

# The Northwestern Lutheran

The Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers; let Him not leave us, nor forsake us. 1 Kings 8: 57.

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## THE HEAVENLY SOWING.

Sower Divine!  
Sow the good seed in me,  
Seed for eternity.  
'Tis a rough, barren soil,  
Yet by Thy care and toil  
Make it a fruitful field,  
An hundredfold to yield.  
Sower Divine!  
Plow up this heart of mine!

Sower Divine!  
Quit not this wretched field  
Till Thou hast made it yield;  
Sow thou by day and night,  
In darkness and in light;  
Stay not Thy hand, but sow;  
Then shall the harvest grow.  
Sower Divine,  
Sow deep this heart of mine!

Sower Divine!  
Let not this barren clay  
Lead Thee to turn away;  
Let not my fruitlessness  
Provoke Thee not to bless;  
Let not this field be dry,  
Refresh it from on high.  
Sower Divine!  
Water this heart of mine!

Rev C Buenger Jan 15  
65 N Ridge

## COMMENTS.

**Circulation of Church Papers.** From a recent note in the "Lutheran Herald" we learn that pastors of the Northwestern Territory of the Methodist Church have solicited within the last fifteen months over 30,000 new subscribers for the "Northwestern Christian Advocate," so that at present the paper has a circulation of 49,000.

We know of other protestant denominations enjoying a circulation of their respective church-papers in numbers equally as large, if not larger. Apparently the majority of their church-members take a lively interest in religious literature, and they undoubtedly realize its wholesome influence on the individual as well as on the church-body at large.

We Lutherans, particularly the members of the Joint Synod, ought to learn a lesson from the foregoing note. According to the latest Synodical report our Synod has a membership of over 30,000 voting members. Of these about 14,000 read our German official organ, the "Gemeindeblatt," while with the rest

of the members there is still room for our Synodical papers.

Would it not be gratifying, if all of these 30,000 members constituting our Synodical body would read a Lutheran periodical of their own, those who prefer reading in German the "Gemeindeblatt," and all others preferring English "The Northwestern Lutheran"?

Assuredly, good results would follow. Not only would the majority of our church-members be kept in touch with the affairs of our Synod, but also be interested in its work which is being done in the various fields of its missionary activity.

Let us then be up and doing, urging our fellow-members to subscribe for our church-papers with a view of gaining 30,000 subscribers.

Will we succeed? We will if we go at it in a right spirit.

J. J.

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**The State Church of Prussia.** The official Church of Prussia, known here in America as "Unier-te Kirche," or Evangelicals, has suffered serious losses recently and the prospect for the future is not encouraging. As press dispatches from Berlin inform us, the German Socialists have induced great numbers of citizens to withdraw formally from the Church and in that manner evade the church-tax. The law permits this and there were 40,000 in Greater Berlin alone that took advantage of this provision. In one day 1,300 withdrawals were allowed. The law demands a formal statement before a judge; on one day in a single court 12 judges and 38 actuaries were kept busy taking down the depositions. This may only be intended by the Socialists as a protest against the high taxes, but that the protest should take the form of severing allegiance with the Church is an evil omen. Will the 40,000 that left the Church last December ally themselves with some other Church? Grave doubts cannot be suppressed. Perhaps the complacency that grows apace in every state church will disappear momentarily under this political spur.

H. K. M.

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**Troubles of Another State Church.** The Anglican Church, the State Church of England, is in the throes of violent disturbance over a matter that appeared trifling to the English, at least, in the beginning. At a missionary con-

ference in Africa, Kikuyu was the place, an Anglican Bishop, with the consent of one colleague, but over the protest of another, admitted Non-Conformists, that is members of other English Protestant Churches, to the Communion. Those Churchmen that are of stricter discipline want this practice condemned, many others see in it a step in the right direction approaching still closer union of all the Protestant Churches. We have here a struggle between the two elements of the Church of England that always have been at daggers' points with each other, the "High" and "Low" Churchmen. Bishop Gore in the "Times" intimates that this controversy may lead to a separation. The vigor, not to say violence and bitterness, in the battle on both sides is an interesting sidelight on the discussions of Church unity that are so much in evidence to-day. The question itself, whether a communion is possible where there is a difference of faith, is never in doubt with us. That's why we call it communion, because differences of faith are excluded.

