

## *Crumbs – Good News for the Diaspora!*

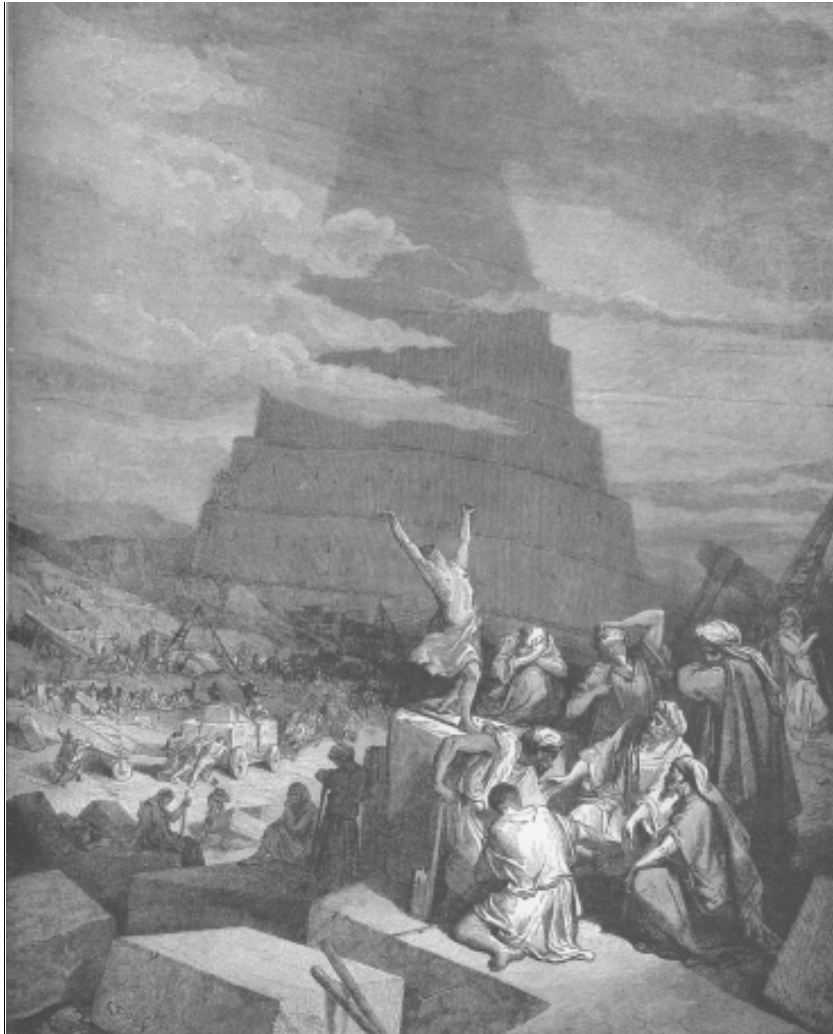


Illustration: The Tower of Babel

### A Devotional for the Week of the Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

SUNDAY.

*Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. – Matthew 15:19.*

From original sin, from the depravity of our nature, there result what are called *actual sins*, that is to say, sins that are acted, done, carried into effect. By these actual sins are meant all transgressions of the divine Law, not only such as may be observed by our fellow-men, sinful words and deeds, but also all sinful thoughts, which are known to God and ourselves only, yes, also the sinful desires slumbering within us which we ourselves do not notice, which only the eye of God can detect.

Consider the text at the head of this lesson, and see what abominations arise from our heart. And indeed, it cannot be otherwise. From a bad fountain only foul water will issue forth, and a corrupt tree will bring forth nothing but evil fruit. And not only do we do the wicked things forbidden in the Law of God, but we also fail to do the good things which we are commanded to do. We are totally depraved; within us there is a countless brood of sin. The more we are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, the more we realize this. Where there is nothing but darkness, the various shades of darkness, so to speak, are not distinguishable; but the brighter the light, the more pronounced the shadows will be.

What an awful delusion, then, to think that by the works of the Law, by the fulfillment of the Law, man might become righteous before God and obtain salvation! No, it is solely through faith in Christ, who fulfilled the Law in our stead and bore its curse for us, that we become free from sin, righteous before God, and obtain life everlasting.

