

# 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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## INCARNATION

“Herr Jesu Christ, Dein Kripplein ist  
Mein Paradies, da meine Seele weidet.”

— Gerhard.

O Lord of All,  
Thy manger small  
Delights my soul with beams of Eden's portals.  
The Word doth grace  
This lowly place,  
The mighty God garbed in the flesh of mortals.

To wind and wave  
Commands He gave,  
Who now assumes a servant's lowly meekness.  
To earthly sod  
The Son of God  
Descends to share our poverty and weakness.

Thou Highest Good  
Dost lift our blood  
High to Thy throne in lofty exaltation.  
Eternal Might,  
Thou dost unite  
With mortal men in brotherhood's equation.

What can he do  
Who would pursue  
And wound our souls with fiendish venom galling?  
Though Adams fall  
He doth recall  
And taunt us with our guilt and sin appalling?

Be silent, Foe!  
My Friend, I know,  
My flesh and blood now dwells in Heaven glorious.  
What thou hast slain  
He raised again,  
The Son of Jacob, Conqueror victorious!

His grace and light  
Make all things bright.  
What is my loss compared with wealth supernal?  
My Fount of Joy  
Doth hell destroy;  
Immanuel hath crushed the Foe infernal.

Then, Christian true,  
Take courage new,  
And let no earth-born woe or sorrow move thee.  
Since reconciled  
Through God's dear Child  
Most tenderly His Father-heart doth love thee.

Translated from the German.

Anna Hoppe.

## THE GIFT OF GOD

“The Gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord”  
Romans 6:23 — Luke 1:26 — 2, 20

Christmas-time is a time of giving gifts to one another. It has its origin in the Great Gift that God gave to man almost 2,000 years ago. All of man's gifts should only be faint reflections of God's Great Gift. They should only be reminders of it. As we appreciate, recognize, the Gift of God will we be giving our gifts aright, and receiving our gifts aright. Without that Great Gift all of our gifts are empty shells no matter what they may be; for things only have value as they receive it from the one standard of value: Christ Jesus: **of** Whom, and **through** Whom, and **to** Whom are all things (Rom. 11:36). This being true it is fitting that we consider God's Great Gift, so that we may live and give aright. So that we may not spend our time, money, and talents building in “wood, hay and stubble,” which will not stand the test; but to “gold, silver, and precious stones” which will endure forever (1 Cor. 3:12).

“The **Gift** of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” So it is a **gift**. Now, a **gift** is not something that we have worked for or earned. It is not something we deserve. A **gift**, as the word indicates is “**given**,” not for value received, but free. The giver is moved not because of something without him, perhaps in the receiver, but because of something within him: **love**. So it is with this **gift** that God speaks of.

Rev. C. Buenger Jan 27  
65 N Ridge



For it is the Gift of God. "The Gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Men could never have given this Gift. For "None of them can by any means redeem his brother" (Ps. 49:7). Man would never have thought of giving such a Gift, for our natural man is a man of law, though he knows he has broken that law himself. It took God to give this Gift. "For God so loved the world (you and me, and all mankind) that He gave His only-begotten Son" (Jh. 3:16).

If some one that loved you most dearly sent you a gift this day, — supposing a most wonderful gift, — yet it would pale into insignificance over against this Gift of God. Your friend's gift of love would be shining only by reflected light of the great Gift of God. It is only a shadow of it.

God, mind you, God is sending you a gift. God is giving you and me another opportunity in this blessed Christmas-tide to get a deeper appreciation of this gift of His. God, because of His unexplainable love for us gives a gift. It is similar to a king giving a great gift of a million dollars to a rebel. It seems impossible. It seems too good to be true. It is so different than we would do, for man expects to rule, and act by law, but God by love.

Now, what is this Gift of God: It "is eternal life" through Jesus Christ our Lord." Eternal life, that finally summarizes that which every man is looking for. No one wants to die. No one wants to grow old. No one likes to think of the time when this life will end. All this only confirms: we are all looking for eternal life. We want to live forever. Even inanimate creation writhes and struggles at death. We are all Ponce de Leons by nature, going about looking for the fountain of youth. Why this great desire to have operations successful? Why this attempt to prolong life? Why this crime of doctors and nurses not to tell the patients he is to die? Not willing to face the facts. They would sooner believe a delusion, a lie, than to know that this life has an end, — is not eternal.

Why this desire, and why is it not realized? Is God mocking man? Does He find pleasure in torture? God forbid such a thought even. For saith He not in our text He has given a gift, and that gift is eternal life? Certainly! But why this tragedy in every human life by nature? Hear the answer: "The day that thou eatest thereof thou (man) shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). No eternal life. That is not restricted to the body, but includes it also. Ever since, man is afraid of death, if he does not know and believe in the Gift of God, which is eternal life again through Jesus Christ our Lord. Because of God's great Mercy, Love, He at the very time that man doomed himself to death spiritually and physically, — the very time he forfeited his God-given eternal life in the Garden of Eden, God promised the gift of

eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. He said it in these words: "I (God) will put enmity between thee (devil) and the woman, between thy seed and her seed, it (the woman's seed, Christ) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his (Christ's) heel (suffering)," Gen. 3:15. God so loved (us) that He gave us a Christmas Gift, and that Gift was "in Jesus Christ our Lord." That Gift is eternal life through Him.

Then the question of the rich young ruler which is upon every lip: "What must I do to inherit eternal life" (Matt. 19:16) is answered. And answered correctly. Answered so that all may know. Recorded for us, for "When the fulness of time (according to God's promise and plan of the gift) was come, God sent forth His Son (the Gift of God), born of a woman, (the reason we celebrate Christmas) born under the law, (Why?) that He might redeem them that were under the law (and curse for breaking it: death spiritually and bodily); that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4-5).

That is why God proclaims through the angel at Bethlehem: Fear not, for behold, I proclaim unto you good tidings (news) of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior (from eternal death) which is Christ (Greek for Old Testament Messiah) the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

That is the sole reason why God through John says of the Gospel of John and of the Scripture as a whole: "These things are written (why?) that ye might believe, (what?) that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and believing might have life (God-given, eternal) in His Name" (Jh. 20:31).

That is why God says in His little Bible, as Luther calls it: "God so loved the world (you and me) that He gave His only-begotten Son, (why?) that all who believe on Him might not perish, but have eternal life" (Jh. 3:16).

Only in that spirit will the words of Jh. 3:5 mean anything to you: "Ye must be born again." "Born again" a new birth, implies too a new life. Out of "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1) into new life; and since given by an eternal God, eternal.

The Gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is through Christ. The "Son" was put, born under the law (Gal. 4:4). "Unto you is born this day a Savior." His birth, life, is our life, for it was not lived for Himself. He had eternal life from eternity, but He made Himself of no reputation, (as we are by nature, sinners) that we might have a reputation before God. Now, we, trusting in His birth for us, His life lived for us, we have what He accomplished (Phil. 2:7; Jh. 19:30).

That is exactly what is expressed in Jesus' prayer for us before the Father (Jh. 17:3). "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Again



Jesus says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one cometh to the Father but through Me" (Jh. 14: 6). Again: "I am the resurrection and the life, whosoever believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (Jh. 11: 25-26). "He that believeth on the Son hath, (now) great joy over the Gift of God" (Lu. 2: 10). **Eternal life** (Jh. 6: 47).

In this unbelieving age where all gifts are valued but the one great Gift of God: Jesus, "would ye also go away?" Jesus asks. "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (Jh. 6: 68). This gift conquered death: "Death where is thy sting?" (1 Cor. 15: 55). Unwrap the gift by "searching the Scriptures, for therein ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me" the Gift of God (Jh. 5: 39).

W. F. B.

### COMMENTS

**Filling the Church** A prominent local minister vied with a well known Y. M. C. A. man in dance competition, Thursday night, at a party given by the young married folks of Plymouth Congregational Church.

Perhaps to show his congregation the benefits obtained from foreign travel, Dr. Edwin W. Bishop entertained with an Oriental number. The number, it is stated, was well received, although few in the audience knew it was the pastor of the church, as he was masked.

The next number was a graceful interpretative exposition by Trygve Narvesen, also masked. Mr. Narvesen scattered flowers as he "floated" about the room. A third dance, a clog number, was given by Bert Cooper.

The above clipping is from the State Journal, Lansing. Truly, there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, but it is a dangerous step to take. Such performances are anything but character building. The venerable Doctor ought to know that. But then, you've got to entertain the people or they'll think the Church is dull. However, in the art of entertaining Dr. Bishop could learn much from the famous Drs. Guthrie and Stidger. As to the methods of attracting people to his church. Dr. Bishop is in step with the rest, as the sermon topics he just finished preaching on show: "The League of Nations," "The War Debt," "The War Guilt." That reminds me of what an editor of a sectarian magazine wrote: "Filling the Church."