H. K. M.

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**A "New" Saint.** Now that aviation is an established institution, young Russians that had taken to the new profession felt neglected that the Russian Church did not provide for them a patron saint, such as all other professions had. Their appeals have been heeded; their new saint, canonized for the occasion, is Saint Elijah. It is difficult to decide whether to smile or to weep at this. Elijah is chosen because he ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire. Is it irreverence that can find satisfaction in such playing with sacred things, or is it blind, ignorant superstition that demands and receives such spiritual food?

H. K. M.

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**A Splendid Achievement.** The Lutheran Congregation at Roscoe, S. D., recently dedicated a school house that cost them \$155.00. Why should that be considered splendid? Because they accomplished what many others, blessed with many times their prosperity, have been unable to do: serve their children with the Word of God in their own school. The pastor of that Roscoe Church tells us of the hardships his people suffered in recent years from crop failures and tells us further how they saved on the necessities of daily life to do this for their children out of their love for Christ. It is a modest building, but a monument to Christian spirit. We are not at all astonished to hear that children come ten miles to attend this school. If the gracious gifts of God that make us His children are worth anything, why should such sacrifices as this be so unusual? Our schools are the children of our Church, a Church without a school is barren—there is a heritage but no heir.

H. K. M.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE APOSTOLIC CREED.

From the very earliest beginnings of the Christian Church, "confessions" were found to be necessary. They were, as the name implies, brief accounts of the Christian Faith, and were made in public declaration before the assembled congregation to demonstrate the fitness of the applicant for membership. The one qualification for fellowship in the Christian Church was the true Faith in Christ, the confession gave evidence of that Faith. Because it served to identify the individual Christian and the whole congregation it early was given the name "symbol," or sign. It was the token of Christian allegiance to the Lord. There can be no reasonable doubt that the Apostles from the very beginning made use of some such form that presented the Christian truths succinctly and as fully as was deemed necessary. At the Pentecostal preaching the conduct of the converts is briefly described, "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship." This seems to indicate that the Apostles had a well recognized set of doctrines even before the New Testament Scriptures had appeared; perhaps they had a set form for enumerating them as a token of fellowship and that would be a "confession," or "creed," and the seed of further more elaborated declarations.

It was in the preparation for baptism, however, that a uniform and adequate confession was first found to be indispensable. In the early centuries the candidates for baptism were mainly adults and they were not admitted to the Church until a satisfactory declaration of their beliefs could be made. Here it was found that a set form, sanctioned by the approval of the most experienced teachers and modeled after the forms used by the Apostles and based upon the Scriptures that were now available, would alone answer the purpose effectually. This was all the more necessary, even imperative, since the very earliest Christian Church had to experience the truth, "that many false prophets shall rise and deceive many." The truth is a double-edged sword, it fortifies the confessor and confounds all falsehood. These early baptismal pledges and declarations were looked upon as signs, or symbols, of the true and unadulterated Faith.

For the Apostolic Creed no other origin can properly be assumed. As all definite and exact knowledge as to its making and as to the time of its first employment is lacking, it is a matter of summing up all the available secondary evidence and of judging according to the greatest probability of its authorship and earliest use. It seems beyond all doubt that the Apostolic Creed was one of the earliest forms of pledging the applicants for membership in the Church and that it grew out of the baptismal vows, which in turn have the Lord's command in the last chapter of St. Matthew

as their common source: "Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The Catholic Church, and some few individuals, still uphold the legendary story that the Creed was the direct work of the Apostles; they even relate how each one of them added his particular declaration to the Confession, accordingly they divide the Creed into twelve parts. But this story is pure legend and the product of those dark years of the Church, when nearly all Truth was obscured by such fanciful exercise of the imagination. Early authorities are well aware that the Apostles had no direct part in the making of the Creed, and our own Luther speaks of it as a beautiful and complete whole that gradually was collected, "as bees collect honey from the sweetness of many flowers". That describes the process as well as anything can. There may have been slight deviations in different parts of the world, but a real similarity existed and paved the way for the general adoption of the crystallized form we know as early as 300 A. D. We give this date because from the fourth century onward we have direct evidence of its use and practically the same form we now use is recorded in writings of that time.

