The foe shall never part us.

EPIPHANY.

Ye are the light of the world. – Matthew 5:14.

This day, since olden times, has been especially devoted to the consideration of Heathen Mission.

“Ye are the light of the world,” says Jesus to His believing disciples. Light is salvation. And salvation, the salvation of the world, surely is none other than Christ, the Savior, and He only. When, therefore, Jesus says to His believers: “Ye are the light of the world,” He thereby says that believing Christians are to be the bearers of the light, the bringers of salvation, for the world. We, who through His Word and Holy Ghost know and own Him who is our Light and Salvation, are to bring Him, His name and His Word, to those who are in spiritual gloom and darkness, and who do not know the Savior. This is His fixed and express will. Therefore He says to us: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,” and again: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” And prophesying even through Isaiah

the Prophet, He says to the Christian Church: “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light.” (Isaiah 60:1-3.)

So let the obedience to His will and the compassionate love wrought by the Holy Ghost, as well as the promise that our labors shall not be in vain, let all this move us to bring to the heathen the light of salvation which has saved our souls.

PRAYER. – Lord God, Heavenly Father, who has caused us to believe in Your dear Son Jesus Christ, who is our Light and our Salvation, and has made Him to be our own, enlighten us, we beg You, by Your Holy Spirit that we may duly appreciate such grace and thank You for the same with all our heart, and also communicate our light and salvation to those who still sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. This grant, O merciful God, who desires that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Amen.

Hymn 179, 1.

O JESUS, King of glory! | Both David’s Lord and Son!
Thy realm endures forever, | In heaven is fixed Thy throne;
Help that in earth’s dominions, | Throughout from pole to pole,
Thy realm may spread salvation | To each benighted soul.

THURSDAY.

Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

– *John 1:29.*

At the time when John the Baptist, by his preaching and baptizing, caused so great a commotion in Israel, the Chief Council sent messengers to him, asking who he was. They asked him whether he were not the Christ; and when he denied it, whether he were Elijah; and when he denied that too, whether he were the promised Prophet. When he denied that also, they demanded him to tell them who he was. He answered: “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, *Make straight the way of the Lord*, as said the Prophet Isaiah.” Then they asked him why he baptized. He answered that he baptized because he was the forerunner of Christ, who was standing among them, whom they knew not. – The next day John saw Jesus coming to him,

and he publicly testified: “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” And again he testified and said: “This is the Son of God.” (John 1:19-34.)

This is the true, and only true, testimony concerning Jesus Christ, and this is the true, and only true, knowledge of Jesus Christ: He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and He is the Son of God who became man. Let this be your faith, O Christian, your comfort, the source of your defiant trust and confidence in life and death, that the eternal Son of God has become man, and has become the Lamb of God, of whom all the lambs sacrificed in the Old Testament were but types, that He is the right and true Lamb of God that has taken away the sin of the world and, therefore, also your sin. I say to you – this lamb is mighty and strong to take away your sin that it no longer burdens you.

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, eternal Son of God, my Savior and my Lord! I, a poor sinner, am now entirely free from all my sin, – and its grievous, unbearable, and damning burden no longer lies upon me; for You, my dear Lord, did become the Lamb of God and have altogether taken away the sin of the whole world, and also my sin. You have paid for it, atoned for it, and utterly abolished it. Praise and thanks be to You! Endow me with Your Holy Spirit, that in such true faith, I may nevermore fear nor faint, but joyfully appear before the face of God, and be blessed forevermore. Amen.

Hymn 102.

COME let us join our cheerful songs | With angels round the throne,
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues, | But all their joys are one.

“Worthy the Lamb that died,” they cry, | “To be exalted thus.”
“Worthy the Lamb,” our lips reply, | For He was slain for us.

Jesus is worthy to receive | Honor and power divine;
And blessings more than we can give, | Be, Lord, forever Thine.

Let all that dwell above the sky, | And air, and earth, and seas,
Conspire to lift Thy glories high, | And speak Thine endless praise!

The whole creation join in one, | To bless the sacred name
Of Him that sits upon the throne, | And to adore the Lamb.