"In the first place, get a pastor who has a fertile imagination. Have him advertise that a Sunday evening service will be featured by dancing on the platform. Moreover, let it be understood distinctly that the dancers will be barefoot — "Feetured." It will not be necessary to tell the folks to come early in order to get a seat — they will be there. Then, when all things are ready, dim the lights, start the music, bring on the barefoot dancers, the "feeture" of the evening, and proceed with the religious service. It will work. It has worked. The preacher got his crowd, but what

the crowd got is not a subject for debate. It got exactly what it went for, and what it desired. But it is a sure way to get a congregation. This course is recounted here for the sake of preachers who have been looking into empty pews. It is a fine way to get a crowd, provided the crowd is the thing and the only thing the preacher wants. If he wants something better than a crowd, we advise him to stick to his religion."

I wonder if Dr. Bishop ever read that. K.

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**Jew and Gentile** Jew and Gentile recently met in joint "worship" at Kenosha, Wis., the members of Beth Hillel Temple accepting the invitation of the Park Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church. Rabbi Julius Rappaport delivered the address. Mr. Edward Burns Martin, the pastor of the church in question, had previously addressed the Council of Jewish Women. According to the papers, the pastor of the First Congregational Church will soon speak to the congregation of Rabbi Rappaport.

In the Kenosha Evening News, Dr. Martin explains:

We Christians talk so much of good will among men, particularly at the Christmas season. Too frequently our acts belie our words. We show little of that good fellowship we preach, but illustrate rather those prejudices and partisanship which our very faith protests.

The editor of the Evening News calls this event "a significant incident in the religious life of Kenosha" and considers it "a hopeful sign when churches of different faiths show willingness to meet on common ground."

Too frequent in the past people of different beliefs have been too ready to emphasize their differences rather than to recognize that they are all striving towards a common goal — namely, the betterment of the lives of the people of their congregations.

Surely, there are many things that we have in common. Descended from Adam and Eve, we share with each other the life of our race, such as it is on earth. In a community we are dependend on each other, and the conduct of one affects the other. We all desire that the relations between our fellow-citizens and us be as agreeable as possible. It will be noted that the "good fellowship" of Dr. Martin, Rabbi Rappaport's "underlying unity of humanity," and the editor's "common goal, the betterment of the lives of the people of their congregation," extend no further than to the things that are purely human. These things, however, would require neither church nor temple.

We are willing to go a step further, there are two other vital interests that we have in common. Paul states these briefly in Romans three: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be



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a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past."

Both, Jew and Gentile, are damned on account of their sins, and both are saved by the suffering and death of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Right here, however, our ways part. Old Simeon says: "Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign that shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

By the grace of God, the Christian knows, confesses and worships, Jesus Christ as the Son of God incarnate and the Redeemer of the world by His suffering and death upon the Cross, declaring in the name of God, "He that believeth not shall be damned"; and the Jew denies and rejects his Redeemer, holding that we are blaspheming God when we confess Christ the Son of God.

The editor of the Evening News is mistaken when he, advocating a further exchange of pulpits, says: "It is clearly impossible for either to understand the other without having a chance to see both viewpoints." The point of difference has long been established and is definitely known by every true Christian and by every Jew.

No, we cannot join the editor in his praise of these "leaders." A minister who is able to welcome a preaching rabbi as a "brother beloved" is no more a minister of Jesus Christ; and a congregation that follows such a leader is surrendering its Lord into the hands of his enemies.

Does this pastor and his people still believe in Christ? If they do, common honesty would have demanded that they tell their visitors that all are lost who reject Christ. If they do not, they should not assume the name Christian, which belongs properly only to those who believe in Jesus Christ the Redeemer.

Good fellowship, love? Here is a man who had them, Paul. He says: "I say the truth in Christ, I

lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." And this man who is willing to perish for his kinsmen preaches repentance to them and exhorts them to save their souls by accepting Christ as their Redeemer, lest they perish; and every one who knows and loves Christ and who loves the Jews will do likewise. J. B.

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**Emphatically** Thanks are due to the American Israelite for calling attention to "the fact that of all the orthodox Christian sects, the Lutherans and the Baptists are the strongest advocates of the absolute severance of church and state." Whether in view of the history of the Lutheran state churches in Europe, the Lutherans would join the Baptists in appreciation of this friendly Jewish compliment, may be a matter for further inquiry. —The Baptist.

Without wasting any words in explanation, we say emphatically the American Israelite is right as far as its statement of our position is concerned. J. B.

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**What Is the Soul** Educational economy is coming up for air. Miscellaneous herds of students have been rushing into the colleges and universities, drawn by every lure from the love of learning to the love of pleasure. In the rush the university has lost its bearings if not its soul. But a new reckoning is at hand. There is a tendency to restore scholarship to the school and to eliminate the slothful, the defective and the mercenary, and to organize education for life. —The Baptist.

Fine, as far as it goes; but, what is the soul of a university? And what is life? Our Christian schools of higher learning have, by the grace of God, retained their balance and kept their soul. And they know what life is and are, consequently, able to educate for life. J. B.

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**The January Meeting** One of the first events in the life of our congregations as we enter upon the year 1927 will be the January meeting, for some congregations practically the only regular meeting in the year, for others at least easily the most important.

Usually this is the meeting in which the officers of the church are elected. Such an election is by no means a new thing in the church. The Bible tells us of one held in the distant past soon after Pentecost.

Then the twelve called the multitude of disciples unto them and said, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables.

Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. Acts 6.

So far the apostles had done about everything that had to be done in the first church and so had been bur-



dened also with the task of receiving the offerings of the faithful and distributing them to those who were in need.

This work had taken up much of their time, and, besides, this "daily ministration" had of necessity not been fully satisfactory, for there was complaint that some of the widows had been overlooked.

So it was thought best for the church to relieve the apostles of such work, in order to give them more time for preaching and for prayer, and to entrust this ministration to other men to be chosen by the congregation.

Yes, by the congregation. The apostles did not by virtue of their office appoint the seven. They considered this a **matter for the congregation**. The multitude of disciples was called to the apostles, **and it came**, and, after having the proposition placed before it, elected the seven deacons.

These were to be the qualifications of the men who were to serve the church as deacons: First, they were to be men of honest report, men of generally acknowledged integrity of character.

Second, they were to be men full of the Holy Ghost, that is, men sincere in their faith, fervent in their love for the Lord and for His Church, holy in their conversation and gifted with a good spiritual understanding.

Third, they were to be men of wisdom, men who knew the true purpose of the church and the right means to achieve this purpose, men of sound judgment and of well-balanced temperament.

We do not want to enter into details. Our purpose was to attract your attention to the story of that meeting in the hope that you will look for it in Acts six, read it and ponder on it awhile. Perhaps this story will show you how important your January meeting would be even if the annual election would be the only business transacted. Perhaps it will prevent you from slighting the Lord's business by staying at home in spite of the call that comes to you just as the call of the apostles came to the disciples of that day.

But the annual election is usually not the only business transacted. Your church officers will want to report to you on their ministration. The needs and problems of your congregation will be discussed. Perhaps decisions of great importance will have to be made. There may be a question of doctrine or of Christian discipline. And all of this is the Lord's business, that is to serve His saving Gospel. To you He has entrusted this His business, for you are His disciple. You would not fail Him, would you? Then, come; and come with a heart of love for the Lord and for His church to serve Him with the gifts He has bestowed upon you for that very service.

However, your meeting has not to do only with your local affairs. The Lord has called you to His

service also in a far wider field. United with the brethren in our Synod, you are engaged in building the Kingdom far and near. There should be time in every meeting of a congregation to hear and discuss reports on our institutions and our missions. The problems and needs of our synod should become the concern of every congregation and of every Christian in the congregation. The matter of a deficit in the synodical treasury should be felt as keenly as a deficit in the treasury of the congregation is felt, and every congregation should ask itself, Am I also at fault? and should take steps to do its share toward covering the deficit and increasing its contributions in the future.

A congregation that really wants to take care of the Lord's business properly will have to keep that business before its members constantly. Naturally, the pastor will do all he can in this direction, but it will speedily be found that he will require assistance. Within the congregation the members of the council will aid him in his work, and from without our synodical papers, the "Gemeindeblatt," the "Northwestern Lutheran," the "Junior Northwestern" and the "Kinderfreude." Let every congregation in our synod devote some time in the January meeting to find an answer to the question, How can we introduce at least one synodical paper into every home in the congregation?

Perhaps we should not introduce this subject here, but the impulse is too strong to be repressed. We have a particular interest in your first meeting in 1927. We are looking forward to it with the confident hope that every congregation which has not yet satisfactorily completed its work will accord the collection for the new seminary and for the liquidation of our debts a prominent place in its deliberations.