The Creed may have been complete and in general use at an earlier date and the absence of testimony to that effect in the early writers may be accounted for in a very reasonable manner. In early times the Creed was in no way made the basis for instruction, but at the end of the time set aside for catechetical instruction the catechumen was admitted to baptism, providing he had shown the proper spirit and efficiency in his preparation in the estimation of his teachers; if he had been baptized in infancy the occasion for personal confession arose when he was ready to take communion with the congregation. Shortly before the sacramental act he was solemnly charged with the custody of the sacred Symbol of the Faith, that is, the Creed was taught him by word of mouth as a mark of identification and as a token of complete fellowship. He had to get it by rote and very likely it was never entrusted to writing since it was virtually the countersign and distinguishing mark of the true Faith and was to be known by its professors alone. Owing to this peculiar method of transmitting it and to the seeming necessity of keeping it from the sacrilegious hands of the enemy, it is not surprising to find it a matter of record only at a comparatively late date when Christianity had outgrown its first fears and had already begun to treat of differences of the Faith in a different spirit and before a wider forum. However, it is unquestionably the earliest generally accepted symbol of the Christian Faith and its beginnings go back far enough into that period which would justify the use of the designation "Apostolic", although we know that the personal authorship of the Apostles cannot be maintained.

We cannot part with it under any circumstances, for as the early Church found in it the Symbol of the absolutely necessary biblical Faith, so do we find in it to-day the Symbol of the Faith that cannot grow old or antiquated because it is the Revelation of the Living God. We use it to-day as it has been used from time immemorial: It is our baptismal confession, it is the confession of our fellowship in our regular service, its contents are the foremost part of our catechetical instruction in preparing our young Christians for active membership in the Holy Church, and as it was with Luther, who prayed it daily, it is with us a prayer and a fit expression of our hope for Everlasting Life.

It is not, and never has been, a complete exposition of the articles of our Faith; there are many doctrines not touched upon that always have been known and taught. But it remains the best abstract of the vital and essential truths of the Bible. We are fortunate in having the incomparable explanation of Luther in the Small Catechism to guide us in its use. Indeed, when we think of it, it is always in the light of this beautiful and enlightening expansion, and that is quite as it should be, for the bare facts recited in the Creed, true as they are, need the further light of Scripture as Luther's and other explanations give it. The ever-present enemies of Truth have not hesitated to use this very Creed and by means of unbiblical enlargements and inventions have made a larger, more comprehensive and detailed knowledge necessary. Our other confessional writings have supplied this needed light. The Creed as an authoritative symbol is as secure with Bible Christians as Holy Writ, but in using it the Christian must have the support of the whole body of Truth of which it is the Symbol. H. K. M.

#### REJOICING IN HOPE.—Rom. xii., 12.

In Uganda, three young men were bidden to renounce their faith in Christ or die. The young converts chose martyrdom. Their arms were cut off, they were bound to a stake and a slow fire kindled about them. Then they were taunted and ridiculed. As the flames slowly crawled about them, these dusky boys broke out in joyful melody,

"Daily, daily, sing to Jesus;  
Sing, my soul, His praises due,  
All He does deserves our praises  
And our deep devotion, too."

The flames crept higher and the lips were forever hushed. Then the executioner turned sorrowfully away and found the missionary, and begged to be taught how he might learn about the God who could make one rejoice while undergoing such torture.

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### LENT.

This season of the church year derives its name from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten*, the German "Lenz," meaning spring, supposed to have its origin in "lang," long, because in spring the days lengthen. While the English name refers to the time in which it is annually observed, the German "Fastenzeit" indicates the manner of observance, namely by fasting.

Fasting at certain times, especially in days of sorrow and affliction was in vogue among the Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and other ancient nations, but Scripture does not show that it was practiced by the patriarchs of the Jews. The law of Moses, however, demanded it, though only for one day in the year, the great day of atonement. After the exile other annual fast days were added, commemorating certain great catastrophes in the history of Israel, as the commencement of the siege of Jerusalem, the fall of the Holy City, and its destruction by fire. Fasts were also appointed on extraordinary occasions when visitations of God, as defeat in battle, threatening famine, etc., led the people to repent of their sins and to seek the pardoning grace of Jehovah. Under similar conditions in their private life, individuals would also fast. Some began to practice it regularly, for instance the Pharisees, who fasted twice a week, and the Essenes and Therapeuts, with whom it was a prominent feature of their worship of God.

