

The Northwestern Lutheran

Kenosha
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Jan 13

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

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THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Was not Christ our Savior
Sent unto us from God above,
Not for our good behavior,
But only of His mercy and love?
If this be true, as true it is,
Truly indeed;
Great thanks to God to yield for this
Then had we need.

This did our God for very troth,
To train to Him the soul of man,
And justly to perform His oath
To Sarah, and to Abraham, than
That through his seed all nations should
Most blessed be,
As in due time performed, He would
All flesh should see.

Which wondrously is brought to pass,
And in our sight already done,
By sending as His promise was
(To comfort us) His only Son,
Even Christ, I mean, that virgin's child
In Bethlehem born:
That Lamb of God, that Prophet mild,
With crowned thorn.

Such was His love, to save us all
From dangers of the curse of God,
That we stood in by Adam's fall,
And by our own deserved rod:
That through His blood and holy name,
All that believe,
And fly from sin, abhor the same,
Shall grace receive.

For this glad news, this feast doth bring,
To God the Son and Holy Ghost,
Let man give thanks, rejoice and sing,
From world to world, from coast to coast,
For other gifts in many ways,
That God doth send:
Let us in Christ give God the praise,
Till life shall end.

Thomas Tusser, about 1570.

COMMENTS

The Community Christmas Tree Milwaukee is again to have a community Christmas tree, the one of last year having aroused so much enthusiasm. The idea is rapidly gaining ground in other cities and bids fair to be introduced quite generally. Now we are willing to let everyone celebrate the day for himself or with others in the manner he

prefers, as long as he does not disturb the peace and dignity of the community, but here we are considered as taking part in the affair and therefore we feel that we have the right, if not the duty, to state our opinion on it. And thus we shamelessly confess that we cannot go into raptures over the proposed celebration, that we rather consider it an ill-advised undertaking in line with many others which the public thoughtlessly supports. In taking this position we are not moved by the spirit of opposition or of carping criticism. We freely admit that a large Christmas tree under the starlit sky is a thing of beauty and that there is something in such a large gathering listening to the singing of Christmas carols which appeals to our feelings, but there are principles involved which are very important to us, and they forbid that we endorse the idea.

Christmas is and must remain to us the festival of the birth of Christ. Our celebration is a joyous confession that the little child born in Bethelhem is the Son of the living God. We kneel before the humble manger and worship Him as our Savior and Redeemer, without whom the world would have been lost forever. Our observance of the day is a reproof to the unbelieving world and at once an invitation to come to Him that it might find life and peace in Him. Christmas is a Christian festival. Take Christ away, and what remains?

Now the community is not Christian, not even religious, nor can it be. We have with us the Jew, the atheist, and others who openly reject what we believe and teach of Christ. They are our fellow-citizens entitled to as much consideration in the community as we are. Religion must therefore be barred from a community celebration. We should not foist our views upon others when we meet them on the common grounds of citizenship.

Nor can we, on the other hand, as Christians yield to the spirit which considers much feasting, a little sentimentality brought on by recollections from our childhood days, and the sending out of a few Christmas baskets to the poor, a due celebration of the day. We dare not appear as countenancing a Christless Christmas.

Here lies the greatest danger threatening the Church to-day. The religion of humanitarianism steals so softly over the soul, stifling true religious life within it and leaving nothing but what is merely human. We are so easily carried away by the enthusiasm and

the raptures of those whose object of worship is humanity. Let us be consistent Christians, a salt that has not lost its savor—and at the same time consistent Americans who resent anything that looks like a departure from that vital principle, the separation of State and Church, who would bar from all public functions everything in which not all citizens can take part with a good conscience. Neither Church nor State are served by affairs like the community Christmas tree.

But have we no heart for the poor, do we not need the tree on their account? We point to the many churches of the city. Their doors are open to everyone all the year round and on Christmas eve as well. Their Sunday schools are eagerly searching the homes of the city for recruits offering every inducement to parents and children. Some even have day schools from which no child is debarred by poverty. They all offer to the children a Christmas tree and the usual gifts, but not these alone, they lead the child to the manger in Bethlehem that it might there find the real Christmas gift, Christ Himself, the Friend and Savior of little children. They teach it to recite the Christmas story and sing joyous Christmas carols. There the child finds a real Christmas. Why, then, a community Christmas tree?

