

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.

Vol. 4.

Vis., March 21, 1917.

No. 6.

'TIS FINISHED

'Tis finished! so the Savior cried,
And meekly bowed His head, and died:
'Tis finished—yes, the race is run,
The battle fought, the victory won.

'Tis finished—all that heaven decreed,
And all the ancient prophets said,
Is now fulfilled, as was designed,
In me, the Savior of mankind.

'Tis finished—heaven is reconciled,
And all the powers of darkness spoiled:
Peace, love, and happiness again
Return, and dwell with sinful men.

'Tis finished—let the joyful sound
Be heard through all the nations round:
'Tis finished—let the echo fly
Thro' heaven, and hell, thro' earth and sky.

COMMENTS

The Taxing of Church Property The taxing of all Church property was proposed by a bill introduced in the legislature of Wisconsin during the present session. The Assembly Committee on Taxation, as might have been expected, promptly reported against this bill. We do not now want to discuss the question whether or not it would be advisable or desirable to tax all property not strictly public, but would merely try to clear up a misunderstanding under which many seem to labor concerning this matter. A number of societies, The Milwaukee Rationalistic Society, several Turner Societies, the Freie Gemeinde, and some Milwaukee Guardians of Liberty, addressed an open letter to the Committee in support of this measure. In this letter they assert that religious institutions are enjoying privileges that are not accorded to those who live outside of the pale of the Church. They evidently believe that in exempting Church property from taxation the State is discriminating in favor of Religion, for they ridicule the argument that the Church is an important moral factor in the community, a factor without which society could not live in peace and security, pointing to the present war as the direct refutation of any such claim that might be made for the Church. Therefore they declare the law as it now stands unjust and un-American, a violation of the fundamental principles of our constitution.

We wonder how these people could write the letter

in question, as they must have known that they were not stating the truth. Many others are enjoying the privilege they want to take away from the Churches, e. g. all charitable, scientific, and educational organizations, art societies, lodges, not to forget the Turner Societies. The principle is simply this, the State does not want to tax property from which the owner does not derive financial benefits. Not to exempt the Churches as well as those other organizations were to discriminate against Religion, which would be unjust and un-American, a violation of the fundamental principles of our Constitution. J. B.

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Another Zoological Lodge In order that our readers may keep their catalogue of zoological lodges complete, we reprint the following item from the Lutheran Witness:

"We have had the Elks for some time, and the Owls, and the White Rats, and the Moose, and the Eagles. The latest addition to the lodge-zoo is brought to our notice in a folder introducing the Camels of the World. The document before us announces to a delighted world that "By Special Dispensation from the Supreme Temple" the initiation fee has been reduced to \$5.00. The Camels, we are told, are "an organization of men banded together in a great Social, Fraternal, and Beneficial Order having for its Cardinal Principle the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man," which "seeks to impress upon its members the sweet and ennobling influence of the home circle." Then comes a pretty fat lie: "The Order of Camels was established in Arabia in prehistoric times" (elsewhere we read: "The Camels of the World are 70 Years Old"); "it crossed the waters and was established here; and today the Temples know the sands of the Desert, even as we work through them today."

This "working through the sands of the desert" must be pretty thirsty work. We gather as much from an item in the St. Paul Dispatch of January 24, 1917:

"The popular belief that a camel can go seven days without a drink is refuted, apparently, by A. Hirschman & Co., wholesale liquor dealers, St. Paul, in a suit brought on for trial in the Hennepin County District Court today against Minneapolis Temple No. 66, Camels of the World, and twenty-six individual members of the order.

"The liquor firm asks for \$496.98 as the balance alleged to be due on a liquor bill of \$715. The tem-

ple's answer is that it has no money, and that the liquor was sold by the club illegally, the wholesale firm knew it, and as a guilty participant cannot collect.'

Quoting again from the Camel folder, this order has been established to "inculcate Patience, Optimism, and Faith in mankind." It seems that the order is endeavoring to instruct the world outside its Temples in these fine principles. The wholesale liquor house involved "as a guilty participant" is given a prime opportunity now to exercise, if not Faith in Mankind, at least Patience and Optimism."—Lutheran Witness.