The abstinence was either total, no food whatever being taken for a short time, or partial, when only certain articles of food were eschewed. The person fasting would often put on sack-cloth, cast ashes upon his head, and rend his clothing, to show that he was mourning. From one day to forty days fasts were observed.

In earlier times fasting was regarded merely as a token of man's self-humiliation before God, or as an exercise useful in preparing the mind for communing with Him, but later the view became prevalent that it is a meritorious work, by which a person can expiate his sins, conciliate the offended God, and merit

His grace and assistance. Against this abuse Joel, among other prophets, raises his voice: "Rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." Joel 2: 12, 13.

In the New Testament fasting is not commanded. When the disciples of John came to Jesus and asked, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?" He replied: "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast. No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles; else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." Here the Lord declares that there is no room in the dispensation of the New Testament for a law imposing ritual and ceremonial observances. The fasting of which He speaks in the second half of verse 15 is the suffering and affliction which they will have to bear who would be followers of the cross. This fact is also asserted in the Epistles. Rom. 14: 17 we read: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Col. 2: 16, 17 declares the liberty of the Christian: "Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ." 1 Tim. 4: 3 St. Paul designates as a doctrine of the devils "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God created."

Still the Christians of those days continued to observe the fast days to which they had become accustomed and practised fasting at other times also. Acts 13: 2, 3. 1 Peter 4: 8 briefly states the object of all such outward training: "Be ye sober and watch unto prayer."

But the doctrine of an obligatory fasting early began to creep into the church. The Montanists, who by it were preparing for the expected millennium, the Judaistic Ebionites, and the Gnostics were partly responsible for this. Hermits fasted, and the practice formed a part of the discipline of the monasteries, which now began to spring up. In the third century fasting was declared a duty of the Christian, and about the middle of the fourth century it began to be considered a meritorious work. The Catholic Church has retained the idea and developed it, the Greek even surpassing the Roman in strict observance of fasts.

It had become customary to fast twice in a week,

on Wednesday, when the Jews had taken counsel to slay Jesus, and on Friday, the day of His death.

In the course of time longer periods of fasting were introduced: forty days before Good Friday, four weeks before Christmas, and the Pentecostal fast, which was placed after that festival, as the time between Easter and Pentecost was considered a season of great joy. Leo the Great (440-461) added to these three another similar period in the fall of the year.

Of these four, the Lenten season chiefly engages our attention. Its duration was fixed at forty days, possibly with reference to the forty day fasts of Moses, Elias and our Savior, Israel's forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, or the forty hours' rest of Jesus in the grave. The Sundays not being considered fast days, the season had to begin as early as Ash Wednesday. Lent was observed with great solemnity. In addition to the restrictions on food, more or less rigid at different times, public amusements, especially stage plays were prohibited, and the celebration of religious festivals, as also of birthdays and marriages, were held to be unsuitable; and increased diligence in almsgiving and deeds of charity were enjoined. Pulpits were draped in black and from them, as well as on streets and in marketplaces, itinerant monks preached repentance to the people.

In order to compensate themselves for the enforced self-denial of Lent, the people made the days preceding Ash Wednesday days of self-indulgence, at times even under the sanction of the church. With banquets, drinking bouts, masquerades, and amusements of all kinds, they bade farewell to the flesh for a season. From this the name carnival and the annual masquerade season have come down to our time.

The church of the Reformation made no attempt to abolish fasting entirely, but merely protested against its abuse. Luther in his Small Catechism calls it a "fine outward training." The Augsburg Confession condemns the Catholic doctrine on this subject as preventing a correct understanding of Law and Gospel, unnecessarily burdening the conscience and introducing grave errors into the church. It maintains that the Christian will continuously practice self-denial, not in order to earn salvation, but as a part of his struggle for preservation in faith against the flesh within him. But in the course of years fasts and other forms of Lenten discipline gradually declined, and in the time of Rationalism disappeared almost entirely. Some traces are still found in isolated cases in the "Buss- und Bettage," observed in some localities, the use of black drapings for altar and pulpit during Lent, the fasting of some before receiving the sacrament, and the restrictions placed on marriage and other festivities in the closed seasons of Advent and Lent. Of all the features of Lenten observance formerly found in the Church, the most worthy of continuation is no

doubt the special preaching of the Word. This feature is found almost universally in the Lutheran Church of today. Special services, generally held on weekdays, are given to the contemplation of the suffering and death of our Savior, thus preparing the Church for a glad celebration of Eastertide.