J. B.

“THIS IS MY BELOVED SON”

There has never been a voice raised to assail the spotless character of Jesus. There have been detractors that have laid hands on the most sacred things of Christian belief but not a hand did they dare raise against the holiness of His person. This might reasonably be supposed to indicate that His divinity was and is universally accepted. But that has never been the case. From the very beginning that was the one thing that men violently opposed in His message. The Jews felt justified in crucifying Him because He asserted His Sonship of God. “The high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said: I am . . . Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy.”

If Christ was not the true Son of God, then it was blasphemy and the Jews were right. Christ's whole mission rests upon the truth of that answer He made the high priest. It is a self-deception for men now and in the past to profess love and honor for Christ, if they refuse to accept this statement upon which He himself bases His message. It is a mockery to extol the excellence and purity of the life of Christ and to deny that he was true God, for Christ Himself always spoke to man as the Son of God and always gave His Sonship as the reason of His knowledge and of the truth and power of His work for man. Christ cannot

be excellent and pure, if this the highest and foremost of His assertions is erroneous.

And more than that, the Bible ceases to be an excellent book, if Christ be not true God; because all prophecy and all testimony is founded upon that truth. The Messiah long promised, was plainly and unmistakably described as the Son of God; nearly every prophecy says or implies that; as an example we may quote Hosea 1: 7, “But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah and will save them by the Lord their God.” The Jews had no possible excuse for misunderstanding this part of the nature of their Messiah, Jeremiah 23: 6, we read, “This is his name whereby he shall be called, **the Lord Our Righteousness,**” and the Hebrew word used there is the one expression which was too sacred even for human use and was the one name which belonged to God alone: Jehovah. The Jews that accepted Christ and became His disciples saw the harmony of the Scriptures and their fulfillment and their faith was founded on this recognition.

When they in turn testified to what they had seen and heard and experienced, they naturally took this for granted, it was the starting point for their preaching. But their direct testimony is everywhere apparent. The whole opening chapter of the Gospel of St. John is a wonderfully profound statement that Christ is true God; one might say that of the whole Gospel, from beginning to the end, there is not a chapter that does not make it a special point to show that Christ is true God. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, adds his testimony to that of the Apostles and the many others that witnessed the Lord's deeds and heard His preaching. St. Paul, whose conversion was a particular manifestation of the Godship of Jesus, says, that Christ came of the fathers “as concerning the flesh, who is over all, **God** blessed for ever.” St. John's “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten **Son**” is reechoed and reasserted by Paul's “God spared not his own Son.”

That was the peculiar thing of Christian faith, as it is now, that Christ is held as true God. It is God who works our salvation because Christ who worked it, is God; Scripture knows no other truth. In 1. Timothy Paul says: “We both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the **Living God**, who is the **Savior** of all men, especially of those that believe.” From His birth to His death Scripture records the divine acts and manifestations that bore witness to the Lord's true Sonship. The angel chorus, the Star of Bethlehem, the voice from heaven at the baptism, the transfiguration, the darkness, and the earthquake at the hour of death on Calvary, to mention but a few of the many, all were read by the faithful as tokens of the divine nature of their Master.

But these external witnesses are no more compelling than those that are apparent in the Lord's own acts. Every miracle He performed was performed

as a means of bringing men to the faith in His divinity. He ruled over the forces of nature and even called back the dead. Who but God can do that? In passing we might say that foes of Christ have naturally tried to discredit every testimony of Scripture that showed Christ's Godship; so they have incessantly assailed the miracles. Their activities are in themselves a proof of the convincing character of everything that the Bible says about Christ as true God. All their attacks have not shaken a single statement and the Bible remains as the uncontroverted witness that Christ is God.

If Christ is true God then He must possess the attributes that we know are God's. He must be omniscient, omnipresent, and have all those other qualities that are associated with God and no one else. For every one of them there is an undeniable parallel in the life of Christ. This has never been seriously questioned, the attack has always been directed at the witness.

But more than anything else the teaching of Christ Himself is convincing that He must be accepted as true God, or not at all. In Matthew we read the Lord's own words: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." On almost innumerable occasions He calls the Father, His father. And to those that would have that mean that He merely speaks of God as the Father in the sense that He is the Father of creation and the father of all men one must point out the distinction the Lord makes to avoid this misconception; speaking of His ascension He says: "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God" and plainly He means that though God is the Father of both Christ and His followers, He is the Father of Christ in a different and very particular sense.

