

The Northwestern Lutheran

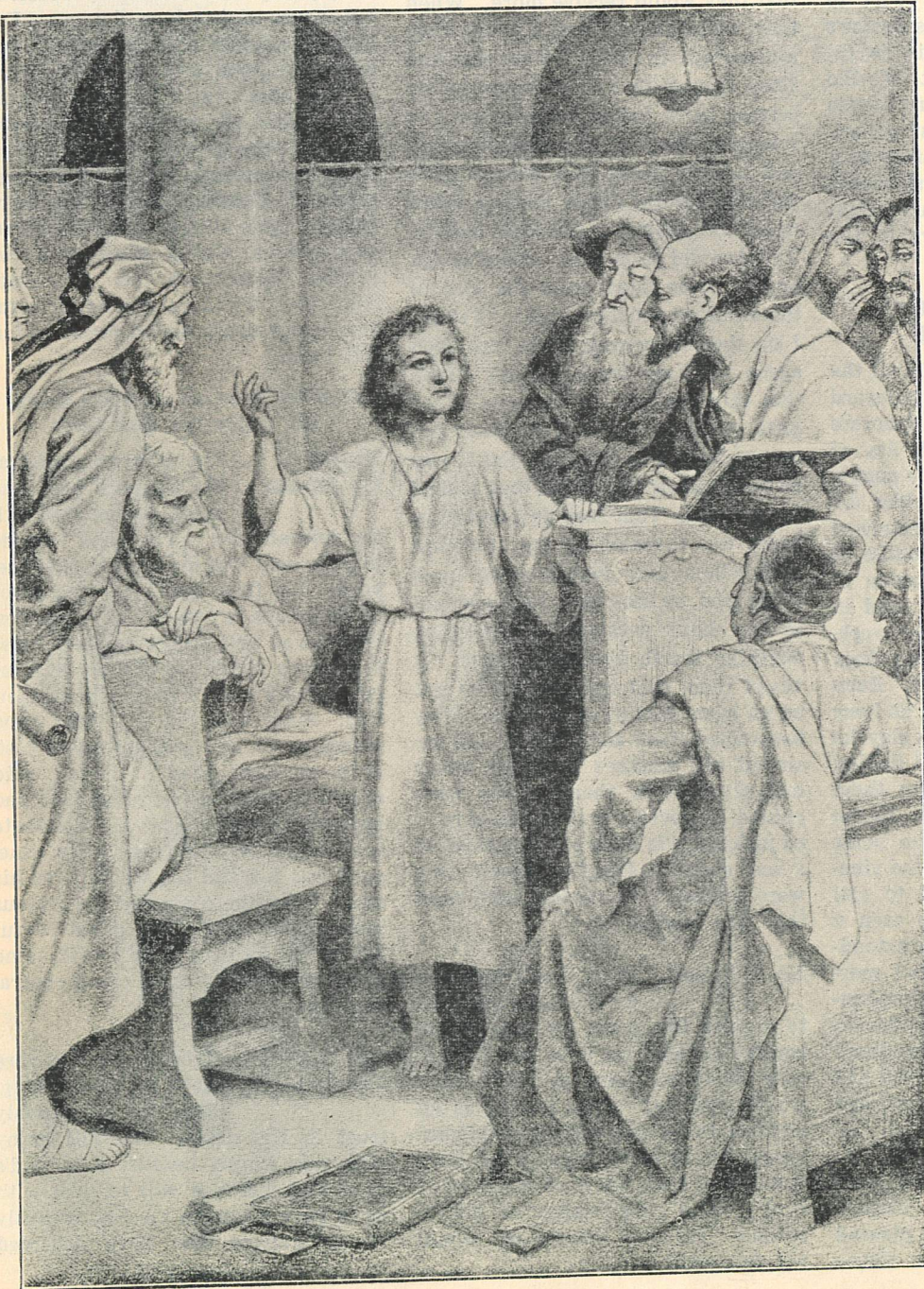
"The Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers; let Him not leave us, nor forsake us." 1 KINGS 8:57

WISCONSIN SYNOD

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**"Jesus increased
in Wisdom
and Stature
and in favor with
God and Man"**

Luke 2:52

The Standard of God's Kingdom is Grace

Matthew 20, 1-16

IN a moment of weakness Peter came to Jesus, saying: "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefor?"



Probably without being fully aware of it Peter was embarking upon a dangerous course — the dangerous course of no longer being quite content to glory in his Savior's grace and to serve Him in joyful thankfulness. Losing sight of the Savior's grace he was pleading merits of his own and asking for just reward. To remind him — and all of us with him — where such a course would lead to in His kingdom Jesus taught the parable of the laborers in the vineyard.

Whoever Still Pleads Merits Will Not Fare Well

The Parable Early dawn found the owner of a vineyard in the marketplace hiring laborers who agreed to put in a full day of labor for the current wage of a penny, a denarius. Yet the householder desired more laborers. Thus he returned to the marketplace in the middle of the forenoon, at noon, and again in the middle of the afternoon, and in each instance engaged further workers with the promise of giving them what would be fair and right. Even now he was not satisfied. Just an hour before the close of the work day he went out once more and, still finding some standing idle, bade also them to go to work in his vineyard. In the settlement at evening lies the point of the parable. The Lord of the vineyard instructed his steward to call all the laborers and to give each a penny. This man delighted in extending gifts where they were not merited. He was pleased to deal graciously, yet without doing an injustice to anyone. Also those who had rendered an entire day of labor received the full wage upon which they had agreed.

There Is No Claim to Grace Even so the Lord in His blessed kingdom is pleased to deal with us in pure grace. Those

who despise such grace and wish to plead merit are therefore bound to suffer disappointment. Their case is portrayed in the parable in the conduct and experience of the laborers hired at dawn. When they saw the bounty which the lord of the vineyard showed to those who had labored only one hour, when they saw how these received a penny, they supposed that they would receive more. When they, too, received each a penny they murmured in deep dissatisfaction. They figured that they should be receiving more, having toiled under the scorching heat of the noon-day sun and having borne the burden of a full day's work. They made a claim upon the master's gracious bounty. Yet they did so in vain. Singling out one of these murmurers the lord of the vineyard set them right: "Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way." Free gifts can be given and received but never claimed as a right. Yet it was on the basis of merit that they looked for a bonus. That they despised pure grace was revealed by the contempt with which they looked down upon those who, as they said, had only put in one hour without accomplishing anything worth speaking about. It vexed them that they should be put on an equal footing with them. They begrudged them their penny and resented the master's goodness which had given it to them. They were chided, however, for their unwarranted jealousy: "Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" Pleading merit they were bidden to be content with what they had earned.

No Injustice If in God's kingdom we should be tempted to despise His grace, we, too, would receive all that we have earned, yet only what we deserve. But what would that be? "We are all as an unclean thing and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." And "the wages of sin is death." Pleading merits we would not fare well.