It still belongs under the heading of "unfinished business." It is our hope and prayer that this will be the last year that it will have to be so listed.

May January first, 1928, find us with a new seminary under construction and a synodical treasury with a goodly credit balance.

May the Lord's blessing rest upon our January meeting!

J. B.

### COMFORT AND JOY

"It is indeed right that we celebrate the grace and compassion of our God with so glorious a festival, that this article of the creed: 'I believe in Jesus Christ, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,' be not only confessed by all Christendom, but that all sad and troubled souls may be cheered by it, and strengthened against the devil and every possible misfortune. We diligently preach and urge this article, in order that we may be raised above doubt, and may be certain, yea, ever more certain, that God has sent His Son into the world, that He was made man, and that He was



really born of a virgin. We celebrate this festival for the great benefit it brings; for if God had been hostile to us, He would never have taken poor, wretched human nature upon Himself; but now He has become such a creature, and is true man. We learn that the Child born at Bethlehem is born for us and is ours. He is born, not for His mother only, the Virgin Mary, nor for His brothers and relatives alone, much less for God in heaven, who needed not His birth, but for men upon this earth. This Child is as near to us as our body and soul. Oh, blessed, and a hundred times blessed, is the man who in this wisdom is well taught and grounded. If we get no joy nor comfort from it, either we believe not, or our faith is mean and weak. We keep this feast and preach this Gospel that all may learn it and be assured of it, that our work may not be in vain, but that it may bring to all comfort and joy." — Dr. Martin Luther.

### THE PLACE WHERE JESUS WAS BORN

Bethlehem is perhaps the oldest town in Palestine, having been in existence already at the time of the patriarch Jacob. It has never had more than about three thousand inhabitants, its present population. Nor is there any likelihood that it will ever grow to any extent, for it is situated in a rocky, mountainous country which is not favorable for agriculture nor for commerce. An insignificant town indeed, and yet within its bounds the most wonderful, the most important event in the history of the world occurred.

"O little town of Bethlehem!  
How still we see thee lie;  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight."

\* \* \*

"Bethlehem's story, eternally true —  
Old as the mountains, and yet ever new!"  
— Lutheran Standard.

### THE CHRISTMAS GIFT

Again that day of gifts is at hand. Everything has been thinking of friends and what to give them for Christmas. Gifts are given because of love and courtesy. Every gift, however, ought to be an expression of regard and esteem. Gifts of courtesy have not the thrill for either the giver or the recipient that gifts of esteem have.

In the mad rush for presents and preparation for the great day, one is apt to forget the significance of these presents and gifts, and regards them as deeds of courtesy, as a duty rather than privilege. The pleasure

of giving and receiving can be appreciated only, as we appreciate the Christmas gift, the Babe in the manger.

Isaiah, the prophet of the Triune God, and inspired of God, saw the manger in Bethlehem and the gift it contained. His one great theme was and then continued to be, the Savior. Seeing the Babe, he exclaims, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." He sees the gift and lives in this. He does not even tell us who the donor is. Even the angels proclaiming his birth, speak only of the gift and say, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Jesus tells us that the gift is from the Father. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." The gift that Isaiah saw, was a gift of love, as all of God's gifts are. This gift, however, is unique in that it is the greatest expression of love. For God is love.

God is infinite and so also is His love. Men have made many attempts to fathom this love, but have never succeeded. Paul, inspired of God, tried to apprehend its depth and boundless character, Romans 8:38-39. Paul would have us and all believers to apprehend "what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." Eph. 3:18-19. Christ also measured this love. "God so loved the world." Isaiah tells us that He loved us so much that "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." His love goes even farther. He has gone to prepare a place for us and has promised to come again and receive us unto Him. He loved us unto the end.

The climax of the Christmas love presents itself on Calvary. As we pass through the garden of agony and stand at the foot of the cross, we really see the greatness of the Christmas gift. Only as we know and appreciate this love do we find reason for Christmas gifts.

The Christmas gift then is, God's great love for us, made manifest to us, in the birth of Christ and His life and death. Christmas gifts are gifts only as they are given in the spirit of love. Only, as the love of God, "which passeth all understanding," is felt in our hearts, can our gifts be termed as Christmas gifts. The value of Christmas gifts depends on the appreciation of the Christmas Gift. — A. F. M.

### GOD WITHIN US

Far in East the dawn is glowing, grey old times becoming young; from Light's radiant fountain flowing, streaks of glory bright are flung; ancient yearnings, holy adumbration, finding Love's divine transfiguration.

Down at least to earth descending comes Heav'n's own all-blessed Child; breezes blown from pure skies bending, breathe round earth a music mild: breathing, fan to new eternal splendor life's long hidden spark in brighter wonder.

From deep vaults illumined never, springs new life in leaf and bud; since he, bringing peace forever, plunged



into life's foaming flood; now his hands are stretched forth and pressing, lovingly to all who ask his blessing.

Let his glances, mild and gracious, deeply sink into the soul; and his joy eternal, precious, over thee shall ever roll; all hearts and thought, with all their sense, and willing shall then begin to joy in love's fulfilling.

Boldly seize those hands appealing, by his radiant fact he won; turn to him with all thy feeling, like the flower toward the sun; if but to him thou turn'st, the whole heart showing, he'll prove thy faithful bride, his heart bestowing.

New power divine to us is given, Godhead which us oft dismayed; from south to north, the germs of Heaven divinely waked, are full displayed; so let us now, in God's own garden growing, wait faithful till each bud's eternal blowing. — Translated from Novalis.

### THE BIRTHDAY OF THE KING

Christmas is the birthday of the greatest King who ever lived. Caesar Augustus, mentioned in the Christmas gospel, who ruled over the whole then known world, was nothing compared to the King whose birth we celebrate on Christmas day. Of this King it is written: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom." The greatest earthly monarch is compelled, without his knowing it, to help fulfil the ancient prophecy that this King should be born in Bethlehem of Judea. Heaven itself is stirred by the birth of this little King. An angel announced his birth and a multitude of the heavenly host sang his praises. This King is greater far than the angels. "When He bringeth the First begotten into the world He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him. Yes, this King is God over all blessed forever. He is the Son whom the Father hath appointed heir over all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, when He had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

"There's a song in the air!

There's a star in the sky!

There's a mother's deep prayer

And a baby's low cry!

And the star rains its fire while the Beautiful sing,

For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King.

"There's a tumult of joy

O'er the wonderful birth,

For the virgin's sweet boy

Is the Lord of the earth.

Ay! the star rains its fire and the Beautiful sing,

For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King.

"In the light of that star

Lie the ages impearled;

And that song from afar

Has swept over the world.

Every hearth is aflame, and the Beautiful sing  
In the homes of the nations that Jesus is King.

"We rejoice in the light,

And we echo the song

That comes down through the night

From the heavenly throng.

Ay! we shout to the holy evangel they bring,

And we greet in His manger our Savior and King."

— Lutheran Standard.

### FITTING MESSAGE FOR THE CLOSING YEAR

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh." (Matt. 25:12.)

No one reading the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of St. Matthew can get away from the conviction that our Lord intended that all his children should be looking forward to his second coming.

Those chapters are a standing protest against that type of Christianity in our day which is intensely concerned about this life, but has no vision of the things that are to come. It is a Christianity that lives in the present and for the present, and is deaf to the voice of the future. It has cut the cable between the things that lie near at hand and the things that seem afar off. It is a near-sighted Christianity, without the field-glass of prophetic vision which brings things near that to the natural eye are far off. It is an ethical Christianity far more than a Christianity of faith and hope and spiritual longing. It breathes no sigh for that new order of things when the evil forces of this world shall have spent themselves and the kingdom of God in its full glory shall be ushered in. Only things that are near are real; the things that loom large to men of apostolic instinct and vision are hidden from this age behind the mist and smoke and darkness of worldliness by which it is enveloped.

Do I really look for his coming? Am I waiting and watching for it? Does that crowning event in the world's history, that great consummation toward which the world is moving, appeal to me as a Christian? Or is it simply an elusive *ignis fatuus*, a sort of sunlit horizon, which recedes as generation after generation moves forward and disappears? Am I living under the spell of a conscious and joyous expectation of his coming, or have his words in these two great chapters fallen on ears dulled with the noises of a materialistic age, incapable of grasping the significance of his first coming?

That I may know how intimately my life and destiny are bound up with Christ's second coming, how transcendent in significance it is, and how necessary it is for me to look forward to it in hope and glad expectation, to watch and be prepared for it, that it may not come upon me unawares, my Savior in graphic and repeated sentences holds it before me as the fixed star, the ultimate



goal of my heavenly longing, and clinches all he says with the words: "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh."