It ought not be necessary to warn a Christian against these organizations, that can certainly not stand before Phil. 4: 8: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." J. B.

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

Article VII — Of the Church

"Our churches teach that One holy church is to continue forever. The church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered. And to the true unity of the Church, it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: 'One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all'. etc.—Eph. 4: 5, 6."

In this article the Confession states its position on the question: Where is the true Christian Church to be found? Though not as vital to the soul's salvation as some other matters of doctrine, it was violently opposed by the enemies of the Reformation. It took the ground from their feet. That was the first and last argument of the Papists when all other argument failed: the unity of the Christian Church is inviolate; the Reformers are wrong and enemies of Christ, because they are disturbing the unity of the Church. Directly and indirectly they sought to maintain that the Roman church was the one holy, Christian, catholic Church.

Without growing controversial the Augsburg confessors expose the hollowness of this pretense and with few words upset the elaborate structure of the papal hierarchy. Incidentally they also point out that this question, like all others of importance to the Christian, is a question that must be answered from the evidence of Scripture, for they say that doctrine and ad-

ministration of sacraments must be "right." That is, must be according to Scripture; it matters not what human traditions have to say on the subject.

There is ONE true Church, just as there is but ONE Christ. This Church will continue forever, just as Christ will not cease to be Christ and Savior. Since His power will not wane, the true Church will not become extinct.

This true Church is a HOLY Church. It is without flaw or blemish. It is perfect. "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5: 25-27. It follows that the true Church is made up of those only in whom Christ works by His Spirit: "God gave Christ to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. 1: 22, 23. The Church is then the "communion of saints". Those who are not "saints" are no part of it. Christ cannot be the head of the ungodly.

Since the Church is a spiritual kingdom with Christ as its head, it cannot be any visible organization recognizable by other "heads"—such as the Roman church with its pope. If any earthly polity, or estate, or hierarchy, were the equivalent of Christ's holy Church, then the Spirit would be subject to the rules and ordinances and rites and ceremonies by which such an organization governs itself. That is what Rome maintained for itself. But it offends every principle of the spiritual community of which Christ is the sole head.

Is the true Church, then, recognizable, though invisible? The Confession affirms that it is possible, even necessary, for the Christian to know where spiritual growth may be hoped for. It does not, at this place, eliminate those conditions where such growth is impossible, but it states the conditions under which it may be found. As Christ is the head of the Church, so "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." The foundation is Christ. And Christ is identical with that which is revealed to us concerning Him. It is His Gospel and His sacraments.

The Confession, therefore, declares that agreement with the true Church is firmly secured where this condition is found: the "right" preaching of the Gospel and the "right" administration of the sacraments. That is enough. Anything less is not enough. It is understood that "right" can only mean one thing: according to the will of God, who revealed the Gospel and ordained the sacraments. He requires no spokesmen or interpreters. That removes the Church from the sphere of human interference and rule-making.

It releases it from the necessity of seeking for certain forms and institutions.

That test assures the universality and unity of the Church. Wherever the Gospel is preached, there the Church is to be found. Wherever it is preached "rightly" the one head, Christ, unites all the individuals into the ONE body of the true Church.

The Confession adds that "human traditions, rites, or ceremonies, instituted by men" need not be everywhere alike. That was really the bond that held the Roman church together. By this declaration the Reformers announced their independence of Rome. The principle operated automatically in breaking down the power by which Rome held Christendom in bondage. At Worms, in 1521, Luther and for the first time publicly declared that he would not be bound by traditions and "the opinions of councils or by their decrees". Here the united testimony of the Reformation is given clearly and unmistakably that the Gospel truth has carved its way into the hearts of millions of men.