J. B.

#### RELIGIOUS TEACHING OF CHILDREN.

It is with pleasure we read such utterances on the religious teaching of children outside of the Lutheran Church as given in "The Christian Herald" of January 26, 1914, an undenominational paper. Referring to a movement under way among Roman Catholic citizens of New York City, that religious instruction is to be given to Catholic school children in public schools, after school hours, by teachers who are Roman Catholic, "The Christian Herald" makes the following well-timed and proper remarks:

"There is a great object lesson in this, to which the Protestant churches of America might well give heed. Religious instruction of children is prohibited in the public schools in a large majority of the States. Our Protestant Sunday schools, however excellent they may be, are attended by an inconsiderable portion of our public school children of Protestant parentage. Religious instruction at home is still more problematical as a dependence for the spiritual welfare of the young. The plain truth is that it is largely neglected. The result of such conditions is, that with the exception of a few denominations which have their parochial schools in which religious training is a strong feature, a startling proportion of the children of Protestant parents in this country are spiritually neglected. The Lutherans have many parochial schools, and the Episcopalians and possibly a few other denominations, and these are like spiritual oases in the great desert of neglected American childhood. We do not regard this as an overdrawn picture. The pity of it is that it is the truth! Is it a cause for wonder that there should be an ever-increasing complaint among Protestant churches of a decline in attendance and a growing indifference to things spiritual? We spend millions on the heathen in foreign lands, and it is an excellent work; but how can we justify the neglect of our own little folks at home, whom we are permitting to grow up to manhood and womanhood in ignorance of these vital things that relate to the spiritual life? How can we expect them to become good citizens and Christian men and women, unless we provide some system of religious education for them, worthy of the name?

"Our children of to-day will be the men and women of to-morrow. The Catholics, in the project recorded by the "Evening Post," are setting Protestants

an example which might be followed to real advantage—not in the public schools, however, but in suitable buildings elsewhere. We must enter a solemn protest against this new Catholic scheme to evade the law and utilize the schools for religious purposes. Their ceaseless activity puts our neglect to shame. Practical Christian workers everywhere know that the great hope of spiritual growth in a community must largely depend on the efforts that are made to win the children—to train them in the religion of Jesus Christ. If our churches were wise enough to take the obvious lesson to heart they would go very far toward remedying the existing evils of indifference, non-attendance and declining church influence by an organized religious movement to reach and teach the Protestant children of America.”

### “ATTRACTING THEM.”

Under the headline “Attracting Them,” an editorial in a daily paper of recent date says the following:

“The churches are getting on. Here is the Lenox Avenue Unitarian church of New York opening a dancing school where ‘by paying 10 cents anyone may take a lesson in the tango and other modern dances.’

The Women’s alliance of the parish has the dancing school in hand as an auxiliary to its settlement work, the idea being to attract the young folks by enabling them to ‘have a good time in the right way.’

Of course there is a great deal in that. The old religion of grimness and gloom is much faded and outmoded, and even New England puritanism (what there is left of it) feels the inexpediency of allowing the devil a monopoly of the attractions.”

It must be sad for anyone to arrive at the conclusion that the religion he has been professing is “an old religion of grimness and gloom.” Sadder still is his position who must admit that his religion, no matter what it was in times past, is today “much faded and outmoded.” But will it mend matters to adopt attractions over which the devil otherwise would maintain “a monopoly”? It would seem that the devil is a good judge of the essentials “for a good time” and if the church is not alive to its opportunities, it will lose these attractions “the tango and other modern dances,” only to see them gathered under the greedy monopoly of the arch-enemy. In the minds of many the time for decisive action is even now past; some even concede Satan’s previous rights in the premises, the rights of the designer or inventor, which are respected wherever copyright is maintained. So these attractions, “the tango and other modern dances,” are at least open to question. But admitted that a church of our day could employ these means to attract “the young folks,” would it not be wise before using them to ask: What kind of young people will be likely to respond;

what will be their influence on the church; what will be their further demands on the church, which has broken the devil’s monopoly on attractions, to give them “a good time in the right way”?