— The Lutheran.

### FOR THE NEW YEAR

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,  
From whence cometh my help.  
My help cometh from the Lord,  
Which made heaven and earth.  
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:  
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.  
Behold, he that keepeth Israel  
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.  
The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy  
right hand.  
The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by  
night.  
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil:  
He shall preserve thy soul.  
The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in  
from this time forth, and even for evermore.

\* \* \*

Another year is drawing to a close and will soon need to be considered as a part of the pilgrimage of life which lies behind us. Such mile stones of life as the close of a whole year are eloquent appeals to the Christian to pause for a moment, as it were, in his journey and devote a little time to most serious thought and earnest consideration.

A Christian looks backward at the end of a year and once more contemplates it as a whole and in its outstanding important features. He necessarily begins with himself and asks, what has the year brought me for my lasting good? But "no man liveth unto himself", so immediately other considerations enter and other questions suggest themselves such as, What power for good has my life been as lived together with others, in the family, at my work, in my church, in my synod? Perhaps some of the good resolutions which he formed at the outset of the last year touched on these very features; but now the year is past, what results can he point to for his comfort and peace of mind? The Christian is honest and besides he knows that the good opinion of his fellowmen here avails nothing, he is to judge himself as standing before Him who gave the year and says: "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." The Christian confesses to failure and many shortcomings. He does not cast about for excuses, as environment, bad examples, the force of circumstances, and the like, but places the blame where it belongs — with himself. On closer inspection many a one finds his case to be like that of Peter (Matt. 14:28): "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee." He began with Jesus and then tried to continue alone, the result was failure. But Peter ended with Jesus; so does the Christian of to-day. When he looks back he must

confess that He was very near him in the past year — all the real good it brought was because of Jesus. He grasps the saving hand extended to him by faith, and resting in the Savior he brings the year to a blessed close.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help," that is the glad confession with which he turns from the old and enters upon the new. A blessed prospect opens to his view: he is by God's grace to walk in the new year with Him who "made heaven and earth." Obstacles and difficulties will be overcome in their very appearing, for "he will not suffer thy foot to be moved." Doubt and misgivings must vanish as the mists before the sun when he ponders on the assurance, "the Lord is thy keeper, he shall neither slumber nor sleep." Whatever the coming year may bring with its changing days, weal or woe, profit or loss, it shall bring nothing which may prove a real harm: "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil." The Lord not only can preserve his own against threatening danger, he can even let the dangers enfold us and cause us to walk safely through the midst of them; he can not only turn aside what threatens to harm us but even let us meet it and find it transformed into a blessing. Surely the pilgrim's "going out and his coming in" are safe in the care of such a wise, powerful, and gracious Keeper. And if the year should bring our last going out and coming in, that indeed were blessed for the pilgrim, blessed "even for evermore." Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God. G.

### VICTORIES OF THE SILENT MISSIONARY

Not always is there a Voice available. In cases without number the Bible has had to do its work alone, with no one to explain or expound. That would not have been commonly thought possible four hundred years ago. The Bible was not trusted to do its work alone. To-day it is released as a silent missionary, healing and teaching in all parts of the world.

The motive power that rests within the silent pages of the Book might be illustrated by a thousand stories from the history of the Open Bible. Only a few of these stories may be recounted here.

A patient in a Philippine hospital was given a Testament. He went back home, and the staff forgot about him. But the Testament was at work. Presently he was converted by its silent persuasion. Then he gave the book to others in his village. It was read with deep interest by those who could read, and a congregation composed of everyone in town was formed, so that the book might be read to all in public. Thus they could all benefit — for there was still only the one Testament in the town. There was no missionary or teacher, and the book was read by one of the citizens.

One day a stranger came to town. He carried a bag, and the people soon learned that the man was a colporteur and the bag was full of Testaments. Much to



the astonishment of the colporteur, he met an overwhelming demand for books, and his entire stock was sold out in short order. Then he was prevailed upon to take some of the leaders of the self-made congregation to the nearest missionary, where they were duly constituted as elders and the congregation was formally acknowledged.

And all this shower of blessing from one little book the size of a man's hand!

One Bible is the beginning of an endless chain. An Englishwoman advised a Chilean to read the Bible. He did so, and advised a friend to do likewise. The advice was passed on from friend to friend, and acted upon by each. Who knows where in Chile the end of that chain will be — if, indeed, it is limited to Chile.

"You will acknowledge that this is gold," said the Chilean who had first discovered the merit of the book. "Get it then, fresh from the mint. Do not be content with coins which have become defaced from long circulation."

A pocket Testament, dropped from an English warship in a Japanese harbor in 1854, was the beginning of another endless chain, reaching to the present day and beyond. A Japanese general, Murata, who was suspiciously watching the movements of the alien vessels, picked up the little book. But he could not read it. A Dutch interpreter informed him that it told about God and Christ — which only increased his perplexity.

At last he secured from China a translation of the strange book. He read and was profoundly impressed. Risking death, since the Christian religion was strictly forbidden in Japan, he and his brother came to Dr. Verbeck for baptism.

Their distinguished rank added to their influence upon others, and there are many Christians in Japan today who owe their religion to the Testament fished out of the waters of Nagasaki harbor.

The Bible entered Korea in advance of the missionary. It was in the days when signposts along the road said:

"If you meet a foreigner, kill him; he who has friendly relations with him is a traitor to his country."

So the missionary in living form was barred. But the silent missionary — even more highly charged with life, had they known it, than any flesh-and-blood foreigner — gained entry.

This came about as the result of the visit of a Korean official, Rijutei by name, to Japan. There he saw the Sermon on the Mount lettered on a scroll belonging to a high Japanese official who had become a Christian.

The immortal words opened a new world to Rijutei. He sought out the Japanese pastor of a Christian church and was baptized. Immediately he desired to know how he could carry the message to the people of Korea. He sought to put his new faith to work at once.

The way was soon found. For Rijutei was a man of no mean literary attainments, and he himself undertook

and carried through the translation of the Gospel of Saint Mark into Korean and the translation of the entire New Testament into Chino-Korean.

He addressed an earnest appeal to the churches of America to send missionaries to Korea. Missionaries had long desired to come, regardless of risk, but the American Legation requested them not to do so. Two years after Rijutei's appeal the first missionaries were allowed to enter the country. They launched their work with Rijutei's translations, and thus began one of the most remarkable epics of Christian triumph that any country has seen. — Bible Society Record.

### JEWES OF VIENNA LEAVE JUDAISM

About 12,000 Jews in Vienna renounced Judaism to accept other religions during the years 1911 to 1923, says a Jewish daily, "The Daily Jewish Courier", for September 5th.

These figures were published by Dr. Goldhammer, a statistician of Vienna. His figure was 9,550, but since this figure does not include children under seven, the correct figure is closer to 12,000, says the periodical. Of those who left Judaism twenty-five per cent became members of Lutheran churches. Seventy-five per cent were adults and belonged to the educated class.

It is not often that a Jewish periodical publishes news of the above kind. That Jews by the thousands accept Christianity we have known for some time. And we are informed that the conversions become more numerous from year to year in the central and eastern part of Europe.

Let us courageously continue to pray and work that the four million Jews in America may hear the liberating and life-giving Gospel. If we sow in tears we shall reap in joy if we faint not." — Zions Röst.

### WHEN TO SPEAK

A famous historian writing of ancient Rome attributed the remarkable progress of Christianity during its first century to the "whispering campaign" of its followers. He emphasized as all important the fact that converts were made through the quiet carrying of the gospel of Jesus from person to person in the out-of-the-way places, above ground and below, in the city. He declared that the spread of Christianity until it conquered pagan Rome would have been a miracle beyond comprehension without the persistent publicity and practical evangelism of the early Christians who talked their faith wherever they went, oftentimes regardless of consequences.

Much along the same line is the following argument, which appeared in a parish paper in Jamestown, New York, under the heading "Tongue-Tied Lutherans":

"A Lutheran in fair standing in the congregation where he was reared once informed us of how a group



of men in whose company he chanced to be made light of the Christian faith and of religion in general and came to the conclusion that they were about as well off outside of the Church as in it. We then put the question to him: 'Well, what did you have to say in reply?' He stammered a little and then said that he deemed it useless to get into an argument and so kept quiet. That is the attitude of not a few timid Lutherans who feel no obligations to bear testimony when the necessity or opportunity arises. They are tongue-tied when they should speak. It was not the fear of getting into an argument that caused the silence in the above instance. It was a lack of interest in the faith he failed to confess and defend. He probably cared so little for that faith, it had so little real value to him, that he would rather listen to a conversation which disowned and disparaged it than lift up his voice in defense of it.