Of human traditions, some of them unredeemably un-Christian, the Roman church had so many that the remnants of Gospel teaching were entirely obscured. What if they did show by the Apostles' Creed and other confessions that they taught the Gospel, if they immediately nullified the Gospel by their insistence on a hundred practices that assumed such importance that a Gospel-thought had no chance of ever entering the heart of the faithful? With fast days innumerable, indulgences, saint-worship, relic-worship, to say nothing of the extensive purgatory traffic and the gradual suffocation of spiritual life by the ritualism and ceremonialism of the regular services, the simple principle of "right" doctrine had to be rescued from oblivion by the upheaval of the Reformation. This little article proved to be not only a clear statement to the Romanists, it was a wonderfully lucid explanation of the aims of the Reformation to many of those that knew that something was very much wrong but were unable to see clearly where the line ran that divided right from wrong.

It is difficult to refrain from pointing a moral: if the Church is determined by the principle of "right" doctrine, do not modern religionists of all types that tamper with the doctrine overthrow the ONE CHRISTIAN CHURCH? They do. And he who is indifferent to their practices shares their ungodliness.

H. K. M.

—"All the peace and favor of the world cannot calm a troubled heart; but where the peace is that Christ gives, all the trouble and disquiet of the world cannot disturb it. Outward distress, to a mind thus at peace, is but the rattling of the hail upon the tiles, to him that sits within the house, at a sumptuous feast."—Leighton.

"THE EDUCATIVE METHOD"

(Continued)

The Church and the Lodge Member

How is the Church to deal with the individual lodge member? In our last issue we showed where the Synodical Conference differs from other Lutheran bodies on the lodge question, and prepared the way for a discussion of the "educative method" by determining what must be the attitude of the Church toward the lodge as a body.

We found ourselves in full accord with Prof. Gerberding, being "firmly convinced that there is a deep antagonism between the religion of the lodge and the religion of the Gospel as taught by our Church." That we are not mistaken in our interpretation of the religion of the lodge was shown by the letter of a Mason, who defines it as follows: "The great modern fraternities accord to a man the right to get his inspiration to a noble life from Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Krishna, Jesus, or any other one or more of the great religious leaders, but **teach him that in the end he must stand or fall on his own merit.**" There is no choice for the Church, it must here obey the injunction: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." 2 Cor. 6: 17. The honor of God and the welfare of souls demand that the Church do not cease to bear witness against this blasphemous, soul-destroying error of the lodge. How shall we escape judgment if we fail to do our duty: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." Ezek. 2: 18. Our testimony against the religion of the lodge must at all times be clear and decisive!

Now let us consider the case of the lodge member. He has joined the secret society of his own free will and has solemnly sworn to remain faithful to it. So long as he has not openly withdrawn, the lodge can rightfully claim him as a brother who is in full accord with its principles and practices and who will at all times loyally support its cause. That makes him responsible before God for all its sins and errors; he is, therefore, continuously denying Christ and His Gospel; disseminating errors that lead men to eternal damnation; daily by his example tempting others to do what God forbids; and through his lodge opposing the Church and hindering it in its work. That he may not be conscious of the fact that he is living in a grievous sin, does not alter his status before God. We who recognize this fact must consider it a duty

not to be neglected that we attempt to lead him out of this sin, which may destroy his soul. We cannot be satisfied to let him remain in the lodge. We must in all love and patience try to educate him to see the will of God in the matter and to do it. But that does not immediately necessitate that we receive him into the Church, as the advocates of the "educative method" would do. He can be educated as well, if not better, before we receive him into our communion. In fact, important considerations would seem to demand this.

No Lutheran will, we are convinced, assert that the writer of the letter from which we quoted above, or any one that shares his convictions, should be received as a brother. He is too patently an un-Christian; and Scripture admonishes us: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John v. 10, 11. We would be making ourselves guilty of his denial of Christ; and he would in no wise be benefited. He would be an unworthy guest at our altar, eating and drinking damnation unto himself. The same must be said of him who realizes that it is wrong to belong to a lodge, but who refuses to sever his connections with it because he does not want to lose certain benefits or part with former friends.

We can think of but one case in which any true Lutheran could possibly consider the "educative method" admissible; that is when a man comes to us and tells us: "I believe everything you believe and teach, hope to be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, and do not want to do anything contrary to the will of God; but I really cannot see anything wrong in the lodge."