It must be emphasized that the divinity of Christ is not a matter subject to proof; if that were all that is necessary, then the question would have been disposed of as soon as He appeared publicly to preach and work His miracles. It is a matter of faith. Those that take offence at His doctrine of atonement, that will not have a Savior because they will not admit their sin, will never accept Christ as God. They will not, proof will not induce them to change their minds; only the illumination of the Holy Ghost can prepare the heart to rejoice in the Savior Jesus, who is "true God sent by the Father." Like the Jews they will be witnesses of such divine power and holy supernatural gifts that even their unwillingness must give way before the force of truth—but they will not believe. "Whence hath this man wisdom, never having learned?" so say the Jews, but they do not accept the inevitable answer: His wisdom is of God because He is God.

The wealth of testimony and the ever varied manifestation of the divine glory of Jesus is not material for argument for us Christians, it is a neverending source of solace and consolation, it gives us courage and cheer, and above all it strengthens our faith in our deliverance to hear on every Christmas morning and to recall on every day of our lives that our Master is not like the masters of other men, that He is the only begotten Son of whom the Father said, accepting his sacrifice, "This is my beloved Son."

H. K. M.

HYMN ON THE NATIVITY OF MY SAVIOR

I sing the birth was born to-night,
The author both of life and light;
The angel so did sound it,
And like the ravished shepherds said,
Who saw the light and were afraid,
Yet searched and true they found it.

The Son of God th' Eternal King,
That did us all salvation bring,
And freed the soul from danger;
He whom the whole world could not take,
The Word, which heaven and earth did make
Was now laid in a manger.

The Father's wisdom willed it so,
The Son's obedience knew no No,
Both wills were in one stature;
And as that wisdom had decreed,
The Word was now made Flesh indeed,
And took on Him our nature.

What comfort by Him do we win,
Who made Himself the Prince of sin,
To make us heirs of Glory!
To see this babe all innocence,
A martyr born in our defence:
Can man forget this story?

Ben Jonson, about 1600.

"NO ROOM IN THE INN"

"There was no room for them in the inn."

What thoughts do these words awaken in the mind? Perhaps the first may be this, that no wonder, in so great a concourse of people, of all ranks, going up to be registered for taxes, there should be no room in the inn for the poor and unpretending Mother of the Savior, to be delivered of her first-born child. But the second thought may be that the world is like that inn, that amidst its pomp, its magnificence, amidst the whirl and hurry of its business, amidst the marble edifices of its gigantic triumphs, amidst its enterprises, amidst the crowd and pressure of even its neediest inhabitants, there is not room for the Savior of mankind.

Upon this thought another might follow—that that inn, in respect of its bustle and turmoil, is like the world. Man crowds round man, giving himself up without reserve, whether to vicious indulgences, or

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selfish enjoyments, or to schemes of advancement in this world, till he feels himself so full that there is not room in him for the thought that his food and raiment, his gifts and faculties, his hopes and prospects, all that he has and all that he can ever be, came down to him from the Most High, and are to be rendered up again to him from whom they came, in thanks, in praise, and in dutiful obedience.—W. E. Gladstone.

THE NEW YEAR—
Our Every Want Supplied



“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”
Matth. 28: 20.

The Friend of Children: “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.” Mark 10: 14.

The Blessed Guest in our home: “To-day I must abide at thy house.” “This day is salvation come to this house.” Luke 19: 5. 9.

The Savior of sinners: “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Luke 19: 10. “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” John 6: 37. “Thy sins are forgiven.” Luke 7: 48.

The Comforter of the troubled: “Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?” Luke 24: 38. “Be not faithless, but believing.” John 20: 27. “Peace be unto you.” John 20: 26.

The Loving Friend: “Ye are my friends.” “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.” John 25: 14. 9.

The Succor of those in danger: “Peace, be still,” to wind and sea, and to His disciples: “Why are ye so fearful? how it is that ye have no faith?” Mark 4: 39. 40.

The Healer of the sick: “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” John 5: 8. “Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.” Luke 13: 12. “Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.” Luke 18: 43.

The Gracious Provider: “I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.” Matt. 15: 32.