The Northwestern Lutheran

The Rewards of The Kingdom Cannot Be Claimed The Lord indeed finds pleasure in the fruits of our

faith, pleasure in every cup of water that we offer to a thirsty fellowman in His name, pleasure in every kind word that we speak to others for His sake, pleasure in every sacrifice that we make, in every cross that we bear, in every testimony that we give in His behalf. He promises to reward it all a hundredfold, now or hereafter. Yet these promised rewards are all free, bounteous gifts which can be joyfully and thankfully received but never claimed as deserts. For even our fruits of faith are all imperfect, stained with much sin. What is good about them is His workmanship. That He promises to reward them is pure grace. To raise questions concerning the spiritual and temporal blessings which the Lord bestows upon others, to make envious comparisons would show that we neither understand nor appreciate His grace. To claim such rewards for any of our deeds would mean to forfeit them.

Humbly Trusting in God's Grace We Enjoy His Rich Gifts

Taught in the Parable The laborers hired at the eleventh hour had made no contract with the householder. They had worked but one cool evening hour in the vineyard. Yet they tasted his rich favor in receiving a whole day's wages. They fared well simply because it was this man's delight to bestow gracious gifts where they had not been merited. Such was his will and good pleasure: "I will give unto this last, even as unto thee." Having paid everyone what he had earned he had an indisputable right to distribute free gifts where he chose. The vineyard was his and his wealth was his own. When he corrected the jealous murmurers, saying: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" not one of them could contradict him.

Our Hope and Comfort Even so we will fare well in God's kingdom as we humbly trust in His grace. We will enjoy rich gifts simply because it is God's good and merciful will to deal with us in pure grace, to give bounteously to us sinners who have deserved

(Continued on page 54)

Editorials

Why Don't They Come? It is indeed puzzling that some members of Christian, Lutheran churches seldom attend divine services. Some parents are careful enough to send their children to church but they themselves do not come; husbands send their wives, while they prefer to work or loaf about the house; some wives act as if their only Sunday duty is to prepare a good dinner.

Yet if these people are reminded that they are sinning against God's commandment, they are very much surprised and startled that anyone should think church-going to be so vital to our Christian life and they often claim to be better Christians than those who go to church regularly.

God has instituted the public ministry. Our Lord before His ascension gave to His Church ministers and teachers for the edifying of Christ's body, the Church, for the keeping alive and strengthening of our saving faith. And He commanded His disciples and believers to "preach the Gospel" unto the end of the world and to all nations adding the promise that He will be with them. His command to preach the Gospel implies a command to hear it. When a congregation calls a pastor to preach the Word of God, then it also thereby promises to hear and learn that Word of God. When a congregation holds its pastor responsible for the spiritual well-being of all members then self-evidently the members will give their pastor every opportunity to provide them with the Bread of Life. They do not expect him to go from house to house and hold services each week or month. When they are sick they have the right and duty to call their pastor that he bring the Word of God to them.

When people neglect preaching of God's Word and are no longer interested to assemble themselves together with their fellow-members to worship God, it has become clear that they are becoming indifferent to God's command and thankless for the blessings which He promises those who gladly hear and learn His Word. Neglect in church attendance is one alarm which ought to be heeded, for by our deeds we are showing that we no longer are ruled by the Spirit, but by our sinful flesh. Those who now come seldom may soon be too dead spiritually to come at all. Any one who lays claim to the name Christian will, like the Savior Himself, be about His Father's business and will not be satisfied if he is not. He loves the voice of his good Shepherd that calls and speaks to him in the Gospel. These are the people that will fill the pews at each divine service and they will return to their homes strengthened in the inner man with the blessing of the Lord upon them. Who would not want that?

G. W. F.

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Freedom of the Pulpit It is generally known that professors at the secular colleges and universities jealously guard, what they call, their academic freedom. They reserve the right to teach their own ideas regardless of whether they conflict with the views of the taxpayers or not. Some claim the right to teach their students that communism is preferable to capitalism and that the Russian way of life is better

than the American way of life. Some biologists and anthropologists teach the theory of evolution as a fact though it conflicts with the sacred convictions of tax-paying Bible Christians. To us it looks like dishonesty to oppose the views of those whose money they accept.

To acquaint the students with communism and the theory of evolution belongs to a well-rounded higher education and cannot be criticized as such but to use tax money to make propaganda for such things is an entirely different thing and involves the question of elemental honesty.

Likewise, there are preachers who take the position that it is entirely up to them what they preach and that no member of the congregation has anything to say about it. In a certain respect that is true. There are times when the pastor need not and should not take orders from the congregation or its members. The preacher's orders are given in the words: "Preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season." The orders of God are higher than the orders of man or any group of men. Luther said that one little word of God made the world too small for him. When a congregation or any part of the congregation exerts pressure to get the preacher to suppress the Word of God, then he dare not yield but must say with the apostles: "We ought to obey God rather than men." It is not a question of what the preacher himself would like to preach or what the members of the congregation would like to have him preach, but only what God wants him to preach. There is no freedom of choice in that respect. The Lutheran Church recognizes this principle by obligating the pastor in the Call and at the formal installation upon the Bible and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church as a correct exposition of the Word of God. Liberal preachers would call that a grievous yoke and an unwarranted abridgment of the freedom of the pulpit, but in reality that is the highest freedom, for Jesus said: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

The fact that the preacher in his preaching and pastoral work is to take his orders from the Word of God and no one else does not mean that he has a right to lord it over the members and that they have nothing to say. In outward matters where no principle of the Word of God is at stake and which lie in the sphere of Christian liberty, the congregation can exercise its own wisdom and judgment, and the pastor has no right to insist that it be done as he says. There the pastor does not have freedom of action apart from the congregation. Such things are entirely a matter of brotherly consultation in the fear of God.

Only where God's Word has spoken can the pastor speak with absolute authority, and then he should do so regardless of the opposition with which he meets and the pressure that is put upon him to depart from this or that teaching of God's Word. And with respect to the preaching of the pastor the members are to do what the Bereans did, namely, to search the Scriptures daily whether those things are so. That preserves the sort of freedom of the pulpit which God wants. I. P. F.

Open Questions

VII

THE assumptions rejected in theses 11, 12, and 13, that doctrine is the result of a gradual process of development, that questions of doctrine remain open till the Church renders a decision, or that the support of some recognized orthodox teacher gives an opinion some standing in the Church: these all substitute human authority for the sole authority of the Scriptures, or at least lift some human authority to the same level with the Scriptures.

The fourteenth thesis rejects another view of Open Questions, one which assumes that God has presented to us in the Scriptures some articles which we are to embrace in faith, but which He has not revealed clearly enough, so that no one can definitely say just what God expects us to believe.

Vague Revelations

Everybody will feel at once that a "vague revelation" is really a contradiction in terms. If something is vague, hazy, veiled, you could hardly call it a revelation. On the other hand, if God reveals any truth, you expect it to be intelligible, open and clear. Yet one theory of Open Questions assumes just this that God offers us some doctrine of faith without telling us clearly what it is that He asks us to believe.