Such a man we must, in charity, consider a Christian; but the question arises, Can we accept him into our Church without denying the truth, or weakening our testimony against the lodge? Scripture makes it our duty to refuse the hand of fellowship to all who are not one with us in faith. Rom. 16: 17: "Now I beseech you, brethern, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and **avoid them.**" Titus 3: 10, 11: "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." Eph. 4: 3-6: "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

On these grounds we refuse to admit to our altar a Catholic or a Methodist, though we may consider him a believer in Christ, unless he is willing to con-

demn with us as false and pernicious the errors of his former Church and to sever his connections with it. Should not this apply more strongly still to the member of an organization whose "religion is deeply antagonistic to the religion of the Gospel as taught by us"?

We hold that it does, and for this reason consider the "disciplinary procedure" the Scriptural method of dealing with the evil of the lodge. By this the testimony of the Word against the ungodliness of the lodge is kept clear and decisive, while the "educative method" must necessarily tend to break down this testimony and weaken the Church in its battle against its dangerous opponent.

The lodge member who is so readily accepted will, for that very fact, be slower to recognize the evils of secret societies. Those without the Church will immediately consider this practice a concession made to them and be led to condemn as narrow and bigoted those Lutherans who debar members of secret societies. The admonition of a faithful Lutheran pastor is often met with the careless, "If you object to my belonging to a lodge, I know a Lutheran Church that will gladly receive me." How can we successfully warn the young against this danger that threatens their spiritual life, if they know full well that even members of the church council belong to secret orders.

We fear that this method has already materially influenced some of those synods who, according to Prof. Gerberding, "have officially declared themselves as opposed to oathbound secret societies." Not long ago, the Philadelphia ministerium (General Council) adopted an amendment to the bylaws which forbids the ministers of that body to join any secret society. The Milwaukee Journal tells of this and then continues: "At the same time this amendment had the effect, according to Dr. C. M. Jacobs, of taking the sting out of the original bylaw which condemned all secret societies as anti-Christian, thereby barring from membership therein the members of the congregations as well as the ministers. . . ." Dr. J. E. Whitaker, Philadelphia ministerium, said that they had no idea of placing secret societies under the ban. 'We are not judging their merits', he said, 'but simply their expediency for the clergy. When a priest takes the vow against marriage, does that cast a slur upon marriage? No. We are not criticizing secret societies, but speaking of their advisability for our ministers.'

The Rev. Frederick E. Cooper, Lake Park Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, is quoted as follows: "Some of the members of my congregation belong to secret societies, and some do not. The relation of the minister should be alike toward all members of the congregation, so there is a rule of long standing that the minister should not belong to secret orders."

Not a word of testimony against the lodge in these interviews; invitation rather than condemnation;—the direct and, we believe, inevitable result of the “educative method.”
J. B.

CHRISTENDOM AT THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

When the Apostles began to preach they had as bearers Jews and Greeks. The Jews soon placed themselves beyond the sphere of Christian activity by their uncompromising hatred for Christ. Christianity then was for all practical purposes a Greek religion. The great scholars and workers of the first four centuries of the Christian era were Greeks, or at least they used the Greek language and were rooted in Greek civilization. The dominance of Rome, politically, did not affect this condition.

Syria, Asia Minor, Egypt, Greece, and Macedonia were the seats of Christian learning and, Christian tradition had its source in the scholarship and customs of these early Christian communities. Antioch, especially Alexandria in Egypt, Ephesus, Corinth—these were the leading centers of Christianity. It is true, Italy had become Christianized at nearly the same time and portions of North Africa, Spain, and France soon embraced the Christian faith. But by the acknowledged leaders of the Church of the East their activities were conceived to be nothing more than those of subordinates.

In the V. century affairs began to assume a different look. It seemed the Greeks were content to rest on their laurels. Their assumption of superiority began to grow offensive to the earnest workers of the western wing of the Christian Church. Jealously guarding against anything which would indicate that the western daughter had reached her majority, the Greeks judged everything by the writings they had and by the practice they had developed.