“Children, have ye any meat?”—“Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.” John 21: 5. 6.

The Hope of the dying: “Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Matt. 23: 43.

“I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” John 11: 25.

The Consolation of the bereaved: “Thy brother shall rise again.” John 11: 23. “Weep not.”

Hence, all fear and sadness!
For the Lord of gladness,
Jesus, enters in.
Those who love the Father,
Though the storms may gather,
Still have peace within;
Yea, whate'er I here must bear,
Still in Thee lies purest pleasure,
Jesus, priceless Treasure!

J. B.

FOR THE NEW YEAR

Great God! let all my tuneful powers
Awake and sing Thy mighty name:
Thy hand revolves my circling hours,
Thy hand from which my being came.

Seasons and moons still rolling round,
In beauteous order, speak Thy praise;
And years, with smiling mercy crowned,
To Thee successive honors raise.

To Thee I raise my annual song,
To Thee the grateful tribute give;
My God doth still my years prolong,
And 'midst unnumbered deaths, I live.

He bids each season on my soul
Its sweetest, kindest influence shed;
And all the periods, as they roll,
Bring countless blessings on my head.

My life, my health, my friends, I owe
All to Thy vast, unbounded love;
Ten thousand precious gifts below,
And hope of nobler joys above.

Thus will I sing, till nature cease,
Till sense and language are no more,
And, after death, Thy boundless grace,
Through everlasting years, adore.

THE ANNUAL MEETING

During the first days of the new year the congregations in most cases assemble to transact their most important business at the annual meeting. Business, in this case, is meant to apply to conduct of affairs of a more material nature. It is a great mistake to think that this can be done by a Christian church in a manner that has come to be considered the rule in every-day business affairs. There everything is decided and guided by considerations of advantages to be gained over competitors or with an eye to greater profits at less expense. Church business must never be guided by such cold reasoning; it must not be forgotten that its business is divine service. There is no essential difference between the Sunday morning service and devotion and the congregational meeting for the conduct of affairs. The rules that guide in the one service are not suspended in the other. The meeting should never be looked at as an opportunity to air personal grievances and as the place where a little every-day squabbling can properly be introduced. There, if anywhere, the Christian should put in practice the Christian principles of love and devotion to his Lord, who is the Head of His Church.

Officers are usually elected in this meeting and it is a Christian duty to exercise the greatest care in their selection. When the Disciples found that they needed help in the first church they said, "look ye out among you men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." Deacons should be selected with as much

care as is usually devoted to the selection of a pastor. They are to be entrusted with the affairs of the congregation to a great extent and must be men that command the confidence of their brethren from the very beginning. Here personal friendships and relationships should cease and men should be selected purely for their fitness. Members that vote for deacons, or on any question that may arise, are exercising a very high privilege, they are taking part in ordering the affairs of the Kingdom of God and never should they forget that the responsibility is as high as the cause is sacred. Prayerful devotion is fully as necessary here as in listening to a sermon or in joining in the hymns and petitions.

In that spirit the progress of the congregation during the past year should be viewed and discussed. Were there many new members? Were there but few? Whatever may have been the case in your particular congregation, this is an affair in which you must be deeply concerned; in many cases there will be an invitation for serious self-examination whether you, as a fully responsible member, have done your duty in assisting and encouraging friends and neighbors to hear the Word and become regular attendants and members of your church. You cannot expect your pastor and your deacons to do this alone.

A report almost as important in our day that will be read to you is the school report. We hope the one you hear will be favorable, but in any event, here is where you can practice your faith by acting in your own family as the head of a Christian household should act and by helping others to see the necessity of a Christian school for children that are to be Christians. It has actually happened that "Christians" have spoken against their own school for some fancied reasons; but how can that be reconciled to their plain duty as representatives and members of the Church of Christ? If you believe that your school can be improved, it is your duty and privilege to urge such improvement; but even a "poor" Christian school is so much needed by all children that the costliest and most "advanced" school of any other kind can never take its place.