Thesis 14. — The assumption that there are Christian doctrines of faith contained in the holy Scriptures which nevertheless are not presented in them clearly, distinctly, and unmistakably, and that hence they must be counted with the Open Questions, militates against the clarity, and thus against the very purpose or the divinity of the holy Scriptures, which is offered to us as the divine revelation.

It was conceded from the very beginning that there are questions in connection with some articles of faith on which the Scriptures do not give us a clear answer. The Scriptures,

for instance, say very much about the holy angels; but they do not tell us when or how they were created. The Scriptures also tell us very much about the evil angels, the devils; but they do not tell us when or how they fell away from God. The Scriptures contain some references to these matters, so that we are in a position to draw certain conclusions; but the Scriptures do not say, thus and so it is. They do not speak clearly on these matters.

Since the Scriptures do not speak clearly on these matters we have no ground to hope that they will ultimately develop into articles of faith; that the Church in some confessional statement may some day define them; or that a teacher of the Church who enjoys the reputation of orthodoxy may pronounce a doctrine one way or the other. Such questions will forever remain open. Any attempt to fix them doctrinally means to speak where the Scriptures have not spoken, that is, to add something to the Scriptures. A doctrine not clearly revealed is no doctrine, and never will become one.

The Purpose of the Scriptures

The purpose of the Scriptures is expressed by St. Paul in the following words: "That from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3, 5-17).

If we look at the world without the Word of God, men are described to us as blind, as sitting in darkness, as being puffed up in ignorance. The prophet Isaiah, prophesying the birth of our Savior, wrote these words: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of

death, upon them hath the light shined" (chap. 9, 2). And again: "Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee" (chap. 60, 2). And when the fore-runner of our Lord was born his father Zacharias praised God because now He was going to "give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1, 79). If anyone deviates from the Word of God, St. Paul says about him that "he is proud, knowing nothing" (1 Tim. 6, 4).

For the benefit of such blind people the Scriptures were given, to make them wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. The Psalmist says the same: "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. 19, 7). And again: "Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119, 104, 105).

But what sort of light would that be if the Word of God presented to us doctrines of faith that should make us sure, so that we attain salvation, and then left open questions along the course? It pretends to make a man of God "thoroughly furnished unto all good works," and then leaves him guessing at many points! To teach that there are Open Questions in doctrines of faith means to charge God, that He promised us light, but left us in darkness.

The Clarity of The Scriptures

It is important that we make sure of the clearness of Scripture. There is too much at stake. If it were merely a matter of dollars and cents, or even a question of life and health, we might not be so insistent; but the matter pertains to our eternal salvation.

We heard a few passages above that claim clearness, even brightness, for the Scriptures. We shall now take a little closer view of the matter.

When the Scriptures claim clearness for themselves this does not mean that natural man with his natural reason can understand and grasp the truths there presented. It ever remains true what Paul said about natural man in this respect: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2, 14). Any one who is "slow of heart" will experience the same trouble (Luke 24, 25). That does not mean that the Scriptures are dark, but that our heart is blinded by foolish ideas. Paul, speaking of such people, says: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4, 4).

The clearness of the Scriptures does not mean that a believer will at once grasp the full meaning. The Psalmist prays: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Ps. 119, 18). Moreover, we are always encouraged to *grow* in knowledge and understanding.

In the Scriptures themselves there is an increasing clearness. Take the first promise of a Savior, Gen. 3, 15, and compare it with the vivid picture which Isaiah paints of Him in chap. 53. And the New Testament, which records the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, is clearer by

far than even the clearest words of the Old Testament. This is but natural. The things that we see are always clearer than a mere promise can make them.

So also there will be progress in our understanding when we leave this world and enter the glories of heaven. It is certainly a glorious thing to be children of God, but St. John adds: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; . . . for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3, 2). Paul even says that, compared with the future brightness, we now see as "through a glass, darkly" (1 Cor. 13, 12).

Yet all of these considerations do not militate against the clearness of the Scriptures, rather they serve to emphasize it. In matters pertaining to our eternal salvation the Scriptures give us clear instructions, making us wise, leaving no Open Questions to vex us. The theory of Open Questions and the plea for unionism based on it must be rejected as violating the clarity of the Word of God.

We close our study of Prof. Walther's theses, which the fathers of our Wisconsin Synod approved most heartily, with a word of St. Peter: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn and the day-star arise, in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1, 19).

J. P. M.

Luther On Human Reason

IN the last sermon which Luther preached at Wittenberg he warned against the danger of being misled by our reason. Today we bring a paragraph from that sermon, which contains his thoughts as in a summary.

From Luther's Last Wittenberg Sermon

Heretics in every way try to intrigue us into yielding to them, to relent and make concessions; but with the help of God we will not do so. I know they will call us arrogant and stubborn. Let them. I am ready to suffer reproach, but I am not ready

to deviate by a finger's breadth from the word of Him who said, "Hear ye Him."

I see clearly that if God will not grant us faithful pastors and ministers, the devil will through the sectarians disrupt our churches, and will not cease till he has finished it. Those are his designs. If he cannot do it through the Pope and the Emperor, he will do it through them who are still agreed with us in doctrine. Therefore pray, I say, pray fervently that God give us orthodox leaders.

Now we may still feel secure and fail to see how the prince of this

world is grimly scheming against us for our destruction through the Pope, the Emperor, and our own men of letters who say, *What harm can there be in conceding this or that?* No, not a hairsbreadth may we yield. If they will agree with us, well; if not, then not. I did not get my doctrine from them, but by the grace of God from God. I have learned my lesson. Therefore pray God earnestly that He will preserve His Word for you. There will be terrible times.

See here, the lawyers and the wise men at court will say, *you are proud, you will cause revolts and riotings.* Our gracious God and Lord help us that we do not grow weary under such dangerous trials.

Limitations of Reason

Luther in all his writings had very much to say about human reason, about its use and its limitations.

The field which God has assigned to reason are the affairs of this life, things pertaining to a person's physical welfare, gainful occupation, trades and industries, social, economic, hygienic matters, travel, science and arts, government, and the like.

Reason also knows something about God, knows that there is a God, that He is mighty and wise, also that He is good and kind; also to some extent what He demands of us, and that we are accountable to Him.

Although reason knows that there is a God, it does not know who He is; least of all does it know how we may have a favorable God, one with whom we are at peace.

The things which God has revealed about Himself in the Scriptures our natural reason ridicules as foolish and rejects as utterly unacceptable. It does not know, and cannot know, that God is triune, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It does not know and cannot know that God out of unspeakable love sacrificed His only-begotten Son to redeem us. It does not know and cannot know that we cannot do anything to merit God's good will, or to pay Him for it.

Hence, in all spiritual matters we must simply accept the Scriptures. If any one here follows his reason it will lead him into error and heresy.