The estrangement grew rapidly. Every century saw the gulf between the two parties widen. It was impossible to bridge this gulf after the West had permitted Rome and the pope to assume the headship over all others, for now all attempts at reunion had to be made on the terms of Rome and that meant subordination to Rome. The Greek churches could not think of that. In 1054 the Great Schism was the result. The parties mutually put each other under the ban.

The Greeks had at this time begun to win for themselves the loyal allegiance of Russia. At the time of the Reformation the Russian church was numerically the strongest member of the Greek family. Added to the old Greek field it represented a fair half of the Christian world. And the whole of this was virtually outside the sphere of influence of the Reformation. The few attempts to interest the Greek

church in the Reformation which were made in the century of the Reformation and which have been going on ever since at intervals, have led to nothing definite. Here and there an individual has been won but the Greek church as such always regarded the Reformation as another one of those western innovations which could not have anything to interest the most ancient and orthodox church of all Christendom. The field of the Reformation was cut in half by this condition.

The Christian West, however, had still other and more aggressive foes to contend with. Mohammedanism had become a world-power, at first under the Arabs, later under the Turks. The Arabs overran the whole of North Africa. This had once been a Christian stronghold; it was now a total loss. They did not stop at Gibraltar but crossed over and conquered Spain, even crossing the Pyrenees. There is no telling what would have happened to the rest of Christendom if the Christians under Charles Martel, the Frank, had not thrown back the invader at Tours in 732. But as it was, the enemy continued to hold Spain for more than seven centuries.

In the meantime the whole of Germany and the Scandinavian North was being converted to Christianity, making all of Europe Christian. But it seemed that what was being won, or had been won, at one extremity of the continent, had to be lost at the other. The Turk, converted to Mohammedanism, proved to be its most aggressive champion. Mohammedanism was but slightly checked, if at all, by the Crusades. After these had subsided the Turk began to press steadily forward; he came into Europe in 1338; in 1453 he captured the capital of the eastern world, Constantinople. For the next hundred years none was found to stop his progress. The whole South-East of Europe belonged to him up to the shores of the Adriatic. Greece, Servia, Roumania, great portions of Austria-Hungary, and portions of modern Russia were under his sway.

He was not stopped until he had reached the very walls of Vienna in 1529 and was on the point of capturing that city. As it was, he still held the whole of the Balkans. That cut off still another field for the Reformation to exert its influence.

It took Spain nearly eight centuries to throw off the Mohammedan yoke. It was not fully accomplished in a political sense until the closing years of the XV century. There still remained in Spain so many Moors and Jews that throughout the Reformation Spain had so many internal affairs to straighten out that it had little time to devote to doctrinal truth.

It will be seen that the Reformation had a comparatively small field in which to work. Germany and the Netherlands were, properly speaking, the only countries where the Reformation had a chance. Though Italy, France, England, and Scandinavia—

all that remained of Christendom—might have entered into its blessings more fully if there had not been other factors.

France and England were at this time the strongest monarchies. Their strength lay in the great power which was concentrated in their rulers. These rulers were loath to admit any discussion into their domains which threatened to disturb the existing conditions. As the Reformation did disturb existing conditions very materially, in that it led to a readjustment of the vast properties of the Roman church and curtailed the power which Romanist bishops and dignitaries exercised, very often in agreement with the crown to mutual advantage,—it was not welcome in France and England and had much to overcome.

Italy was so entirely what papal domination had made it that this otherwise promising field could easily be kept from reaching out for the freedom which the Reformation offered.

Scandinavia did become "reformed" very early. But politically it was still in its infancy; it did not make its influence felt until the Reformation had run its course.

Even in the German Empire the desire to be free of Rome was throttled by the heavy hand of the Hapsburg rulers. Southern Germany and all of Austria and Bohemia, though at one time seemingly of one mind in freeing themselves of Rome, was gradually forced back into the old dependence and to this day occasional efforts to find relief meet many difficulties.