When questions of expenditure and money in general are to be considered, the amount to be voted on is not always the important thing. Concerning, as it does, the most common of our possessions, it should be the very first means of showing how far we have adopted the spirit of Christ in dealing with it. One might almost say that the manner in which our financial business is disposed of is far more important than the matter of debits and credits. It is impossible to lay down ironclad laws according to which these matters are to be judged, but so much is quite plain: the church is not an institution that is treated as an unpleasant burden, it is not an almshouse that you support out of compassion, it is the most sacred and most exalted undertaking in which you or any other man

can be concerned. Sacrifice should not be expected from pastors and teachers alone, they must not be forced by their small salaries to carry the burden of the church so that you may get along with a smaller contribution, as it is, their sacrifice is often large enough in other respects.

Coming events and undertakings will also demand your attention at the meeting. Improvements in your own church household will be well taken care of, if you give them the same earnest thought that your own affairs receive. In most cases it is thoughtlessness more than anything else that permits such important matters to be treated so slightly. Other matters that may be discussed concern us, even if we are not always conscious of their relation to our person; this year you may hear of the semi-centennial anniversary celebration that is to be held at Watertown for our college. Suggestion has been made by a committee appointed by your synod that an offering be taken up in which every communicant of our churches participate. Nothing could be more fitting as an expression of our gratitude for the great good our God has done us through this school, and Christians will take delight in offering assistance to make this plan a success.

May the annual meeting give evidence of your Christian faith and service in all things. That is the spirit that St. Paul commended so highly when he wrote to the Ephesians: "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and **love unto all the saints**, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers." H. K. M.

TO OUR READERS

With this issue *The Northwestern Lutheran* ends the first year of its existence. As far as the financial part is concerned, the paper has so far been published without loss to the Synod. Yet there is much room for increasing its circulation and more work to be done in future to that effect. When we consider that there are about 50 per cent of members within our Synodical body who are not in the habit of reading a religious paper of our own publication, we ought to use our efforts in getting more subscribers in the coming year. This end can easily be attained by appointing agents in each congregation, say one or two from the ranks of our young people, to solicit subscriptions for the paper. Let us try it and see gratifying results.

Leaving aside the earning power of a church paper for the Synod, there must be higher motives for its publication and the increase of its circulation. Its columns should be devoted to the services of the Church of the Lord. True, the Church, as a divine institution, is complete without such a paper. But as Christ approves of such devices for the promotion of His kingdom, as the Church, in the exercise of her liberty, may adopt, the church paper also has the sanc-

tion of the Lord, and under the guidance of His Spirit it becomes one of the most efficient agencies for doing good.

Of course a church paper is not to supplant the work of the pastor in a congregation, such as the public preaching of the divine Word, nor the hearing of the same on the part of the parishioner. There are people who on Sunday morning read a sermon published in a Sunday paper, and then flatter themselves on having performed the duty of the day and they count themselves altogether excusable for not attending public worship. In this and other ways the semi-religious press often becomes a hindrance to the work of the Church. Hence we do not purpose to publish sermons in our columns, nor to enter the pastor's proper field of labor.

But there are so many questions and problems arising continually, touching upon religion, doctrine, faith, upon a Christian's life and his attitude in this or that case, confronting him; these must be met and discussed in the light of Scriptures and set aright. Moreover, since the needs of the present hour are often far different from the needs of either the past or the future, so far as externals are concerned, these being subject to constant change, the church paper must also, in a measure, take tone and tenor from the present. It must apply the Word of God to present needs, and it should be a chronicler of the experiences of its constituents under divine grace, and a faithful recounter of the Church's development.

Such a paper *The Northwestern Lutheran* would strive to be, and while its editors ask the prayers of the readers, to accomplish by the help of God that which in themselves they find not to do, they would also seek the cooperation of the readers in spreading the paper among the members of our synodical body.

J. J.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

IV.—Reconstruction and Consolidation 1866-1914.

(Continued)

Melanchton's followers in the XVIIth century were still of another kind. They were neither Semi-Pelagians nor Arminians. They were not even Synergists. They abhorred that idea and fought against it. But their trend of thought was the same as that of Melanchton. They tried to fight the hard teaching of Calvinism by palliating the paterminism which they felt to be expressed in Luther's doctrine of predestination and that of the Formula of Concord by saying: God has predestined the elect in view of the faith in which they would remain unto the end. And in the course of the discussion they also spoke of the difference between natural and willful resistance against the influence of grace. Natural resistance is taken away by the Holy Ghost but willful resistance leads to dam-

nation. While such distinctions may be made when we speak of man's conduct, it is misleading when the scriptural doctrines of conversion and predestination are made acceptable to man's logical mind in that way. It detracts from that strong Gospel-expression, that God alone has worked out the salvation of men, having predestined the elect to salvation. It has in the end the same import as Synergism and in fact will always lead to it.