Quotations

From the great wealth of pronouncements on reason to be found in Luther's writings we cull a few at random, some in translation of Luther's own words, some in a brief summary. (St. Louis edition.)

If they say that reason guides and leads us the best, remember, yes, to the best in civil and political matters, in which our reason is competent. Here reason judges and teaches those things which are honorable and useful in a physical and temporal way. Aristotle, who taught that reason always guides us to our best, was right if his remark is restricted to such things as belong into the field of reason, for instance, how to raise cattle, build houses, cultivate the field. (I, 175.)

When we speak about man's free will we must inquire into his ability in divine things, not in temporal things, in which reason is competent. We conclude that a man without the Holy Ghost is plainly impious before God, even though he be adorned with all the virtues of the Gentiles. And truly, in the histories of the Gentiles we find beautiful examples of decency, moderation, liberality, love of one's country, one's parents, one's children; also of manliness, friendliness, etc.

But we conclude that reason's best thoughts about God, God's will, the service of God are all utter darkness. For the light of reason which alone has been given to man by nature does not grasp more than what is good for the body. (I, 484.)

Reason is vain, and hence inclined to lies, that is, to its own glory and the praise of its own virtues. Reason likes to be told that a man may merit his salvation with his own works, may fulfil the law of God and work out his own righteousness. (I, 757.)

Though reason be beautiful and glorious, yet that pertains to this life only; here is its realm and its rule. But in Christ's kingdom the Word of God is the only authority. (III, 883.)

Reason may understand to some degree that God can help, and we need His help; but it does not know and cannot know the true God. It may speak much of Him, but who He is, where He is, how He will help, it is unable to say. (III, 1722.)

God is always occupied with checking that mad harlot, our reason, which estimates the value of works according to their size or length. In opposition to reason, and to spite his harlot, God commands such works as appear to be nothing. Be assured, then, that it matters nothing before God how many, how big, or how long your works are; the only thing that matters is the Word of God. If that is joined to a work, then do not consider it as unimportant; when the Word of God rings in a work, then that work is precious. . . . Reason says, but in this it errs, because the work is *great*, hence it must be prized greatly; *great* works must be praised. (III, 409.)

They are surely dense dunces who try to know God by their own reason. We must cling to the Word and wrap ourselves up in it. Else there will follow schisms and heresies, superstition and idolatry, if every one spreads his own ideas, drawn from his own strength and reason without the Word of God. It is difficult enough to stand when you strictly adhere to the Word; what will happen if we flit about with our own ideas? (III, 1720.)

Our reason accords this "honor" to God, judging that He is either ignorant and does not see nor know what wickedness is going on; or else malicious, because He does not check the evil which He sees. (V, 100.)

Such is the nature of all articles of faith that our reason abhors them. Without the Spirit they cannot be received. Whoever wishes to be a Christian must blind his own reason and listen alone to what God has to say. (V, 452.)

Reason does not understand that to hear and believe the Word of God is the greatest service of God; but is of the opinion that those things which we choose ourselves and do with "good" intentions must please Him. Faith, however, slays this beast, our reason. (IX, 302.)

You must separate God and man, temporal and eternal things. In temporal things which concern man, man is reasonable enough, he does not require any other light besides the light of reason. For that cause God does not teach us in the Scriptures how to build houses, make clothes, marry, carry on war, navigate, and the like. In these things our natural light is sufficient. But in

divine things, that pertain to God, so that we may do what pleases him and be saved, our reason is so stone-blind that it cannot as much as a hairsbreadth show what those things may be. . . . Here reason is like the man who builds his house on sand; here it takes cobweb to make a dress; sand for flour to bake bread; sows wind and reaps the whirlwind; dishes out air with a spoon, carries light with a bushel into the dark cellar, weighs flames in a scale; and all such foolish things, thinking to do God service. (XII, 295.)

So far the natural light of reason can go that it recognizes God as good, benevolent, merciful, kind. Indeed, a great light! Reason knows that there is a God, but who He is it does not know. It always gropes and plays blindman's buff with God, always misses Him and calls that God which is not God, and accords it divine honor; and on the other hand refuses to call Him God who is God in truth (XIV, 858.)

J. P. M.

The Standard of God's Kingdom is Grace

(Continued from page 50)

nothing. In the richness of His grace He has chosen us to be glorified now and forever. Gods pared not His only-begotten Son, but delivered Him up for us all. Through Him He wrought a full atonement for our sins, procured eternal life and every blessing for us. All spiritual and temporal gifts are His to give, and He is pleased to give them in pure grace for Christ's sake. Through His Word and Spirit He graciously grants us pardon, peace, comfort, eternal hope, strength to do His will, willingness to serve in His kingdom, and the faith by which we apprehend these gifts and come to enjoy them. In no other way can we receive what we need.

Just because the standard of God's kingdom is grace many are, however, offended by it. The standard of merit is an old wine which appeals to the palate of sinful man. It is also the only standard for which our own sinful flesh has any understanding. May God graciously help us to a taste for the new wine of Gospel grace, which alone is a life-sustaining draught.

C. J. L.

Siftings

BY THE EDITOR

Surely God is blessing our work in Nigeria, Africa. The Rev. Karl Kurth, Executive Secretary of the Negro missions of the Synodical Conference, reports further progress: "The Lutheran Girls' School at Nung Udoe was opened in May, 1939, with an enrollment of eighteen girls. This school now has an enrollment of 125 girls. Miss Quinta Oelschlaeger has labored faithfully as the head of this institution since 1946 and is assisted in her work of supervision by Mrs. Basse Cobham, the headmistress. The school is situated on a piece of land consisting of eight acres. We now have five dormitories, three classroom buildings, a chapel, and a Domestic Science structure, all erected by our Nigerian Lutherans. By resolution of the Synodical Conference, permission has been granted our American missionaries' wives to gather private funds for the erection on this new ground of a Foundling Home. This new setup will enable the girls of the school to receive systematic training in midwifery and child care." As the readers of the *Northwestern Lutheran* also know, plans were approved by the Synodical Conference for the establishment of a Seminary to train native workers. The school will be under the direction of Missionary Scheweppe, of the Wisconsin Synod.

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Here are words that deserve to be weighed seriously. They are taken from an article in the Lutheran Outlook and written by H. L. Yochum, D. D. He has this to say on Lutheran UNION, "We ought not to be stampered into some sort of forced unity or union simply because 'more and more of our laymen demand it.' That is merely political expediency. Yielding to pressure groups in the church is as unwholesome as it is in national affairs. Not because laymen insist on it, but because it is right and God's

will should we promote Lutheran unity. Nor is it accurate to assert that it is the laymen who want unity while pastors' and especially church officials impede or oppose progress in that direction. I have been involved in some of the earnest considerations our synodical officials have given this subject, and I know their concern for the highest interests of the Lutheran Church in its totality, as well as their sense of responsibility to their own constituency. WE CANNOT MANUFACTURE UNITY; WE CAN ONLY RESPOND TO THE EFFORTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO ACHIEVE UNITY AMONG US." (Emphasis ours. Ed.)