A substitute “religion” built on these lines would certainly not be conspicuous for its “grimness and gloom,” but, embracing it, could you be certain that it might not sometime appear “faded and outmoded”? As far as becoming outmoded is concerned Scripture says this style will hold and be in the height of fashion in the end of days, as it was in the days of Noe (Luke 17: 26. 30); but as to growing faded, well, there Scripture offers no assurance, it says: “The world passeth away, and the lust thereof.” 1 John 2: 17. The time will therefore come when these attractions lose their charm and their savor palls on the taste, and woe unto him who has sought and found only these “good times” in his church.

The above-mentioned church which seeks new attractions is certainly so far removed from us in things spiritual that we could pass its aspirations by unnoticed; the comments of a wordly-minded editor might, too, be ignored: but both voice the growing sentiment of our time. The world to-day is pleasure-mad and it does not require very careful observation to note that it is making its influence felt in the Church. Let us not forget that the mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel, not to enable its members to “have a good time in the right way.”

G.

### STUMBLING-BLOCKS.

Some people view the future of the Church with a feeling of discouragement. They measure the progress of the church by the number of great leaders it produces. But crises make leaders. Whenever the church came to a great crisis, God gave her leaders. There are other stumbling-blocks.

We are now in a transition period. Social forces, economic forces, political forces are trying to influence the religious forces. This has given rise within the last twenty-five years to the **institutional movement**. The great body of men and boys who are without the pale of the Church were to be reached in what was termed “a practical way.” Gymnasiums, club rooms, halls for all sorts of entertainments were added as legitimate agencies in the life of a well-ordered parish. And what has been the result? When too much stress is being laid upon the institutional agencies, we notice a very perceptible decline in the spiritual life of the church.

This movement is now followed by the **social service movement**. Christian life is indeed a life of service; but is the social service movement not moving away from Christ, is it not purely humanitarian, forgetting that mankind needs salvation for the soul, for-

getting that the only strength that can carry men through the battles of life proceeds from the power of God Himself.

Whilst these movements engaged the attention of many denominations, the pulpits of their churches were filled with negations and speculations. But the people have grown weary of the club rooms and of the critical pulpits, they care nothing for stones, they are hungry for the bread of life. Men want definite, positive teaching. "Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths." The older methods and ways, the ways of our fathers, were good and sound. They said: "This is the way; walk ye in it." There is a tremendous demand for this very thing in our day.

J. PLOCHER.

### A WORTHY EXAMPLE.

In one of our hospitals recently, the physicians were getting ready to perform an operation. The patient, an old man, was stretched upon the operating table, and when, at length, all was in readiness, one of the physicians approached with chloroform. The old man raised his head and said:

"Wait a moment," then folding his hands and closing his eyes, he began repeating the prayer which he used to say at his mother's knee:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take,  
And this I ask for Jesus' sake."

The doctors bowed their heads reverently and waited; and when he had finished he looked up calmly, and said: "I am ready."

R. F. F. W.

### BIBLE READING: Matth. 8: 23-27.

"Oh, my soul! Why art thou so often disquieted within thee? How is it that thou hast so little faith? Wilt thou never learn that Jesus has even the least of His little boats always under His watchful eye, and all the winds and the waves obey Him?"

### "MOTHER CHURCH OF LUTHERANISM."

The Passing of an Old Religious Landmark  
in New York City.

On November 23 another church of downtown New York closed its doors. The massive graystone building with its grim battlemented towers, which for more than seventy years has stood at the corner of Broome and Elizabeth Streets, and has witnessed the change of its surroundings from a "Little Germany" into a "Little Italy," will soon make way for a business structure. The building was erected in 1841 by the First Baptist Church of New York and was sold in 1868 to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Matthew,

the oldest Lutheran church in America, and the second church established on Manhattan. The congregation, foreseeing the eventual necessity of vacating the old site, made provision for the preservation of the historic identity of the church by establishing a branch church on West One Hundred and Forty-fifth Street and Convent Avenue, which was served from 1906 to 1910 by the Rev. Martin Walker, now of Buffalo, and since 1910 by the Rev. Otto Ungemach.