"There are no doubt many such tongue-tied Lutherans. They can talk eloquently when dollars and cents are involved, when political campaigns are on, when matters touching their personal temporal welfare are concerned. They have a deep interest in these matters. But as to their own spiritual welfare, and the welfare of others, as well as that of the Church, concern them little or not at all, why should they stand up for that which has so little value in their eyes? It is that very indifference to what the Church confesses and stands for which makes the Church an easy mark for critics and unbelievers to fling their satire against. They no doubt judge the Church by the lack of love and devotion such tongue-tied Lutherans have for it. A faith which is not lodged in the heart is of course not worth having, and hence not worth defending.

"Now contrast with this indifference the intense interest which worldly men show in behalf of their earthly concerns. With what tremendous zeal and zest they advertise their wares! What vast sums of money they invest in such advertising! What physical and mental energy they expend to make known to others what they believe to be of value! The world has to-day become a perfect babel of voices shouting aloud to induce buyers to purchase their wares. You meet these hucksters at every street corner. They proclaim the virtues of what they have to sell from the housetops. They show a zeal and an earnestness which contrasts strangely with the lack of devotion and energy many Christians reveal who are silent on the great issues of life and eternity. Shall we as Christians be dumb and fail to impress upon others what we have found to be of supreme and infinite value both for time and eternity? When the heart has once laid hold on eternal values the mouth is bound to speak. It cannot endure silence."

— News Bulletin.

The ordinary uneventful days of a believer's life are usually a better test of his true character than is an emergency or crisis.

— Selected.

## A MIRACLE OF GRACE

In 1777, the British government sent the sloop *Bounty* to Tahiti to procure some breadfruit trees for the purpose of introducing them in the West Indies. On the home voyage a mutiny broke out among the crew, and the officers, together with nineteen men, were set adrift in an open boat. In passing, we may state that this boat reached the Dutch settlement at Coupon after sailing four thousand miles for forty-seven days. In the meantime the mutineers returned to Tahiti, procured for themselves a large stock of provisions, and after abducting twelve native women and six native men, set sail in search of some uninhabited island where they might be safe from the law. Such an island was known to Fletcher Christian, the mate, and bore the name Pitcairn Island.

This little island, on which the nine remaining white sailors and the eighteen natives landed, was only about six or seven miles in circumference. It had no coral reef around it, but high cliffs made it impossible to land except at a few points. They landed in a little bay, which they called Bounty Bay, and having emptied and dismantled the ship, they burned her.

The nine white men divided out the land among themselves, but gave none to the natives. Each one also selected one of the native women for his wife. For two years all went well; they lived in peace, and all had plenty. Then the wife of Williams, one of the mutineers, died; without any hesitation he appropriated the wife of one of the natives. This enraged the natives, and they laid plans to kill the whites. However, the conspiracy was discovered, and two of the natives were put to death. Now followed two terrible years of endless quarreling and carousing. No one trusted the other. Their crimes arose to accuse them, and fear of revenge pursued them. The white men became more and more cruel to the natives, until finally, no longer able to bear the tyranny of their masters, the natives once more rose in revolt and killed five of the whites. This now left but four whites, and these now murdered all the native men. Of these four one committed suicide in a drunken fit, another was killed in a fight about one of the women, and a third died of asthma in 1800. Thus, ten years after landing on the island, there remained only one white man, John Adams, ten women, and twenty-three children.

Left alone, John Adams began to think of his past wicked life. His many crimes haunted him, and the memory of the prayers of his childhood came back to him. He had rescued from the *Bounty* a Bible and a prayer-book. To these two books he turned for counsel and comfort. Not only did their reading show him the hideousness of the life he had been leading, but also filled him with sorrow for his past sins and misdeeds. And from sorrow he was led to faith in Christ, his Savior. He, however, became not only a believer in Jesus, but a witness for Christ and a missionary. He diligently taught the ignorant women and children the sublime



truths of Christianity. Each day was opened and closed with prayer; the fields were cultivated and houses built. Upon this lonely island a Christian community grew up remarkable for the gentleness and simple virtues of its members. As years rolled on, Adams was called upon to solemnize marriages, and families of a second generation arose. The noble trees and high mountains of the island looked down upon a peaceful village inhabited by a godly people.

Here was a bastard community, a community bred in mutiny and lust, a community from the beginning doubly cursed, transformed into a Christian community by the wonderful power of the Gospel of Jesus!

In 1810, the first ship landed in Bounty Bay; it was an American sealer. In 1816, a British man-of-war came. John Adams offered to surrender himself for trial, but the officers of the ship concluded to leave him on the island where he had done such great work. In 1823, two young Englishmen became permanent members of the little island colony; one a schoolteacher. Thirty-five years after the landing of the *Bounty* there were sixty-five persons on the island. In 1828, the colony received an important addition in the person of George Nobbs. He first became schoolteacher, but in 1853, at the urgent request of the islanders, he was ordained in the Church of England, and thus became the pastor of the colony. As long as Adams lived, he ruled as a patriarch over the island, but when he died, in 1829, laws were framed, and a magistrate and a council of seven were chosen.

In 1831, the British government removed the Pitcairn Islanders to Tahiti, but in six months they returned. In 1856, when they numbered almost two hundred, a population far too large for the small island, they were taken to Norfolk Island, a beautiful island about twice the size of their old home. Here Bishop Patterson confirmed them all in the same year and received them into full communion with the Church of England. They are a fine stalwart race, healthy and handsome, with disease almost unknown, and their genuine Christianity and virtuous lives are an eloquent testimonial of the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

— Lutheran Pioneer.

### A ROOT OUT OF DRY GROUND

"For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and a root out of the dry ground." (Isaiah liii:2.) The Church has always believed, and the true Church still believes, that the root out of the dry ground signifies the Lord Jesus Christ, the Virgin born Son of God. Modernists regard our blessed Lord as the natural product of humanity, the highest development of human nature, and nothing else. But that is an impossibility. The soil of humanity is indeed dry ground. Sin has dried up its life, its fertility, and reduced it to perpetual barrenness. The good is absent and all that is evil is

present. The soil is contaminated, poisoned, charged with all that is obnoxious, and laden down with the curse. Such a desolate and sinful soil, scathed by God's curse, could no more have produced the perfect Man, the holy, sinless Savior, than the thirsty sands of the Sahara could produce the rich verdure of the river-side, or the frozen wastes of the Arctic could bring forth and nourish the luxuriant verdure of the Tropics.

By the law of natural development, corrupt mankind could never have produced a person, so holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, as the Lord Jesus Christ. The degenerate plant of human nature could never have produced Him, who is "the true vine." The infidel theory, more than that, the pit-born blasphemy, that the Lord Jesus Christ is of purely human origin, that He entered the world by natural generation, was born like any other man was born, is a logical impossibility. For how can a clean thing come out of an unclean? Apart from the Virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ His holy, spotless, perfect, sinless life is an unsolvable enigma. Only the shallow thinker can maintain that the Lord Jesus is the natural product of humanity. But behind this shallow thinking, there stands intellectual pride and unbelief. The law of evolution demands progress. Hence the religious-theological evolutionist, the worst of this kind, demands that "the out-worn creeds," the dogmas of the first centuries, must be given up. They think they are constantly advancing toward the light to discover truth with their finite brains, and in order to reach the goal, they must trample down the direct revelation of God and deny its existence. The Virgin birth is the great foundation rock of the Gospel. For this reason it is attacked first, for if that foundation is destroyed, the whole redemption scheme as revealed in the Gospel, on the ground that Christ died for our sins, collapses. Therefore Satan's ministers, who claim to be ministers of righteousness, boldly declare that "Jesus is the natural product of humanity." It will be an awful day when God deals with these enemies of His ever blessed Son.

— Our Hope.

### A MIRACLE OF MODERN TIMES

Once, long ago, a child, a foundling, was picked up in a street in London. As it was St. Thomas' Day, the child was called Thomas, and because it was found between two bridges, it received the name of Thomas Bridges.

Many years afterwards, a man of science, Charles Darwin, renowned in the world, made a voyage for the purpose of gathering materials for his scientific work. When he arrived at Tierra del Fuego, in South America, he found there people who so degraded (cannibals, in fact, without heart or moral feeling) that he declared that the creatures stood as far beneath man as, for example, the monkeys did, and that they were the lowest among humanity.



The account Darwin gave of these creatures was of such a kind that the naval authorities of the day gave orders that in future the crews of none of their ships should land on that coast.

In the meantime, Thomas Bridges had grown to manhood when Darwin published his ideas about Tierra del Fuego. When this young man was asked what he wished to do, he answered: "I was nothing, and by God's grace I became what I am. I will devote to Him all I am and have." "What will you do, then?" "I will go and bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those people in Tierra del Fuego," he replied.