H. K. M.

THE PROMISES ARE SECURE

A man crossed the Mississippi River on the ice, and fearing it too thin, began to crawl over on his hands and knees in great terror, but just as he gained the opposite shore, all tired out, another man drove past him gaily sitting upon a sled loaded with pig iron. And for all the world, that is just the way most of us Christians go up to the heavenly Canaan, trembling at every step lest the promises shall break under our feet, when really they are secure enough for us to hold up our heads and sing with confidence as we march to the better land.—Selected.

What Is The Bible?

"To this stupendous question there is but one equally stupendous answer. It is the written word of God. It is God speaking to men individually and collectively, through the instrumentality of other men, especially inspired for the purpose. It is the authoritative revelation from God of supernatural things and things of God and of eternity. It is the one fountain of truth. It is far above the word of any man or men. It is free to all and addressed to all. It is the greatest

treasure the world possesses. It is folly to neglect it, and a crime to despise it! Eternal life is the reward for accepting it, and eternal death the penalty for rejecting it."

This significant statement in an English daily ought to be passed on from land to land, from city to city, from home to home, lest the world forget the blessings of an open Bible—the Bible restored to such four hundred years ago.—Northern Lutheran.

A PRECIOUS TREASURE.

A young man who had long been kept to his bed with a diseased limb, and was near dissolution, was attended by a friend, who requested that the wound might be uncovered. The wasted member was exposed. "There," said the young invalid, "there it is, and a precious treasure it has been to me; it saved me from the folly and vanity of youth; it made me cleave to God as my only abiding portion, and to eternal glory as my only hope; and I think it has now brought me very near my Father's house."

GOD SAVE OUR NATIVE LAND

God save our native land
From every hand
In this sad day.
May every strife soon cease;
Grant an eternal peace,
And our weak faith increase,
Great God, we pray.

Our institutions bless,
And give us steadfastness
From day to day.
Give our officials light,
And guide them in the right,
Protect them by Thy might,
Great God, our Stay.

Keep Thy dear Church and State
Completely separate
In this great hour.
Bless all that preach Thy name;
Bless those that laws must frame;
Thy righteous cause give fame,
Great God of power.

Lord, take us home at last;
Forgive our evil past,
Good Lord of love.
May we Thy servants be
In all eternity.
We ask it, Christ, through Thee,
Great God above.

—FRANK FRAZIER, in The Lutheran Witness

DEDICATION AT OCONOMOWOC

On the second Sun. in Lent, March 4th, St. Paul's Lutheran Congregation of Oconomowoc dedicated its newly erected church building to the services of the Triune God. The old church could not hold the numbers which thronged thither to take part in the farewell service. The venerable Rev. F. Guenther,

last named in English—preached the Word. A mass choir (Oconomowoc, Watertown, Jefferson) under the direction of Mr. H. A. Jaeger rendered appropriate music.

For the many guests two meals were served in the spacious basement.

The accompanying illustration will give some idea



St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Oconomowoc, Wis.

under whom almost 40 years ago the old church had been completed, delivered the farewell address. The procession to the new church, the formal opening of the doors, and the dedication were conducted according to the usual rites observed on such occasions.

Three services were held, in which the honorable president of the synod, the Rev. G. E. Bergemann, the Rev. Herm. Gieschen, and the Rev. L. Kirst—the

of the exterior of the building, whose grandeur is excelled by the beauty of the interior finishings, the design and execution of the whole being worthy of the purpose of the building.

May God bless this house which was erected in honor of His name, and may the true glory of it never grow dim, the pure Word of God and His comforting Gospel.
—JOHN MEYER.

"I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE."

Wanderer, groping in the dark
 Searching keenly for a mark,
 Halting, trembling—find'st thou none?
 Here's a track, the only one,
 Hear the voice of Jesus say,
 Follow Me, "I AM THE WAY!"

Burdened, bound, entangled heart
 Longing for "the better part,"
 Fretting 'neath sin's galling chain,
 Working to escape in vain—
 Sweetly Jesus speaks to thee,
 "I AM THE TRUTH!"—the truth makes free.

Dead in trespasses and sin,
 Wouldst thou life anew begin?
 See by faith, on Calvary's tree,
 Jesus dying there for thee;
 Dies, thus ending Satan's strife!
 Look and live—"I AM THE LIFE!"