The beginnings of this church date back to the time when New York was still New Amsterdam. It is known to have existed in 1649. The first pastor, John Ernst Gutwasser, who arrived in July, 1657, from Holland, was forbidden to preach by the Dutch Reformed authorities, cast into prison and finally sent back to Holland in 1659. When the British captured the city in 1664, Governor Richard Nicolls granted the Lutherans "liberty to send for one minister or more of their religion, and that they may freely and publicly exercise divine worship according to their conscience." The original of this document, dated December 6, 1664, is still treasured by the church as its official birth certificate.

The first place of worship of the Lutherans, according to contemporary views of the city, was in the vicinity of Hanover Square. When, however, in 1669, Magister Jacob Fabritius came over from Holland to minister to them, they began building a small church just outside the "Landpoort," on Broadway, which was completed under the succeeding minister, Domine Bernhardus Arensius, who arrived in 1671. During the reoccupation of the city by the Dutch in 1673, this church was torn down by order of Director Anthony Colve, because, on account of its proximity to the city wall, it would have endangered the defense of the town. As an indemnity the congregation received a plot of ground inside the wall, on the corner of Broadway and Rector Street, which they occupied for 103 years.

In the first church on this site, a wooden structure, Domine Arensius ministered to his flock till his death in 1691, and Domine Justus Falckner, the first Lutheran pastor ordained in America, from 1703 to 1723. Though the majority of the original members of the congregation were Germans, the church had become entirely Dutch by 1700. But early in the new century the Palatine immigration strengthened the congregation, so that under Falckner's successor, Domine William C. Berkenmeyer, the old church could be replaced, in 1729, by a substantial stone building, called "Trinity Church." In 1750, near the close of Domine M. C. Knoll's ministry, the German element in the church formed a separate society, and not even the efforts of the venerable patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America, the Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, who served the old church in 1751 and 1752, could bring the factions together again.

The new society built a stone church in 1767 on Frankfort and William Streets, which was officially designated "Christ Church," but popularly known as the "Swamp Church." This church was served just prior to the Revolution by the Rev. F. A. C. Muhlenberg, who afterwards became the speaker of the first Congress. In the old church on Broadway the Rev. J. A. Weygand ministered to his people in Dutch, German and English from 1753 to 1770. The last Dutch sermon was preached in this building by his successor, Pastor B. M. Hausihl.

The Broadway church succumbed to the great fire of 1776. During the occupation by the British the congregation worshipped in the Scotch Presbyterian church on Cedar Street, and then in the Swamp Church. After the close of the Revolution, in 1784, the two factions of the church were reunited under the name "The United German Lutheran Churches," and called the Rev. John C. Kunze as their pas-

tor. This gentleman was also professor of Oriental languages in Columbia University, and the official interpreter for Congress during its session in New York. In 1797 the first English Lutheran Church in America was established by one of Dr. Kunze's assistants. It was afterwards known as the "English Lutheran Church Zion," but went over into the Episcopal fold in 1810. Dr. Kunze died in 1807. In 1822 another attempt was made to establish an English Lutheran congregation, and a church was erected in Walker Street, and called the Church of St. Matthew. When this English congregation disbanded in 1826, the old congregation moved into the Walker Street church, and became known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Matthew. The pastors who officiated in the Walker Street church were Dr. F. C. Schaeffer, 1823-1826; Drs. F. W. Geissenhainer, Sr. and Jr., 1826-1838; and Dr. C. F. E. Stohlmann, 1838-1868. The last named died on the same day when the congregation moved into the Broome Street church, May 3, 1868. His successors were the Rev. G. Vorberg, 1869-1873; Dr. Justus Ruperti, who returned to Germany in 1876; the Rev. J. H. Sieker, 1876-1904, and the present pastor, the Rev. Otto Sieker.