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Some time ago we carried a ballot for the "Ten Favorite Hymn Poll," conducted by Professor W. G. Polack. The results are now being published. Professor Polack reports that 3,700 ballots came from people in every State of the Union and from all parts of Canada; a few from Foreign Mission fields. The selection was not confined to the "Lutheran Hymnal" with the result that of a total of 1,016 hymns named, only 520 were from the "Lutheran Hymnal," and 496 were from other sources. The ten favorite hymns were: Beautiful Savior; What a Friend We Have in Jesus; Abide with Me; A Mighty Fortress; Rock of Ages; Just As I Am; Be Still, My Soul; Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me; The Lord's My Shepherd; My Faith Looks Up to Thee. The first three favorite hymns of the men were: A Mighty Fortress, Abide With Me, and Beautiful Savior. The first three favorite hymns of the women were: What a Friend We Have in Jesus, Abide with Me, and Beautiful Savior. The first three favorite hymns of those under 21 were: Beautiful Savior; Onward,

Christian Soldiers; A Mighty Fortress. Professor Polack will furnish more information in the near future.

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The Community Church of Etiwanda, California, is behind the times. They have evidently not heard that churches are looking for young pastors. The maximum age limit the congregation has set for its pastor is 35 years. Now its pastor, Dr. Loyal Wirt, is 85 years old, so in order to keep him the congregation has raised the age limit to 100. Gynther Storaasli, in the *Lutheran Outlook*, hands out some sound advice to those churches who believe that age is a handicap in a pastor: "In almost every other profession age and years of experience are assets much to be desired. Government agencies . . . and countless others do not despise age when appointments to high and responsible positions are to be made. The voters of our country . . . do not allow gray hairs to deter them from sending candidates of their choice to Congress. Likewise the commercial and business worlds are constantly on the alert for seasoned and experienced executives. . . . But local congregations, whose chief or primary reason for existence is to build up the kingdom of God in the hearts of their membership and to help spread abroad Christ's Gospel of Salvation, for some unknown reason can see little or no advantage in calling a pastor who is seasoned by experience when looking about for a suitable candidate to be the shepherd of their souls. . . . Is it possible that anyone can be so naive as to believe that a pastor's years of experience would be a serious handicap toward the accomplishment of this most important phase of human endeavor?" The writer concludes, "Are we being presumptuous, then, when we suggest to local congregations, who are evaluating a candidate's qualifications for a call, that they take a leaf out of God's book and look to the candidate's inner man first and not at his age? Age can be an important factor when considering the purchase of a used car or a horse, but not when calling a shepherd of souls. A pastor should be placed upon a higher plane than that."

Where Do We Stand?

II: We Face A Trend

BY PROFESSOR E. REIM

IN a previous article we stated our intention of discussing anew the problems which confront our Synod in the intersynodical field, problems which come under the general heading of "Union" and "Unionism."

Not Isolated Incidents

One may be inclined to think of these as a number of separate, individual problems, or as problems which may concern us and our associates in the Synodical Conference deeply, but from which others seem to be happily exempt. We discuss the negotiations between the American Lutheran Church and our sister Synod of Missouri as though this were an isolated incident. We touch on instances of cooperation between Lutherans of our Synodical Conference and others who are not of our fellowship, cooperation in youth work, in welfare work, in Seminary groups, in editorial staffs, in laymen's organizations. And as we take up these individual incidents, they easily seem to be just "cases," each one a thing for itself. This will particularly be the impression of those of our readers who may have had neither the time nor the opportunity to inform themselves on these matters. As soon, however, as one looks at the entire picture, it becomes convincingly clear that these are not isolated incidents, but that they represent a clearly recognizable, well marked trend with which the Church of our day must reckon.

Working Together With Other Lutherans

The facts speak for themselves. Lutherans of the Synodical Conference have been working together with other Lutherans to a degree which has never been the case before. That is not only the sober conviction of those who are against this trend. It is also the proud claim of those who are for it. There was the meeting of youth leaders, Walther Leaguers as well as American Lutheran and United Lutheran groups. There is the collaboration of prominent Missourians with other Lutherans in the

publication of a booklet written in the interest of Scouting in the Lutheran Church. There is the way in which Lutherans of all shades have banded themselves together for joint action in the field of public welfare, as in the State of Washington, in the Denver area, and elsewhere. Other projects of a similar nature are being planned. Or take the fact that Lutheran editors have met and delivered themselves of a joint statement advocating further steps toward Lutheran union, thereby virtually assuming the role of a policy making body. Student bodies of Lutheran Seminaries, including at least one out of our Synodical Conference fellowship, have formed their mutual association. Seminary faculties are meeting and have undertaken to speak for Lutherans in general by their co-authorship of the book, "What Lutherans Are Thinking." Laymen's groups have been formed with the express purpose of going beyond their synodical affiliation and developing better understanding among all Lutherans, for the purpose of encouraging fellowship and co-operation. Pastors and professors of the various Lutheran bodies have been meeting in jointly conducted "Seminaries," such as those which were held last fall for the purpose of discussing the Lutheran World Conference which had there been formed. These are the facts. We shall reserve our judgment for subsequent issues. But we submit that they reveal a definite trend. In order to understand the full significance of any of these instances, we must view them in their relation to each other.

Synods Working Together

But this is only part of the picture. Even as these groups out of various synods have been approaching one another, sometimes to the extent of complete cooperation, so the synods themselves. We have already referred to the negotiations between Missouri and the American Lutheran Church. This latter body is engaged in similar negotiations with almost every other Lutheran synod or church in America, including a number of outspokenly

"liberal" groups. Some of these others are showing even greater eagerness than the American Lutheran Church. The National Lutheran Council is even now the instrument of common speech and action for almost all Lutherans outside of the Synodical Conference. *) The Lutheran World Federation, referred to above, seems to be designed for the same purpose, only on a larger scale.

Unionism Is in the Air

Nor is this urge for union limited to Lutherans. Various Protestant denominations have been negotiating with each other, and various plans have been proposed. The Federal Union plan of the Methodist Dr. E. Stanley Jones which was recently aired over a national hookup of radio stations is an example. The formation of the World Council of Churches, in which many Lutheran Churches hold membership, is no longer a plan but has achieved reality. Another union movement that has reached the goal for which its leaders had long been striving has led to the formation of the Evangelical Church in Germany. This new body is said to include practically all Protestants in Germany, and is made up of Calvinists, Lutherans, and Unionists, as *Time* quite aptly calls the members of the United Churches (*Unierte Kirchen*) of Germany. This same news magazine speaks of the "spiritual unification" of this new group. It cites the new constitution which, "while allowing each church to retain its own viewpoint on Holy Communion, states that all German Protestants can partake of the sacrament in any German Protestant church."