*PRAYER.* – Lord, most holy God, I confess that not only am I conceived and born in sin and therefore sinful from the very beginning of my existence, but that also knowingly and unknowingly I have daily and in manifold ways transgressed Your commandments, and therewith surely have deserved Your wrath and punishment in time and eternity. Nor can I help myself in the least or

find ways or means thereto. But since You, O gracious God, have revealed to me in the Gospel that Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, is the propitiation for our sin and is our Righteousness, in short, is our Savior, I rely upon this Your Word and pray You to forgive me all my sins, and to give me eternal life through grace in Him. O dear Father in heaven, also grant me, I implore You, Your Holy Spirit, that henceforth I may resist the sinful desires, and be earnestly and sincerely intent upon serving You according to Your Law. Amen.

Hymn 413, 2.

My sin is very sore and great,  
I mourn beneath its dreadful load;  
O free me from this heavy weight,  
My Savior, through Thy precious blood;  
And with Thy Father for me plead  
That Thou hast suffered in my stead;  
From me the burden then is rolled.  
Lord, I lay hold  
On Thy dear promises of old.

MONDAY.

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*  
– *Genesis 1:1.*

Every child in Christendom knows these very first words of the Bible. And the truth they contain, namely, that there is a great, eternal, omnipotent God, who has created heaven and earth, and all that in them is, is a knowledge which every man has by nature. Of all, I repeat it, of all men, St. Paul says: "That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1:19-20.) And still brazen fools and scoffers, willfully hardening

their hearts, deny the existence of this almighty Maker of heaven and earth, and speak of an eternal matter which of itself, by eternal revolutions, developed and formed itself into what now is. They have no excuse for their ungodly foolishness.

To "create" means to produce something out of nothing by a mere word. This God did in the beginning. (Hebrews 11:3.) How immeasurably great is God! We confess in unison with all Christendom of all times: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." Yes, and we believe and may and should believe that through Jesus Christ this almighty God and Creator is our Father, and that we are His dear children. O faith, faith, how highly do you exalt us! And how small we make our faith through our own fault! If the almighty God is our Father and we are His dear children, should we not then exult and sing, and always be full of courage, and joyful, and undismayed, and boldly glory in Him though the world and even hell assail us? And should we not then adorn ourselves with holiness and righteousness well pleasing unto our God and Father, and befitting us, His children? But - oh, how weak in faith we are!

*PRAYER.* – O Lord God, whose greatness and might are incomprehensible, who – by Your Word – did create heaven and earth out of nothing, what a diminutive grain of dust am I in Your sight, and what is more, ruined by sin and death. And still I am to be Your dear child through Jesus Christ. O Lord, give me Your Spirit, that He may lift me up to You! Amen.

Hymn 62, 3.

O all ye powers that God implanted,  
Arise, keep silence thus no more,  
Put forth the strength that He hath granted,  
Your noblest work is to adore;  
My soul and body, make ye meet  
With heartfelt praise your Lord to greet!

## TUESDAY.

*He shall give His angels charge over thee. – Psalm 91:11.*

It is not to be marveled at that besides man God has also created other rational and personal beings who do not dwell on earth. Scripture tells us that God has created angels. They are spirits. (Hebrews 1:14.) Although we are all familiar with the word "spirits," we do not understand the meaning of it. God created these spirits in the beginning, countless numbers of them, and all of them at one time. They sang together and shouted for joy when He layed the foundations of the earth. And God calls them His sons. (Job 38:7.) They are holy. (Matthew 25:31.) Tomorrow we shall hear that, though created holy, not all of them remained thus.

Today we shall hear only of the holy angels. These are now confirmed in their bliss, and do always behold the face of God in heaven. (Matthew 18:10.) They excel in strength, and praise God, and as ministers of His they do His pleasure and His commandments. (Psalm 103:20-21.) And, O yes, God has given them charge over us. God's children, to keep us in all our ways. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." (Psalm 34:7.) What grand and beautiful stories does Holy Writ tell about angels who assumed visible shape and form, and did God's commandments on earth, and served men and guarded them. Will you read 2 Kings 6:8-17?

The last service that they render us on earth is when they bear our souls up to heaven. (Luke 16:22.) But on the last day they will have much to do with men. And then we shall be in their blessed communion eternally, we, – who are God's children. How gracious God is toward us!