From this historical review it may readily be seen that so-called Christian love must not waive the discussion of these problems, but that it is the Christian's business to uphold right teaching in helping that the ideas become clear and definite, according to the statements of Scripture. It hardly needs to be mentioned that this must be carried on in the spirit of Christian love.

When the Lutheran Church in America in the years from 1820 to 1880 had considered every doctrine of Scripture and every measure of practice so as to adjust every point of Christian life in these new environments to the Gospel, it was self-evident and a matter of necessary mental and spiritual development to enter upon the discussion of the doctrine of predestination. When the discussion was opened the general prevailing ideas in the American Lutheran Church were those of the XVIIth century, even among the pupils of Walther although he had long before the outbreak of the controversy expressed his dissension from these views. In consequence of the skirmishes that had taken place in the beginning of the Seventies between him and the Fritschels concerning the questions of regeneration and predestination in which Prof. F. A. Schmid of St. Louis and Prof. Stellhorn (at that time at our college in Watertown), had in private discussion aligned themselves with the Fritschels, Walther published, in 1877, a paper on predestination, which he had read before the convention of the Western District of the Missouri Synod. In this he had made statements which aroused a suspicion of Calvinistic tendencies, although from the whole trend of thought and its presentation it must have been clear that he presented the views of Luther and the Formula of Concord. He was accused by Prof. Schmid who was then at the head of the Norwegian Seminary in Madison, Wis. of Krypto—that is, secret—Calvinism. In the course of the controversy the Ohio Synod and a part of the Norwegian Synod and Prof. Stellhorn, then at Concordia College in Ft. Wayne, Ind., sided with Schmid, while the Wisconsin and Minnesota synods remained under the leadership of Hoenecke with the Missourians. Each of these synods had to experience dissension among its ministers and congregations, so that especially the Ohio Synod gained members from the fragments of the Synodical Conference and extended its boundaries to the West.

Walther had modified some of his statements at the instance of his friends. Walther's opponents however did not take exception to his single statements only but were the followers of that old Melanctonian school which had even in Luther's time opposed the innermost thoughts of the father of Lutheranism concerning the doctrines of sin and grace.

They repeated the afore-mentioned explanations of the doctrine of predestination as they were given by the fathers of the XVIIth century which they called a second way (*tropus*) of teaching beside that of the XVIth century. Especially the idea of man's conduct, presented by the theologians of Ohio was the subject of debate. They said, salvation is not only dependent upon predestination but also upon man's conduct. They did not mean to detract from God's glory nor did they wish to add to man's merit. Nevertheless they brought forth the whole argumentation as it was in vogue not with Luther but with the theology in the XVIIth century. An attempt was made to come to an understanding by a colloquium at Milwaukee in 1881 but to no avail.

The result was that the Ohio Synod severed its connection with the Synodical Conference in 1882. Several splits occurred in congregations of the different synods in the Synodical Conference and brought gains to the Ohio Synod which extended its boundaries to the West. Prof. Schmid and a number of his followers left the Norwegian Synod and formed, together with the "Norwegian Conference" and the Norwegian Augustana Synod, the United Norwegian Church in 1890. The Norwegian Synod which had belonged to the Synodical Conference loosened this connection in such a way that it resigned its right of voting but retained guest privileges on the floor of the Conference.

The other synods outside of the Synodical Conference were the onlookers. But they were mostly on the side of Ohio. And even to-day when it must be clear to every intelligent observer that the doctrine of the Synodical Conference is not Calvinism and that the doctrine of Ohio is Melanctonianism pure and simple, while it is dawning upon the more energetic minds in the other synods that the insertion of "man's conduct" into the idea of predestination was a mistake, the old antagonism is not yet forgotten, and especially Missouri reaps the fruits of a friction existing before the controversy about predestination broke out.

The only outward material gain for the Synodical Conference was that the Michigan Synod entered it after a nearer connection between this synod and those of Wisconsin and Minnesota in the General Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan had been effected in the year before.