FRIDAY.

Follow me.– John 1:43.

On the next day John was standing, and two of his disciples with him. And Jesus walked by. And again John said, “Behold the Lamb of God.” And the two disciples followed Jesus. It was four o’clock in the afternoon. Jesus turned and asked them, “What seek ye?” They said, “Rabbi, where dwellest Thou?” He said, “Come and see.” And they went with Jesus and abode with Him that day. It was *Andrew* and *John*. Andrew found his brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah.” And he brought him to Jesus. And Jesus surnamed him Cephas, or *Peter*, that is “rocklike man.” Then John brought his brother James to Jesus. The day following, Jesus found Philip, who, like the four just mentioned, was of Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Follow me.” And Philip, in turn, found Nathanael, Called Bartholomew, and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Nathanael said, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip said, “Come and see.” When Jesus saw Nathanael, He said, “Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile.” Nathanael saith unto Him, “When knowest Thou me?” Jesus answered, “Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.” Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.” Jesus said, “Because I said unto thee, ‘I saw thee under the fig tree,’ believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these.” (John 1:35-51.)

To you also does the Gospel of Jesus say, “Behold the Lamb of God.” To you, too, does Jesus say, “Follow me.” Learn to know Jesus in the Word, which tells of Him, and follow Him. Proclaim Jesus in word and deed. Do your part in bringing others to say to Jesus: “You are the Son of God; You are the Lamb of God.”

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, You are indeed the Son of God, the Lamb of God who takes away my sin and the sin of the whole world. You – I will follow. With You alone do I find life and salvation. Draw me to You in true faith through Your Word and Your Spirit. Fill my heart with fervent love for those who do not yet know You. Open my lips to a frank confession of Your sweet name, Jesus! O Jesus, Jesus, save me and mine and many others through faith in You! Amen.

Hymn 234, 3. 5.

Draw us to Thee, | O grant that we
May find the road to heaven;
Direct our way, | Lest we should stray,
And from Thy paths be driven.

Draw us to Thee | Unceasingly,
Into Thy kingdom take us;
Let us fore’er | Thy glory share,
Thy saints and joint-heirs make us.

SATURDAY.

And Jesus manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him. – John 2:11.

After Jesus had been baptized by John, and tempted by the devil, and gathered His first disciples, He returned with these to Galilee. And there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus and His disciples were invited to the marriage. And there was a lack of wine. And the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.” He said to her, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.” His mother had no right to tell Him how or when He should manifest His divine glory. Mary now said to the servants, “Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.” Now there were six waterpots of stone set there after the Jews’ manner of purifying, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus said to the servants: “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. And He said unto them: “Draw out now, and bear it to the ruler of the feast.” And they took it there. And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), he called the bridegroom and said to him, “Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.” This was Jesus’ first miracle. Thus did He manifest forth His divine glory which hitherto had been hidden. And His disciples believed on Him the more firmly. (John 2:1-11.)

Christian, you believe in your Savior and you are His disciple. Blessed are you. But to remain in this faith, and to grow ever more firm and deeply rooted and grounded within it, so as to overcome all temptation and lastly to be saved, you must read the Word of Jesus always, and see how there His glory is revealed, the glory of the Only-Begotten Son of the Father, who became your Savior. Without such use of the Word of Jesus, your flesh will stifle the faith within you, and you will be lost. May God keep you from such a fate!

PRAYER. – O God the Holy Ghost, – Spirit of Christ who glorifies Christ within the hearts of Your believers, create, I beg You, within me a mind that gladly reads and contemplates Your Word, beholding there the glory of my Savior, and clinging to Him in ever stronger faith, until in my last hour, You will glorify His gracious image within my soul unto eternal bliss. Amen.

Hymn 103, 2.

O King high-born, Pearl dearly won, | True Son of God and Mary's Son,
Crown of exceeding glory!
My heart calls Thee a Lily, Lord, | Pure milk and honey is Thy Word,
Thy sweetest Gospel-story. | Rose of Sharon, hail! hosanna!
Heavenly Manna, Feed us ever; | Lord, I can forget Thee never!

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