*PRAYER.* – Almighty, eternal, merciful God, – Who out of wondrous mercy did ordain the angels to be ministers to us – grant me grace, I beg You, that my life may also be guarded and protected here on earth by those who unceasingly attend Your divine majesty, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

## Hymn 23, 7.

Lord, to me Thine angel sending,  
Keep me from the subtle Foe;  
From his craft and might defending,  
Never let Thy wanderer go,  
Till my final rest shall come,  
And Thine angel bear me home.

## WEDNESDAY.

*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith. – 1 Peter 5:8-9.*

There are also evil angels. They are the spirits who fell from God, though in the beginning they were created good and holy. They are ruled by a prince, and, as a rule, Scripture usually mentions him alone when speaking of the evil angels. He, as you know, was the first one to sin. (1 John 3:8.) These evil angels did not abide in the truth. (John 8:44.) They kept not their first glorious estate, but left their own habitation of blessedness. And God has rejected them forever: He has reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. (Jude 6.) Therefore they are God's declared enemies. They endeavor to destroy and to ruin the works of God. And they are also our – man's – declared enemies. Remember the temptation and the fall in Paradise!

Until Judgment Day, God in His holy counsel permits the devil and his evil spirits to roam about on earth and practice their evil designs. The devil has a kingdom here, a kingdom constituted of deep guile and great might. He is the prince of this world. He is the ruler of the darkness of this world. (Ephesians 6:12.)

With this evil foe, with all these evil foes, we Christians must wrestle, as the Apostle writes. See how the Holy Ghost, in the text at

the head of our devotion, warns us against our adversary, and admonishes us to be sober and vigilant, and steadfastly to resist him in faith. But with might of ours can naught he done, soon were our loss effected. Christ, Christ, the Valiant One, whom the devil knows, and who has bruised the devil's head, helps His own, those who abide in His Word and arm themselves with His Word. With them all the power of the devil can avail nothing.

My dear Christian, be Christ's own!

*PRAYER.* – My Lord and Savior, O great Conqueror, who has overcome devil and hell, guard me against carnal security, and grant me grace that I may at all times watch the evil eye of the devil which is fixed upon me with the intention of destroying me. But also help me to call upon You, and to arm myself with Your Word, and so in Your power successfully to withstand Satan, and having done all, to stand. Amen.

Hymn 9, 1. 5.

ABIDE, O dearest Jesus,  
Among us with Thy grace,  
That Satan may not harm us,  
Nor we to sin give place.

Abide with Thy protection  
Among us, Lord our Strength;  
Lest world and Satan fell us,  
And overcome at length.

THURSDAY.

*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over . . . all the earth. – Genesis 1:26.*

Such was the counsel and deliberation of the Holy Trinity in creation. Great are the works of the Lord that we see, and most

marvelous. But the foremost among the visible creatures is man. For he was made the lord of the earth; he is to have dominion over everything that is on earth; even the sun, moon, and stars are at his service. As you may read in Genesis 2, God Himself has prepared the body of man with particular love and care, has given him a rational soul, has endowed him with the greatest perfection of body and soul, and, above all, has made him in His image, in the likeness of God. This last point is seen from our text.

And the image of God consisted in this that man was created in righteousness and holiness like that of God, and that he possessed the greatest knowledge possible, the knowledge of God, a knowledge of exalting and glorifying purity. (Ephesians 4:24 & Colossians 3:10.)

Thus man is the foremost of the visible creatures of God.– But woe is us! How shamefully disfigured in body and soul are we through sin! The image of God has been changed in us, into the image – the pen will scarce write it – into the image of the devil. But in the regenerate Christians the beginnings, the lineaments of the divine image, though faintly and imperfectly, reappear. In eternal life the image of God shall be restored in us fully, in heavenly perfection. "I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Your likeness." (Psalm 17:15.)

*PRAYER.* – Lord, my God, You have highly exalted me, and I have fallen very low. And You did bend down to me in Jesus Christ, my Savior, and did draw me again to You, and You will draw me into heaven, into supreme exaltation and perfection. Praise and glory be to You, my God! Finish Your work in me, and leave me not, O faithful Lord! Amen.

Hymn 348, 1.