Notwithstanding all warnings, he left England to go and live amongst those wild creatures with human faces, his only weapon being Christ's love for those whom he desired to win for his Master, and whom he looked upon as brethren, although they were cannibals.

And what seemed impossible really came to pass.

Some years later there was a shipwreck on the shores of Tierra del Fuego. The people (the same who before were cannibals) rushed to the shore, threw themselves at the peril of their lives into the waves, saved the people belonging to the sinking ship, and restored to life the exhausted men by their faithful care. Their conduct was so beautiful that the King of Italy wrote them a letter — which was also published — to thank them, and to praise their conduct.

When Darwin, the learned man, who had before uttered that sharp judgment concerning the Tierra del Fuegians, excluding them from humanity, and declaring that nothing could possibly be done for such a wild race, heard the news, he did what all honest men ought to do, he confessed to having erred, and wrote as follows: I should never have believed that all the missionaries in the world could have effected such a reform." And, taking a check, he sent 125 francs (\$25.00) for the mission.

Reader, do you know of any power that is able to do such miracles? and have you experienced the power of the Gospel in your own heart? — Moravian Missions, quoted in Lutheran Church Visitor.

### FAITHFUL SAM

Sam was cook, valet, housemaid, friend, to his bachelor master. For years they had lived together in a peace which seemed to be perfect in each relation. He was always near when needed, and disappeared when he should. For days scarcely a word passed between them, they understood each other so well.

But one morning, the *San Francisco Examiner* tells us, as the Chinaman poured his master's coffee he said, quietly, "Next week I leave you."

The lawyer smiled.

"Next week I leave you," repeated the Chinaman. "I hire for you better man."

The lawyer set down his cup of coffee and looked

at the white-robed servant. He felt the man was in earnest.

"So you are going to leave me. I don't pay you enough, eh? Doctor Sanders — he knows what a treasure you are — has offered you more than I? Well, I'll make it a hundred and fifty. Say no more!"

"Next week I leave you. I go to China," said the servant, impassively.

"Oh, I see; you are going back for a wife. Very well, bring her here. There is work for two to keep this place in order; the place is lonely, anyway. I'll see the collector of the port myself and arrange your passage papers."

"I go to China next week; I need no papers; I never come back," said the man, with exasperating calmness and persistence.

"You shall not go!" thundered the lawyer.

"I go!" answered the Chinaman.

It was the first time in their experience together that the servant had used such a tone toward his master.

After an instant the lawyer said, quietly, "Sam, you must forgive me. I spoke quickly. I do not own you; but tell me what have I done? Why do you leave me in this way? You know I need you."

"I will not tell you why I go — you laugh."

"No, I shall not laugh."

"Very well; I go to China to die."

"Nonsense! you can die here. Haven't I agreed to send your body back?"

"I die in four weeks, two days."

"What do you mean?"

"My brother, he in prison. He twenty-six; I fifty. He have wife and baby. In China they take any man of same family instead to die. I go to China, give my money to my brother — he live, I die."

The next day a new Chinaman appeared as servant in the lawyer's household. In a week this new servant knew everything, and nothing, just like Sam.

Sam disappeared without saying good-by. He went to China and was beheaded, four weeks and two days from the day he broke the news of his intention to go.

His brother was set free. The lawyer's household goes along about as usual, save when the master calls for "Sam" when he should say "Charlie." Then there comes a kind of clutch at his heart, but he says nothing.

— Selected.

### CHURCH OFFICES

The custom of electing and installing male members of the congregation to certain offices in the Church has for itself Biblical example.

The conversion of the three thousand at Pentecost marked the beginning of the Christian Church of the New Dispensation. From that day the Gospel began its onward march. The converts made on that historic day under the power of the Holy Spirit spread the good



news of salvation. The apostles made extended journeys, preaching the Word and establishing congregations. As the number of converts began to increase, the labors of the apostles became more and more onerous. It was very difficult, yes, well-nigh impossible, for them to supervise their work, owing to the scattered condition of the converts and other conditions of the time. The temporal affairs of the churches called for proper attention and direction, and it was impossible for the apostles to give this in adequate measure.

The first account of such difficulties experienced by the apostles is related in the sixth chapter of Acts. A complaint had arisen in the congregation at Jerusalem about the distribution of the provisions. The Grecian Jews complained that their widows were not receiving an equal share from the common treasury. Now, the apostles had not the necessary time to attend to all these temporal matters, nor did they think it proper that their ministry with the Word should be thus hindered. So they directed the congregation to select from their number "seven men of honest report" whom they might "appoint over this business." Seven men were chosen, presented to the apostles by the congregation, and by them installed into their office with prayer and the laying on of hands. Here we have a Biblical example of the election of church officers by a Christian congregation and their solemn installation. These seven men were called deacons, whose duties were to look after the wants of the poor. We also read of deacons in the congregation at Philippi.

The New Testament also speaks of elders. Their duty consisted in looking after the spiritual interests of the congregation. Paul charges Timothy: "Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the Word and in teaching," 1 Tim. 5, 17. Paul writes to Titus (1, 5): "For this cause left I thee in Crete that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." Paul charges the elders of the church at Ephesus: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood," Acts 20:28.

It is thus clear from New Testament history that the deacons and elders were men chosen from the congregation as assistants to the apostles. They formed the apostles' cabinet, as it were, to look after the temporal and spiritual welfare of the congregation.

This custom, inaugurated in the early Church, has been retained ever since. With the rise and spread of the papacy, however, the custom disappeared, for in the papacy the pope, bishop, and priest are supreme in all matters, temporal as well as spiritual. But, following upon the Reformation, the custom again came into use. In the congregations controlled by the State Church in

Germany the power of control was vested by the State in what were and are still known as consistories. But in those congregations forming the Free Church, the Scriptural custom was adhered to, the custom followed by the apostles. And when these Germans, after the discovery of the New World, set their faces toward our shores and founded colonies on our Eastern seaboard, they brought this custom along. There is extant a record of a copy of the constitution of St. Michael's Church, of Philadelphia, founded in the year 1762. The duties of the officers of the congregation therein enumerated are similar to those found in the constitutions of the Lutheran churches in America to-day.

To be an officer in a Christian congregation is a privilege, an honor. It was so regarded by the early Church, for only men of good report, men of devout, pious habits, were elected to such positions. Would that the duties of church officers were to-day held in high esteem and regarded as a privilege, and an opportunity to render pleasing service to God and His Church on earth. If such were commonly the case, it would not be necessary to call attention so frequently to the injunction of Paul: "Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering," Rom. 12:7.

Faithfulness in the discharge of church duties promotes, while neglect retards, the welfare of a church. A church has temporal and spiritual interests that need direction and control. A church council in which some members are lax in the discharge of their duties cannot do such effective work as one in which all are of one mind and seek the common interests. The truth is that Paul's injunction is necessary. A congregation expects faithfulness on the part of its pastor. The pastor and congregation have the right to expect the officers of the church to be just as faithful. The officers of a Christian congregation ought to be examples of Christian piety and consecration to the entire flock. They are leaders, and of them much is expected. They ought to attend all services regularly; their lives ought to be clean; their conduct in and out of the church ought to be such as to inspire respect and confidence. The Church of God needs men who by their lives will bring honor upon her. No little offense is given to the world at times by some who are leaders in the Church. The stewards of a church ought to be godly men, carrying the fear of God in their hearts; sober, just, and temperate in their lives.

God rewards faithfulness in His service. It was not the amount of, but the spirit and motive behind, the widow's mite that gave her fame in the Church's history. So God will also reward the faithful church officer. Among church stewards there is often a diversity of talents. Some are more gifted, hence better qualified than others to perform certain duties. But every one who is faithful in the use of this talents will receive the reward. This reward will not be in dollars or cents. It is not said that God does not bless the faithful steward



here below. Godliness has the promise of the blessing for this life as well as for that which is to come. The reward, however, should not be the motive for faithfulness. The church officer, as all Christians, ought to serve the Church for the joy of serving, for the opportunity his stewardship presents, to use his talents for the glory of God and the welfare of his fellow-man.

— The Lutheran Witness.

### FROM OUR CHURCH CIRCLES

#### Fox River Valley Conference

The Fox River Valley Pastoral Conference convenes, D. v., on the 17th, 18th, and 19th of January, at Algoma, Wis. (A. Schlei, pastor). The first session begins Monday evening at 7:30.

Papers:

Exegesis on the Epistle lesson for the following Sunday: A. Schlei (A. Spiering).

Continuation of the biography of the Apostle Paul: G. A. Dettmann.

A treatise on the "Unio Mystica": G. Boettcher.

Divine service Tuesday evening with a sermon by K. Timmel (F. C. Uetzmann), and Confessional address by E. C. Hinnenthal (L. Kaspar).