Blessed Jesus! Holy One!
 Power belongs to Thee alone;
 Thou the Way, the Truth, the Life;
 Give, Oh give the dying life!
 Give the bond-slaves liberty,
 Draw the wanderers after Thee;
 So shall praise to Thee be given,
 Here on earth and soon in heaven.—Ex.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Not Bigotry Either

"In Gothenburg, Sweden, there is a Roman Catholic church whose priest has recently been reported to the ecclesiastical authorities of the country for violating the laws of the land. A man of the Lutheran faith was married by the priest to a Catholic woman, but in accordance with the rules of the Catholic Church the man was compelled to allow the children, if any, to be brought up in the faith of the mother. In Sweden, there is a law forbidding this kind of propaganda. Such transactions are common in our country where Protestants do not seem to know why they are what they are. Even so-called Lutherans who should know better, but whose faith is so feeble as not to be able to stand on its own feet allow themselves to be seduced and endanger their soul's salvation.—Lutheran.

Religions of World

The comparative religious strength of the world is given in the following figures: Israelites, 13,000,000; Shintoists, 25,000,000; Buddhists, 130,000,000; Polytheists, 160,000,000; Hindus, 218,000,000; Mohammedans, 220,000,000; Confucianists and Taoists, 300,000,000; others, 10,000,000; Christians, 558,000,000. The Christians are divided into Roman Catholics, 272; Greek Catholics, 106; Protestants, 172; others, 10; millions each. The whole population of the earth is estimated at 1,634 millions.—Lutheran Standard.

A Typically American Church

A Lutheran minister preached in America and died on American soil eight months before the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock. Among the earliest settlers in a number of the thirteen states were Lutherans, who furnished many Revolutionary soldiers, at least one eminent general and the first speaker of the House of Representatives. Historical Lutheranism is American, coming down from Colonial times. Americans are an amalgamation of many nations; so is the Lutheran church, which today, while making the language of the country prominent, preaches the faith of Luther in the land of Washington in at least 17 languages.—Lutheran Herald.

Remarkable Growth Shown by Comparative Figures

The church has shown a remarkable growth from year to year. This is especially evident when the period of years is contrasted; thus 30 years ago there were 58 Lutheran synods, 3,908 ministers, 6,783 congregations, 906,098 communicants. Today they report 65 district synods, 9,831 ministers, 15,077 congregations, 2,445,276 adult confirmed members. This shows a 30-year gain of 7 synods, 5,923 ministers, 8,294 congregations, 1,539,177 communicants. In the number of ministers the gain has been almost 100 per cent. In the number of congregations, a gain of over 100 per cent, and in communicants the gain has been nearly 150 per cent. In the valuation of church property and particularly in the contributions for missions and benevolence, equally striking gains have been made.—Lutheran Publicity Bureau.

THE OLD WALDENSIAN CHURCH

This body of Christians having its origin at Lyons, in France, in the twelfth century, has had its home chiefly in the Cottian Alps of Italy. These Christians have the oldest Protestant organization in the world, and were never brought under the power of the Roman Catholic church.

Their work has spread, and they have a church in Rome, erected by a wealthy American woman, built on the very spot where their martyred pastor, Pascale, was burned at the stake. They now have 270 organized churches in Italy, Sicily and Egypt, with 150 official workers of all classes. Their missionaries have crossed the ocean and preached the gospel in Africa; they have colonies in South America with some 8,000 members gathered in seven churches; they have missionaries also among the Italians in America. The home church has only sixteen pastors, with a membership of 13,000. The present war has greatly interfered with the work of this consecrated body, and contributions in the way of pecuniary aid and prayer are greatly needed.

—The Christian Workers' Magazine.

THE NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN

Edited by a committee under authority of the Ev. Luth. Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and other States, and published biweekly by Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wis.

Address all communications concerning the editorial department to Rev. John Jenny, 637 Mitchell St., Milwaukee, Wis.

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Send all business correspondence, remittances, etc., to Northwestern Publishing House, 263 Fourth St., Milwaukee, Wis. Subscription Price: \$1.00 per year in advance.