Unification in Other Fields

This brief survey is meant to show the tremendously wide scope of the union movement in the Church. In fact, there is good reason for connecting this present tendency with a similar trend toward unification in other fields. In the business world this is the era of the large corporation. The small grocer is replaced by a national chain of stores. The local public utility is absorbed into a nationwide system. The independent manufacturer must merge with his large competitor or be crowded to the

*) For further news about the National Lutheran Council see the article "Lutheran Bodies Plan New Organization" on page — of this issue.

wall. In the field of labor the individual worker does not count for much unless he joins a union. The local union must have the backing of the national body. National unions must federate with others if they would not be outmatched in the merciless struggle for power. And so it is with nations. Not even our own America dares to go it alone. We must form a Western bloc in order to hold our own against an Eastern bloc. This is advocated as the best available substitute for the ideal of a United Nations Organization, an ideal which for the moment seems to have slipped beyond the grasp of our leaders.

The Church Faces This Trend

This is the world we live in. It is definitely not the world of the little

man, — nor of the small, independent group. Everywhere the trend is toward consolidation, federation, amalgamation, unification. These words have become the slogans of our day. That is the trend that we face also in the Church, the force of which we feel even in the hitherto sheltered seclusion of our Synodical Conference. Unless we realize this, we shall miss the true meaning of the individual problems with which we must deal. They are not isolated incidents. They are not unrelated "cases." They are part of a broad picture, of a sweeping and powerful trend. To become aware of this is an indispensable first step toward a true understanding of our problem.

* * * *

Lutheran Bodies Plan New Organization

(For the information of our readers, and in connection with our current series of articles on Union and Unionism we reprint the following item which appeared under the above heading in the "Lutheran Witness" of January 15, 1949. — E. R.)

Thirty-four representatives of the eight general bodies participating in the National Lutheran Council voted on January 4 in favor of "a closer organizational affiliation of their respective bodies." The meeting was held in the headquarters of the Augustana Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and was attended by Lutheran leaders from all sections of the country, including the eight presidents of the National Lutheran Council groups.

Whether the action will result in the formation of a federation or if it will move still farther in the direction of organic union will be determined by subsequent decisions of the participating bodies. Another meeting of the representatives of the eight groups is scheduled to be held next September, at which time more definite plans will be presented by a special committee of fifteen appointed at the Minneapolis meeting.

The eight general bodies involved in the unity move embrace a total of four million baptized Lutherans, or two thirds of all Lutherans in America. The groups are:

United Lutheran Church in America
Evangelical Lutheran Church

American Lutheran Church
Augustana Lutheran Church
Lutheran Free Church
United Evangelical Lutheran Church
Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church
Suomi Synod

The meeting was held under the sponsorship of the Augustana Lutheran Church and was the result of a resolution adopted by that body at its annual convention last June when it went on record in favor of organic union of the National Lutheran Council groups, with federation as an intermediate step if necessary. Presiding at the Minneapolis conference was Dr. P. O. Bersell, President of the Augustana Church, who set forth in a preliminary statement the motives and purposes of his group in initiating the discussions.

The decisive resolution was presented by Dr. Emanuel Poppen,

president of the American Lutheran Church. It reads:

"Resolved, that it is the sense of this group that a closer organizational affiliation of the participating bodies in the National Lutheran Council is desirable and should be sought by all proper means."

Shall It Be a Federation?

Following the adoption of this resolution, there was an extended discussion relative to the nature of the contemplated organization. While some favored a federation as a preliminary step, others expressed a strong desire that it might go farther in the direction of organic union. Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, president of the United Lutheran Church, argued forcefully for "a federated Church."

By motion of Dr. Oscar F. Blackwelder of Washington, D. C., a member of the United Lutheran Church delegation, it was finally decided to authorize the appointment of a committee of fifteen "to prepare a structural plan" for the new organization.

E. E. RYDEN (Condensed)

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"DID you take notice of that last name in our guest-book?" asked the missionary after the Sunday service, addressing his wife, "the lady signed her home address as Memphis, Tennessee. I wonder why she is way up here, a thousand miles

north from her home?" "Maybe just another war-bride!" replied the pastor's wife. "Well, I'll have to go and find out, maybe tomorrow. I notice that she gave her local address as only about two blocks from our church."

A few days later the missionary called on the lady. Yes, she had been a WAC during the last war. She had met a soldier and after the war they were married. Now she was living here, a long distance away from home. Lonesome. Her husband was not a Lutheran. She was confirmed in one of our Lutheran churches, but was not married by her pastor. Then one day she noticed to her joy our church announcement in the daily paper. She came to our church — her church! How wonderful to worship with fellow-Christians far away from home, to sing the same hymns she used to sing together with her father and mother in her home church, to hear the Word of God expounded as only it is heard in our church!

When asked, "Does your home-pastor know where you are?" she replied, "I doubt it very much. We were not married by him but by a justice of the peace near the army camp, where my husband was stationed. I had intended to write to him, but — well, I just slipped up on it."

Just how many of our members are in a similar manner lost to our church? They get a job away from

home, they get married and move away, an entire family moves into a new locality, etc., without notifying the local pastor. In their home church their names are carried on the books for a while, maybe a few years. Because no one knows where they are eventually their names are stricken from the records. Maybe they will turn up here or there, as did this lady mentioned above. Maybe they are lost to our church for good and perhaps often to heaven too!

Why not inform your pastor, when you go away: on an extended trip, a longer vacation, seeking work somewhere else, etc.? He will be only too glad to give you a letter of introduction to one of our churches in your new home town. If you do not know beforehand what your new address will be, tell your pastor that you are leaving and that you will inform him of your new address, as soon as you know it. By all means, keep your pastor informed of your whereabouts, so that he can arrange for your transfer to your new home church. Your pastor is more than eager to serve you. It costs you nothing. But it may mean the difference between heaven and hell for you! T. H.

Instructions By Mail

"DID I hear correctly today, when you made your announcements in church, that the boy who was confirmed, had been instructed by mail?" inquired Mr. Hope. "Yes, that's what I announced. You see, this boy lives about thirty miles away. There was no way for him to come to my place and none for me to go there, so we arranged to do our studying by mail," replied the pastor. "But, I don't quite understand! I never heard of that! I didn't know that this could be done! I thought one had to attend classes and listen to the teacher, not write to him," replied Mr. Hope somewhat perplexed.

"Instructions by mail may seem like something new to you and to many others, but it really is nothing new at all! Did you ever stop to think, why the Bible was *written*?" asked the pastor. "I don't quite understand what you are driving at," replied Mr. Hope, "we were taught

that the books of the Bible were written by inspiration of God. But I never asked myself, just why the Lord wanted it that way, why He wanted these books to be *written*." "Well," said the pastor, "think for example of St. Paul and his letters. He wrote for instance to the Romans. If he had been in Rome, or could have been there at the time, he surely would not have *written*, would he?" "Very likely not," replied Mr. Hope. "Then he could have *said* the same things and he would not have had to go to the trouble to *write*! Incidentally, isn't it really a blessing in disguise, that St. Paul could not deliver his message in person? Where would we today be without St. Paul's letter to the Romans?" continued the pastor. "That certainly is an entirely different angle from which I ever before looked at the writing of the Bible-books. But your argument sounds quite logical and also very practical," remarked Mr. Hope. "All right then, let us apply

this to the boy mentioned above. I was in duty bound to teach this boy. I could not go to his place, he could not come to mine, so we asked Uncle Sam to carry our messages back and forth: instructions by mail," concluded the pastor.