F. C. Uetzmann, Sec'y pro tem.

#### Winnebago Pastoral Conference

The Winnebago Pastoral Conference will meet in the congregation at Neenah, Wis. (Rev. A. Froehlke), from January 24th, 7:30 P. M. till January 26.

The following papers will be read:

1. Christ's dealings with believers and unbelievers (Rev. M. Hensel).
2. Exegesis of 1 Tim. 5:18ff (Rev. W. Pankow).
3. Exegetical and homiletical paper on the Gospel of 4th Sun. p. Epiph. (Rev. Pifer).
4. A catechetical paper on "The Calling by the Holy Spirit" (Rev. Wm. Wadzinski).

Sermon by Rev. Kleinhans (Scherf).

Confessional by J. Dowidat (J. Schulz).

All the brethren are requested to register early.

F. C. Weyland, Sec'y.

#### Lake Superior Pastoral Conference

Lake Superior Pastoral Conference will meet January 11, 1927, in Escanaba, Mich. (Rev. C. Doehler).

Papers are to be read by the Pastors G. Schroeder, H. Kirchner, K. Geyer, C. Doehler, W. Gutzke, W. Roepke.

Confessional address: P. Eggert (W. Heidtke).

Sermon: W. Gutzke (H. Hopp).

Services to be held in the English language.

Paul C. Eggert, Sec'y.

#### Dedication of Chapel

A canvass in the field west of Milwaukee, at Burleigh and Wauwatosa Avenue, made about a year and a half ago showed that a goodly number of families were living in this field who desired church connections. In view of the fact the Mission Board of the Southeast Wisconsin District purchased some lots and erected a chapel on Third Avenue, south of Burleigh. The chapel was dedicated on the 23rd Sunday after Trinity, November 7th. Pastor Arthur Voss officiated in the services held in the morning and evening. Services are being conducted regularly every Sunday morning in the English language, the Sunday School is being attended by almost all the children in the vicinity. May the Mission prosper in the full blessing of the Gospel of Christ.

Arthur P. Voss.

#### Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

By the grace of God the members of the St. John's Congregation, New Coeln, Wis., were permitted to celebrate their twenty-fifth Jubilee and a renovation festival of their Church December 5th. In the morning services President C. Buenger of Kenosha delivered the German sermon. In the evening Pastor Paul Bergmann of Milwaukee gave the English jubilee address. At both services a collection was taken for synodical purposes. The church was built twenty-five years ago. During the course of the summer various repairs were made. The interior was relined with an ornamental metal. The Ladies' Aid have installed the electric light system, donated the amber glass windows and the purple altar and pulpit coverings. The Young People's Friendship Club contributed the rug and runner.

May the good Lord protect church and congregation and bless us with His everlasting blessing.

Theo. Monhardt.

#### St. John's Hospital, Red Wing, Minnesota

In the beginning of May graduation will be held at St. John's Hospital, Red Wing, Minn. Ladies contemplating to take up nursing will do well to get in touch with our Training School for Nurses. Splendid opportunity for a good training. A large Nurses Home with home-like effect awaits the students on the beautiful shores of the Mississippi River.

Address:—St. John's Hospital Training School for Nurses, Miss A. Christianson, R. N. Supt., Red Wing, Minn.

#### Installation

By order of President Schlueter the Rev. Otto Henning was duly installed on the first Sunday of Advent in St. John's Lutheran Church of Sevastopol, Door County, Wis.

Address Rev. Otto Henning, R. F. D. 3, Sturgeon Bay, Wis. F. Schumann.



**Acknowledgments and Thanks**

During the past two months Northwestern College received from each of the following congregations a truck load of supplies for the college kitchen: Iron Ridge (P. Henning); Farmington (P. Paap); Kekoskee (P. Toepel); Richwood (P. Lehmann); Brownsville (P. Otto); Marshall (P. Hillemann); Juneau (P. Nommensen); Cambridge (P. Wolff); Markesan (P. Pankow); Waterloo (P. Thurow); Helenville (P. Fredrich). Markesan sent \$5.00 and Iron Ridge \$2.00 to defray expenses of cartage. In all we received 175 sacks of potatoes, about 50 bushels of apples, many sacks of fresh vegetables, canned goods of all kinds, sugar, and flour. A number of gifts were delivered to the college by individuals: Mr. Heid of Jefferson, 15 bushels of apples; Mrs. N. of Hustisford, canned goods; Mr. Reim of Watertown, 5 bushels of apples; Mrs. Berndt of Hartford, 12 dozen eggs. The Ladies' Aid Society of Watertown has set aside \$25.00 to be used for outfitting a needy student.

To all of these friends of our institution we extend our sincere thanks.

K.

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The following donations were received at Dr. Martin Luther College: from the congregation at Town Lynn, Minn., Rev. H. Albrecht, vegetables, grain and canned fruit; from the Ladies' Aid at Olivia, Minn., Rev. J. Siegler, \$5.00 for the sick room in the Girls' Dormitory. To all kind donors I herewith express our appreciation.

E. R. Bliefernicht.

**A Christmas Gift**

The Ladies' Aid Society and the Dorcas Society, St. John's Lutheran Church, Lake Benton, Minnesota, and the Ladies' Aid Society, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Verdi, Minnesota, have donated a complete pulpit gown of the Lutheran style to the Rev. Fred Foard, Monroe, N. C., who lectured last July in Lake Benton, before a large audience. The robe was made by the E. B. Myers Co., Los Angeles, Cal., and is of poplin silk. This gown was given as a Christmas present to our missionary in the Southland. A member of the Dorcas Society made the cergy-band (Beffchen).

May the good Lord, Who became poor for our sake, fulfil His promise to the donors: "Give, and it shall be given unto you!"

— The Rev. Paul W. Spaude, S. T. M.

The members of the Ladies' Aid at Arlington, Minnesota, donated the sum of \$100.00 for equipment in the sick rooms in the Boy's Dormitory. In behalf of our school I herewith express our thanks to the kind donors.

E. R. Bliefernicht.

New Ulm, Minnesota, December 14th, 1926.

**MISSION FESTIVALS**

**Seventh Sunday after Trinity**

Red Wing, Minn., St. John's Church, J. R. Baumann, pastor. Speakers: M. Plass, J. Alston. Offering: \$300.00.

**Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity**

Sleepy Eye, Minn., St. John's Church, Wm. C. Albrecht, pastor. Speakers: A. Baur, M. Pfothhauer, W. J. Schulze. Offering: \$156.15.

**Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity**

Milwaukee, Wis., Zebaoth Church, Arthur B. Tacke, pastor. Speakers: Arnold Koelpin, Hy. Wojahn. Offering: \$200.00.

**Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity**

Sugar Bush, Wis., Grace Church, K. Timmel, pastor. Speakers: R. Malotky and C. Aaron. Offering: \$95.75.

**Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity**

Rhineland, Wis., Zion's Church, Paul G. Bergmann, pastor. Speakers: W. F. Schink (German and English), J. Krubsack (English). Offering: \$625.06.

Wrightstown, Wis., St. John's Church, F. C. Uetzmann, pastor. Speakers: R. Lederer, C. Aaron. Offering: \$157.50.

Milwaukee, Wis., St. Peter's Church, Paul Pieper, pastor. Speakers: G. E. Bergemann and Ph. Koehler. Offering: \$717.99.

**Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity**

Maple Creek, Emanuel and Christ Churches, K. Timmel, pastor. Speakers: G. Dettmann, K. Timmel. Offering: \$77.77.

**Thanksgiving Day**

Palouse, Wash., St. Paul's Church, Kurt Koehler, pastor. Speaker: Paul Gross. Offering: \$12.00.