For about 150 years a parish school has been maintained in connection with the church. This school is now quartered in the parish house on Washington Heights; Mr. E. H. Engelbrecht is the principal. St. Matthew's Academy and, from 1881 to 1893, also Concordia Collegiate Institute, now at Bronxville, N. Y., found a home in the old school building on Elizabeth Street. In the days of its prime, in the early eighties, over 1,000 children attended the Sunday school and more than 600 were enrolled in the parish school; and there is hardly a Lutheran church in Greater New York which does not number among its members children of old St. Matthew's. The church has also taken a leading part in the establishment of new churches and of charitable institutions, such as the Lutheran Hospital, the Wartburg Home for the Aged in East New York, and the Bethlehem Orphanage at College Point. It is justly regarded as the mother church of Lutheranism in New York.

In December, 1914, the congregation expects to celebrate its 250th anniversary, and a history of the church is in preparation.—Karl Kretzmann in The Christian Herald.

#### BRIEF ITEMS.

##### Money Well Applied.

New Year's gifts of \$25,000 to the United Church hospital association and \$5,000 to the Lutheran hospice were made from the estate of the late "Elder" Stewart of Minneapolis. It was made known yesterday when a letter was received from the deceased's aged brother, David D. Stewart of St. Albans, Me., containing checks for charitable institutions aggregating \$230,000. No conditions or hampering restrictions were attached to the bequests.

"Elder" Stewart was known as a peculiar figure in Minneapolis for many years. He held valuable real estate in the downtown business district of the city, which he kept from year to year unimproved while skyscrapers were reared around him, refusing all offers to buy. His brother in Maine, David Stewart, and Samuel Morse of Minneapolis were made executors.—Ex.

##### Expansion.

The Hermannsburg Mission, which has carried on successful work in Natal and Transvaal, South Africa, since 1854, and which numbers 14,000 communicants among the Zulus and over 56,000 among the Bechuana, now also intends to take up the work in the German colonies of Africa.

#### Dangers of Mormonism.

It is said that the Swedish government has recently set apart 10,000 kroner to warn the Swedish people by lectures and literature against the dangerous and dishonest Mormon propaganda; and that the Norwegian government is to appropriate 8,000 kroner for the same purpose. Mormons who are American citizens are being expelled from the former country. It is no wonder that such steps are taken against Mormonism when the real nature of this religion and system becomes more apparent. We, on this side of the water, on whose territory and in whose nation this evil institution is firmly planted, are guilty of dangerous apathy.—Ex.

#### Bible Distribution.

The secretary of the Chicago Bible Society reports that that society during the last year distributed more than 229,000 Bibles. These Bibles were printed in forty-nine different languages and reached as many different races represented in the districts served by the Society. There were 42,262 Bibles given away and the rest of the total number were disposed of at the usual nominal price which is asked for Bibles by these societies. The increase over the previous year was almost 190,000.

#### Church Growth.

Concerning the rate at which Christian Churches increase the Boston Transcript has some interesting information. Such Churches in America increase their membership every year by two per cent. The smaller bodies do not do quite so well, while Catholics, Disciples of Christ, Lutherans, and sometimes Episcopalians do somewhat better. In statistics the Catholic Church always shows the most marked gains, owing to the steady stream of Catholic immigration coming to America from the southern countries of Europe. Some of the larger bodies falling behind the two per cent rate are the Presbyterians North, Congregationalists, and Unitarians. Even at two per cent it means twenty per cent in ten years, which is a greater rate of increase than the census shows for our population.

#### China and Confucianism.

Christian Missionary Boards for Foreign Countries have anxiously been watching the course of events in far off China, where the heathenism of Confucius was threatening to become a state religion. The watching is over! President Yuan Shi-Kai himself submitted a bill to the administrative council to make that form of heathenism the official religion and the council passed it. This does not threaten existing missions directly, but one can easily perceive the difficulties it will throw in the path of missionary work.

#### Commendable Zeal.

The Annual Student Volunteer Convention is an organization that has as its object the recruiting of college men for foreign missionary fields. The workers are chosen from many different denominations and no hurried decision is asked. On the contrary, students are discouraged from making an early decision they may later regret. This year's Convention brought a harvest of 300 signatures of such as pledged themselves to devote their lives to the service. Such zeal is highly commendable.