Material

"Now I am really curious! Just what did you write back and forth? I just can't see through this matter as yet," inquired Mr. Hope. "The matter is not complicated at all, it is rather simple. We began our course of study about three years ago," said the pastor. "Three years, did you say?" inquired Mr. Hope. "Yes, it's about that long. I sent him the Junior Sunday School quarterly for one year, the second year I sent him the Senior quarterly. He was asked to study this day by day, as suggested in the quarterly. After this he was to write out the answers to all the questions and do all the exercises and return his work to me according to the dates given at the beginning of each lesson. His parents were very cooperative. They had supplied him with a copy of Egermeier's Bible Story Book. Besides reading his Sunday School pamphlet he studied the story from Egermeier. Whenever I received his papers I corrected them and returned them to him. The next week the same, etc.," replied the pastor. "That certainly meant a lot of additional work for you," remarked Mr. Hope. "Oh yes, it certainly did! But that is beside the mark entirely. The boy's salvation was the issue," commented the pastor. "And not only that. Just think of what it did for the parents! They worked hand in hand with the pastor. Time and again they were called upon by their son to assist him in his studies. Thus they reviewed much they had forgotten and learned many new things too." "How long did you continue this work?" inquired Mr. Hope. "For about two years," responded the pastor. "And then you confirmed him?" queried Mr. Hope. "No, not yet! After the boy had thus gotten a good foundation in Bible History we switched over to the Catechism. I arranged Luther's Small Catechism into about thirty lessons. At the end of each lesson from twenty to fifty questions were attached. These he had to answer in writing," explained the pastor. "What about memory work?"

inquired Mr. Hope, "didn't he have any of that?" "This boy did not only have to memorize Luther's Small Catechism, he was expected to write all of it from memory," replied the pastor. "But how could you tell that he did not copy it from your paper?" challenged Mr. Hope. "That is not hard to observe, *e. g.*, from his spelling, punctuation, etc. I might also mention, that he had to look up all the so-called prooftexts in his home Bible," continued the pastor. "Well, I am beginning to see now that this instruction by mail is really quite something," remarked Mr. Hope. "Yes, before this boy was confirmed he was required to answer in writing about 200 questions, covering the entire material he thus far had studied. He did a marvelous job, over 90% of his answers were correct." "And then

you confirmed him?" asked Mr. Hope. "Yes, and you were a satisfied witness," concluded the pastor.

"Just one more question," added Mr. Hope, "is this the only time you instructed someone by mail?" "No, I have been doing this for more than 25 years. During World War II, for example, I helped a soldier, who was with the ski-troopers on the top of the Rockies in Colorado. It was very interesting to read his papers, sometimes written by candle light. When he couldn't get a long enough furlough to come to Michigan for his confirmation, one of our missionaries in Denver took care of this," finished the pastor. "Preach the Gospel: from the pulpit, over the air, by mail, any and every legitimate way, in order that some may be saved," mused Mr. Hope. T. H.

tion of the superintendent and observes the festivities.

An Emergency Service

He is not with the group long when the automatic flasher on the wall repeatedly shows the number 13. This is the number assigned to the missionary and which indicates that a special message awaits him at the information desk. He hurries to the desk and is told that he is wanted on 3E. This is the accident ward. His services are required for a man who has been hit by a street-car and now is in critical condition. He finds a man of 65 years with both legs broken, an arm fractured, ribs crushed, head injured. There is an apprehensive look on his face. He is afraid. "Fear not; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." With his thoughts turned away from himself and toward the grace of God in Christ, the patient is soon eased. He thanks the pastor for this much-needed encouragement.

Christmas In Our Institutions

BY A. H. SCHROEDER, CITY MISSIONARY

IN the last four busy months of our work the highlight was the Christmas season. Even though we have evidences of great appreciation and joy on the part of those whom we serve in *all* the seasons, yet the very nature of Christmas seems to bring to words and action what is deeply felt in the heart. In this report I shall try to give you a word-picture of our various Christmas services, telling what you have done for your afflicted brethren and how they have received your effort.

Service at Milwaukee General Hospital

Christmas dawned very early on December 25 for the missionary. He arose from his bed at 4:30 A. M. and was ready to conduct the first service of the day at 6:00 A. M. in the spacious chapel at County General Hospital. A beautiful evergreen, all trimmed and lighted, brought to remembrance for those in attendance their own home churches, similarly decorated for the great festival. An audience of about 50 hearers, most of them nurses in fresh and crisp uniforms topped by new white caps, had gathered to join in the singing of never-old hymns and carols to the new-born Christchild. For this special holiday even the superintendent

of the nursing school with her staff and faculty came to join with us in observing the birthday of our Lord. The most important part of the service was, of course, the Word, and on Christmas day that Word grips the heart more than on other occasions because it presents the essentials of our whole Christian faith and life in such simple and heart-warming manner. The darkness outside was forgotten, the weariness of long hours of duty faded away, and new strength lighted up the faces of all as they wished each other a "Merry Christmas" at the conclusion of the service.

At Breakfast

A special feature of Christmas at the Hospital is the annual nurses' breakfast, held immediately after the chapel hour in the institution's large cafeteria. On this one day of the year the nurses are *served* their meal at candle-lighted and decorated tables, rather than having to serve themselves and eat in small groups at bare tables. To add to the festivity, individuals display their talents in singing Christmas music, reciting poetry, reading the Christmas story, and in presenting a pageant depicting the Savior's birth. Since time allows, the missionary accepts the urgent invita-

Service at the Hospital for Mental Diseases

With a song in his heart the missionary hurries on to the next station on the morning's schedule. This is the Hospital for Mental Diseases where a congregation of about 60 men and women has met for its Christmas service. Each Sunday of the year this congregation gathers here for worship, but this morning the very atmosphere tells that something special is happening. And it isn't the newly-cleaned chapel, nor the shapely Christmas tree, nor the dozen poinsettias banking the altar, nor anything else of an external nature that has raised the spirits of these unfortunate people. It is the joy of assurance, the inner glow at remembering the endless love of God in sending to a world lost in sin a Savior and Redeemer. Darkened minds seem to see, confused minds seem to clear, disturbed minds come to rest, all following that Star of the Word leading them to the manger in Bethlehem, to God's love as displayed in human form in Jesus.