**WEST WISCONSIN DISTRICT**

**November, 1926**

Rev. E. Abelmann, St. John, Alma .....	\$ 21.69
Rev. E. Abelmann, Nelson .....	4.47
Rev. Wm. A. Baumann, St. John, Iron Creek .....	18.59
Rev. Wm. A. Baumann, St. John, Poplar Creek .....	20.46
Rev. Wm. A. Baumann, St. Kath., Rusk .....	23.63
Rev. Arthur Berg, Sparta .....	118.07
Rev. C. E. Berg, St. John, Ridgeville .....	24.00
Rev. C. E. Berg, St. John, Ridgeville .....	31.33
Rev. Aug. Bergmann, Gnadon, Town Maine .....	75.18
Rev. Dr. J. B. Bernthal, St. Pauls, Ixonia .....	309.81
Rev. Dr. J. B. Bernthal, St. Pauls, Ixonia .....	86.80
Rev. I. M. Brackebusch, St. Matt., Stoddard .....	288.26
Rev. I. M. Brackebusch, St. John, Bad Axe Valley..	70.35
Rev. H. Brandt, St. John, Neillsville .....	44.19
Rev. H. Brandt, St. John, Neillsville .....	89.64
Rev. Karl Brickmann, St. Matt., St. Charles .....	19.10
Rev. F. F. Ehlert, Zion, Eitzen .....	6.00
Rev. G. Fischer, Prentice .....	4.00
Rev. W. Fischer, Dreifaltigkeit, Tp. Berlin .....	31.00
Rev. W. Fischer, Dreifaltigkeit, Tp. Berlin .....	28.50
Rev. J. Freund, St. Paul, North Freedom .....	2.83
Rev. J. Freund, St. Paul, North Freedom .....	7.51
Rev. J. Gamm, La Crosse .....	1194.63
Rev. J. Gamm, La Crosse .....	576.59
Rev. Hein. Geiger, St. Paul, Naugart .....	63.81
Rev. J. G. Glaeser, St. Paul, Tomah .....	117.35
Rev. O. Hensel, Immanuel, Marshfield .....	6.00
Rev. H. W. Herwig, St. John, Lewiston .....	246.97



Rev. H. W. Herwig, St. John, Lewiston .....	129.26
Rev. E. Hoenecke, Marathon .....	4.00
Rev. J. F. Henning, General, Eagleton .....	379.44
Rev. F. Kammholz, St. John, Rib Lake .....	21.51
Rev. L. C. Kirst, St. Stephen, Beaver Dam .....	111.75
Rev. Theo. Kliefoth, St. Petri, Oak Grove .....	17.21
Rev. J. Klingmann, St. Markus, Watertown .....	422.95
Rev. O. H. Koch, Friedens, Randolph .....	23.32
Rev. O. H. Koch, Friedens, Randolph .....	34.46
Rev. E. E. Kolander, St. Paul, Rozelville .....	88.00
Rev. E. E. Kolander, St. Paul, Rozelville .....	3.45
Rev. E. E. Kolander, Gnaden, Green Valley .....	5.20
Rev. Paul Lorenz, St. John, Town Trenton .....	22.00
Rev. Paul Lorenz, St. John, Town Trenton .....	19.00
Rev. W. Motzkus, Cameron .....	68.00
Rev. A. F. Nicolaus, St. Paul, Ft. Atkinson .....	53.66
Rev. M. J. Nommensen, St. John, Juneau .....	55.41
Rev. M. J. Nommensen, St. John, Juneau .....	9.00
Rev. Wm. Nommensen, Zion, Columbus .....	96.15
Rev. Wm. Nommensen, Zion, Columbus .....	12.25
Rev. Wm. Nommensen, Zion, Columbus .....	157.70
Rev. Wm. Nommensen, Zion, Columbus .....	3.00
Rev. Aug. Paetz, St. Peters, McMillan .....	15.00
Rev. Aug. Paetz, St. Peters, McMillan .....	25.00
Rev. Aug. Paetz, Immanuels, March .....	35.18
Rev. H. A. Pankow, St. Paul, Hustler .....	26.20
Rev. H. A. Pankow, St. Petri, Indian Creek .....	17.86
Rev. Wm. Parisius, Globe .....	36.00
Rev. Karl J. Plocher, 1st Luth., Ridgeway .....	21.00
Rev. Karl J. Plocher, 1st Luth., Ridgeway .....	20.00
Rev. Karl J. Plocher, Trinity, Wilson .....	10.50
Rev. J. M. Raasch, St. Paul, Lake Mills .....	287.00
Rev. E. C. Reim, St. John, Fox Lake .....	24.00
Rev. E. C. Reim, St. John, Fox Lake .....	191.00
Rev. H. W. Reimer, Dreieinigkeit, Lime Ridge .....	15.56
Rev. H. W. Reimer, St. John, Tuckertown .....	24.40
Rev. Chr. Sauer, St. John, Ixonia .....	10.41
Rev. E. Schoenecke, Zion, Leeds .....	2.50
Rev. E. Schoenecke, Zion, Leeds .....	11.15
Rev. M. C. Schroeder, St. John, Pardeeville .....	10.00
Rev. M. C. Schroeder, St. John, Pardeeville .....	3.75
Rev. M. C. Schroeder, St. John, Pardeeville .....	27.10
Rev. H. C. Schumacher, St. John, Milton .....	77.75
Rev. H. C. Schumache, St. John, Milton .....	77.75
Rev. J. H. Schwartz, Christus, West Salem .....	34.34
Rev. J. H. Schwartz, Christus, West Salem .....	31.83
Rev. C. W. Siegler, Portland .....	12.13
Rev. C. W. Siegler, St. Paul, Bangor .....	27.67
Rev. C. W. Siegler, St. Paul, Bangor .....	17.88
Rev. R. Siegler, Persoenlich .....	10.00
Rev. F. E. Stern, Trinity, Watertown .....	229.05
Rev. M. Taras, Trinity, Fall River .....	4.00
Rev. M. Taras, St. Stephens, Fountain Prairie .....	11.76
Rev. G. M. Thurow, St. John, Waterloo .....	565.45
Rev. G. M. Thurow, St. John, Waterloo .....	159.94
Rev. Theo. Thurow, Friedens, Sun Prairie .....	65.42
Rev. Gustav Vater, Friedens, Town Little Falls .....	3.55
Rev. Gustav Vater, St. Pauls, Cataract .....	5.10
Rev. Aug. Vollbrecht, St. Michaels, Fountain City .....	15.00
Rev. A. Werr, Zions, Cambria .....	35.51
Rev. E. Zaremba, St. Jacobi, Norwalk .....	7.70
Rev. H. R. Zimmermann, Martin Luther, Buffalo City .....	3.13
Rev. H. R. Zimmermann, Christus, Cochrane .....	5.20
Rev. A. A. Zuberbier, Hamburg .....	112.30

Total for November .....\$7528.40

H. J. Koch, Treasurer.

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

### Martin Luther and the Duke of Marlborough

Apropos of the annulment of the marriage of the Duke of Marlborough and the violent controversy now raging, a choice bit from Martin Luther's pen which is contained in his famous Address to the German Nobility in 1520, is of particular interest. Discussing the supreme Christian authority of the Word of God versus that of the Pope, the distinguished reformer says:

"Even though the Pope's laws forbid it, still after the married state has been entered, the Pope's laws are superseded, and are valid no longer: for God has commanded that no man shall put asunder husband and wife, and this commandment is far above the Pope's laws, and God's command must not be cancelled or neglected for the Papal commands. It is true that mad lawyers have helped the Pope to invent impediments or hindrances to marriage, and thus troubled, divided, and perverted the married state: destroying the commandments of God. What need I say further? In the whole body of the Pope's canon law, there are not two lines that can instruct a pious Christian, and so many false and dangerous ones, that it were better to treat it as waste paper."

### Lauds Iceland Church

Bishop Winchester of the Episcopal Church on his summer vacation made a brief trip to Reykjavik, Iceland, where he found the people were "indeed good, educated, and deeply religious, since the Danish-Swedish Lutheran Church with their bishop and priest are in the capital city." In connection with an investigation of social service work, the bishop reported:

"I went with the priest to the Leprosy Colony. Every leper is a communicant of his church. He has no apprehensions as he ministers to these afflicted children of God. There are about thirty-five in the Colony. Leprosy, I was told, is now a curable disease. The same I learned also at Oslo in Norway, where I had the opportunity of visiting the colony in company with a noted physician, who is interested in this horrible plague that has meant so much suffering to humanity."

### Starts Visiting Nurse Service

Under the direction of Miss Ida E. Winter, R. N., graduate of Lenox Hill Hospital, the Lutheran Inner Mission Society of New York City has inaugurated a visiting nurse service to be developed in cooperation with the physicians and hospitals of the city. It is announced at the outset that the service will apply particularly to child-birth cases, to sick children in the home (especially where diet, fresh air, cleanliness and good habits are prescribed), to discharged and convalescent hospital patients, and to emergency cases where dressings are needed for burns and cancer and the like.

Where nursing care is needed in the home it is to be given "only under the direction of the physician in attendance on the patient", and where no physician is in attendance one will be called by the nurse. Following out the church's principle of being of service to those in need, the Inner Mission Society announces that "when the patient or family is able to pay, a moderate fee will be charged, but it is understood that free care is readily given whenever necessary".

### Eighteenth Century Equipment

Hauled to its present location by ox teams nearly a century before the days of railroads, Hebron Lutheran Church, Madison County, Virginia, is using the same organ which was installed 180 years ago. The church itself was built in 1740 and has retained the general form in which it was originally built with but slight architectural changes. The communion set service used in the church was brought from France in 1739. The congregation claims to worship in the oldest Lutheran Church building in America. —News Bulletin.