(To be continued)

J. PH. K.

"AND THEN?"

Archdeacon Hare gives us the following specimen of the efficacious use of a story:—A professor of great reputation for wisdom and piety, was once accosted by a student just entering the university at which the professor was teaching. The young man said: "My parents have just given me leave to study the law, which is the thing I have been wishing all my life, and I have come to this university on account of its great fame, and mean to spare no pains in mastering the subject." While he was thus running on, relating with boyish fervor what he purposed to do, the venerable professor interrupted him:—"Well, and when you have successfully passed through your course of studies, what then?" "Then I shall take my Doctor's degree." "And then?" answered the Doctor. "And then," continued the youth, "I shall have a number of difficult cases to manage, which will bring me fame and I will establish a great reputation." "And then?" repeated the holy man. "Why then, there cannot be a question, I shall be promoted to some high office; besides I shall make money and grow rich." "And then?" the Doctor again gently interposed. "And then," replied the youth, "I shall live to honor and dignity, and be able to look forward to a happy old age." "And then?" was again asked. The reply came with reluctance: "And then—I will die." "And then?" persisted the professor. The young man had no answer, he had thought of nothing beyond. Have you? This is the season of plans and resolutions, be sure that they carry far enough. As you need God's help to accomplish anything that is truly good, so accept His guidance in the planning. James 4: 13-15. John 6: 27. G.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

A play under this title is now being conveyed through the United States. It is being patronized by many Christian people, and some of them have the poor judgment to commend it to others. Now we admit that there is much to be said on both sides of the question. There is a vast deal that is impressive and true to Scripture. There are many scenes and tableaux that linger upon the memory as a precious possession. But—there are so many other things that are aside from the story, and that attach themselves to the memory, and make the reading of the sacred narrative, in private or in the sanctuary, painful by what is bound to come to mind from the pageant. The play ought really to be named, "The Story of Potiphar's Wife," so much is invented by the playwright and interwoven with the main story. That is the most gripping thing in the drama, and it appeals to what is worst in men. The "temptation scene," which is frankly but briefly portrayed in Scripture, is here acted out, with such suggestiveness of motion and of uttered cry—a cry filled with vile passion, surging

from the deepest depths of a soul given over to lust—as to make a pure woman cover her face for shame, and a pure man tremble throughout his whole body for its almost resistless appeal to his baser nature. It may be unhesitatingly said, that if Joseph did the things he is portrayed as doing, he had already sinned in his heart and his fall and damnation were inevitable. But this scene is a wonderfully effective sensation,—and that is what the actors want—and the audience also. Then, in the larger cities at least, there is the lugging in of ballet dancers, whose dress, or lack of it, and antics are all that the word "suggestive" means. Whoever thinks of going to get religious lessons from "Joseph and His Brethren" should first read Luther's explanation of the Sixth Commandment, and then stay at home. We offer these reflections, because it is impossible for the local clergyman to expose and denounce the play in his local paper without giving it an effective advertisement, and subject himself to such notoriety as every man of fine feeling shrinks from. We believe that our words will be taken to heart by THE LUTHERAN'S readers, and cause them to do some serious and final thinking. We must not let the devil get the best of us with his Greek gifts.—The Lutheran.

A LITTLE ARGUMENT WITH MYSELF

1. If I am able to give, and refuse to give anything to missions, I practically cast a ballot in favor of the recall of every missionary in both the home and foreign fields.

2. If I give less than heretofore, unless because of diminished income, I favor a reduction of the Missionary forces proportionate to my reduced contribution.

3. If I give as formerly, I favor holding the ground already gained, but I oppose any forward movement.

4. If I advance my offering beyond those of former years, then I favor advance and the conquest of the world for Christ.

Would you bring disaster upon the work of missions? Then join class No. 1.

Would you favor retreat in the great work of missions? Then join class No. 2.

Would you have the Church stand still in the work of missions? Then join class No. 3.

Would you have the Church go forward in the great work of missions? Then join class No. 4.—The Lutheran.

ITEMS OF INTEREST**At Work in a New Field**

Rev. Carl Guenther, for 12 years active as missionary among the Apache Indians in San Carlos, Arizona, has so far regained his health that he is able to take up his work again. He has accepted a call of the Missouri Synod to work among the Stockbridge Indians in the northern part of Wisconsin.