O LOVE, who formedst me to wear  
The image of Thy Godhead here;  
Who soughtest me with tender care  
Through all my wand' rings wild and drear –  
O Love, I give myself to Thee,  
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

## FRIDAY.

*Though He be not far from every one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being. – Acts 17:27-28.*

Having in the beginning created the earth (to make mention of that only) and, above all, man, God does not withdraw His hand from creation, but continues to create and to work. He does this according to laws which He has made and laid down in nature, but always in absolutely free exercise of His will. He does this according to laws for our sake, for we are to cultivate the soil and make the earth, with all it contains, serve our purposes; and how could we do this if there were no laws of nature?

He does this always according to His free and sovereign will, for, being the Lord, He is not subject to these laws, but superior to them. He says: "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb *yielding seed*, and the fruit-tree *yielding fruit* after his kind, whose seed is in itself." And when He created the beasts, He said: "*Be fruitful and multiply*"; and the very same words He spoke when He created man. Sun, moon, and stars are to divide the day from the night, and to be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years. (Genesis 1.)

These are laws of nature given by God. But it is always the great and sovereign Lord who in and through them continues to create and to work and to sustain. So it behooved not only Adam and Eve, but you and me today as well, to say: "I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still preserves them."

God is not far from every one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being. To God we owe our life and being; in God, by virtue of His almighty power it is that we exist; each breath we draw, every motion of the body we make, is to be attributed to this almighty power of His. What an abomination it must be to God if we abuse the power He thus gives us to sin! And oh, the patience of God to sustain us notwithstanding!

*PRAYER.* – O great God, in whose all-sustaining power I – as well as every creature, live, and move, and have my being – for Jesus Christ's sake forgive me my sins which so grievously offend You! And give me Your Holy Spirit, that not bodily only, but spiritually as well, I may live, and move, and have my being in You. And be patient with Your frail child, until You shall bring me to the state of eternal perfection. Amen.

Hymn 35, 2. 5. 6.

Thou Father of eternity,  
Thine image hast impressed on me;  
In Thee I am, and live, and move,  
Nor can exist without Thy love.

Thou hast redeemed me, Son of God,  
Hast shed for me Thy precious Blood,  
The Law for my sake hast fulfilled,  
And thus Thy Father's wrath hast stilled.

When sin and Satan witness bear  
Against me, that I must despair,  
As Mediator Thou stepst in,  
And sav'st me from the curse of sin.

## SATURDAY.

*Cast all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.*

*– 1 Peter 5:7.*

God sustains His creatures here below as long as it pleases Him. He who is present within His entire creation "upholds all things by the word of His power." This text speaks of the Son, our Savior, and proves His eternal Godhead. (Hebrews 1:3.) The Son does this together with the Father and the Holy Ghost. God's omnipotence and wisdom are needed to preserve all things thus, and to provide for so great a household.

He keeps also you, provides for you. To this end He gives you clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and home, wife and children, fields, cattle, and all goods, -according as you are in need of each of these things within your station and calling. He richly and daily provides you with all that you need to support this body and life. God does this, God alone.

Certainly, you must labor, as long as you are able to do so; for "if any would not work, neither should he eat." (1 Thessalonians 3:10.) Ordinarily God wants to keep you by means of your labor. And you must also make use of your understanding. But you must trust, rely, and build, neither upon your labor nor upon your understanding. With these you can accomplish nothing, unless God deigns to bless your doing and your planning. Much less must your labor and your understanding be made to serve the purposes of sinful greed.

And do not *worry*. Take no thought, saying, What will I eat? or, What will I drink? or, How shall I be clothed? For God keeps you and provides for you, not you. And God is your Father in Christ Jesus. How sinful, then, is care and worry! O Christian, child of God, poor sinner, take your care and cast it on God; for He cares for you. This is most certainly true. So says the Holy Spirit.

*PRAYER.* – O God, my Father. I thank You that You assure me of Your care and providence! I thank You that You so kindly exhort me to cast all my care on You! Forgive the sinful weakness of my faith. Grant to me Your Holy Spirit through Your Word, that I may cheerfully and wholly rely on You. Hear my prayer for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Hymn 292, 14. 15.

He is thy treasure, He thy joy,  
Thy life, and light, and Lord,  
Thy counselor when doubts annoy,  
Thy shield and great reward.

In restless thought or blank despair,  
Why spend each day and night?  
On Him who made thee cast thy care;  
He makes our burdens light.

These devotions are adapted from *Crumbs* by C. M. Zorn (1914).  
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