Our service here is beautified by the solo work of Mr. Warner, one of our Board members who has a deep personal interest in our afflicted charges. His faithful wife, who has served us well on so many occasions

as organist, accompanied the solos and also our congregational singing. From his position at the altar the missionary could see many a patient trying to hide emotional displays by quickly brushing aside a tear or two with a flip of the hand. The thought of not being able to celebrate the holiday in the circle of loved ones deeply affected some of our people. But they bore their cross well. And when the sermon had been preached and the last hymn sung, they left the chapel with a satisfied mien, as though a great burden had been lifted from their shoulders. They were sure now; Christmas is Christmas no matter where we are, as long as that Savior lives in our hearts.

Service at Muirdale Sanatorium

From the Mental Hospital the missionary and his helpers rushed to Muirdale Sanatorium for a service at 9:00 A. M. Since special permission had been granted by certain doctors to some of their patients whose condition otherwise would prohibit them from making the extra effort of getting to the chapel, the pews on Christmas morning were filled to capacity. Here was a congregation composed mostly of young people between the ages of 20 and 40, young fathers and mothers who were spending their second or third Christmas away from home. Already in the weeks before the holiday they valiantly choked back the tears when that longing came to be with their little ones on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. But this morning it was a bit easier to smile. A small touch of home drew near as they could take part in the church service. The chapel was beautifully decorated. The altar had two spruce trees on either side, and the soft glow of the candles intensified the deep red of the poinsettias. In the center, at the foot of the crucifix, stood a bouquet of fresh roses. Off to one side an elaborate crib with the figures of the nativity scene had been placed. The worshipers were deeply impressed by the simplicity and beauty of the setting, a fitting tribute to Him whose birthday we were celebrating.

In spite of their physical handicaps, the hearers joined happily in singing the hymns of praise to the Savior. And they gave their undivided attention to the Gospel lesson, the prayers, and the sermon. At the close of the

service many of them were reluctant to leave the chapel, since for some of them it would mean that they would not be able to come to chapel again until next Easter, when special privileges would be granted by their doctors. They chatted merrily with their fellow-Christians, exchanging greetings, and with the missionary and his helpers, expressing their gratitude to all those who were responsible for providing these worship services for them. And as a personal token of their appreciation they presented greetings by card to all three missionaries and to Mrs. Warner, our organist.

Service at the County Children's Home

The last service of the morning was held at the County Children's Home, where 240 boys and girls were waiting to begin their Christmas worship. There was great excitement and expectation in the shining faces of these youngsters, ranging in age from three to fifteen years. And yet, as the service began, they were as quiet and attentive as any adult congregation. It warmed the heart to hear them sing "Away in the Manger," "Silent Night," and "From Heaven Above." For the preacher it was an inspira-

tion to see how eagerly even the three-year-olds drank in the story of that Baby Jesus sent from heaven to be our Savior and Lord. For many of them, no doubt, it was the *first time* that they heard the wonderful news.

With this service the missionary's morning schedule was complete. But there was to be little time for relaxation even now. Before another week had passed, he had conducted eleven services, in addition to serving about 80 patients with the Sacrament. Busy? — Yes; but happy too; because the lives of others had been enriched by the greatest news of all: "Unto you is born a Savior!"

Caroler and Choirs Aid Us

We were also able to spread cheer and help instill the proper Christmas spirit by utilizing the volunteer services of carolers, choirs, and individual soloists at various institutions.

Finally, we express our appreciation to all who supported by their prayers and gifts our endeavors during the past year. Liberal contributions were received for our Literature Fund and for our Visual Aids library. A complete report will be rendered in May, the end of our fiscal year, as an appendix to our general treasurer's annual statement.

Death Is A Sleep

BY LUCIDETIUS

YESTERDAY I attended the funeral of John Andrews, a young friend who'd been bedridden for many years and with whom I spent countless enjoyable evenings playing chess, listening to recorded music (mostly Bach), and discussing various topics, trivial and not so trivial. John, although without benefit of a formal education, had read wisely, and he possessed an alert mind.

His sister Julia, a sweet brown-eyed child of fifteen, was very fond of him. I worried how she'd take his death. I needn't have.

During the service she wept but little and to herself. A blessed relief from the spectacle of emotional abandon one often is forced to witness: the agonized sobs, the hoot and holler of exaggerated grief, the moans which seem to intone: "All is

lost." She was composed and dignified.

After the burial I stopped at her house to talk to her and to John's parents. She clasped my hands, smiled, and said: "John's asleep." I asked her what she meant, and she handed me the following letter to read. . . .

Dear Julia,

I was grieved to hear of your sorrow.

Your brother John was dear to you, I realize; you wish he might have been permitted to stay awhile. It is our habit to assume those we love will live to a great age. We assume longevity for ourselves, too. Since we cannot cheat Death of his consequences, we hope to cheat him of his constant threat by ignoring

him. When he enters our house, he always does so unexpectedly, like a rude visitor, without knocking. We can be forewarned a thousand times of his approach; we can hear his footfalls clearly several years away; but when Death turns the knob and steps inside, we are always shocked.

I think you will agree, Julia, that for a good many years now (ever since the Fall), death has been the most natural phenomenon in the world. It is strange our surprise stays with us. More strange our regret. For we who have been "born again" certainly must realize that only through death can we achieve that state of perfection God demands of us.

Comfort your heart, my dear Julia, with the sure knowledge that your Christian brother is now perfect in a far more real way than you, in your child-like hero-worship, thought him "perfect" on earth. This crown Christ has won for him.

Recall, for a moment, Stephen's last bitter hour. His enemies, enraged by his forthright testimony against them, stopped their ears and rushed at him with their stones, determined that every bone should be broken this time, the frail skeleton exposed through the torn and bleeding flesh.

What violence! And yet (how startling the viewpoint) this murder is said to end in sleep. Stephen, on his knees, prays to the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit; prays for the men who are killing him: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

"And when he had said this," the Divine Word casually concludes, "he fell asleep."

This is Christian death, Julia, and whether caused by the outrage of stones or shell fragments, by the benign touch of lingering disease or old age, it is a sleep. And all these sleepers, including your brother, will awaken to a new, wondrous life.

For we shall be like Him!

That's a slumber to look forward to, isn't it? A welcome slumber-time, when our day becomes night, that ought to turn our thoughtless surprise and regret into a serene state of expectancy and resignation. Bach conveys this very feeling, by music, in his beautiful "Come, Soothing Death." Luther, by words, in "Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands," reveals why this tranquil attitude toward death is now possible. In high spirits he sings:

"But Jesus Christ, God's only Son,
To our low state descended,
The cause of Death He has undone,
His power forever ended,
Ruined all his right and claim
And left him nothing but the name,—
His sting is lost forever.
Hallelujah!"

And so, — my dear young sister, do not weep for long. When you read this, I shall be asleep — only asleep.

Love,

John.

ANNIVERSARY

St. John's Congregation Baraboo, Wisconsin

On October 27, 1948, the St. John's Congregation in Baraboo, Wisconsin, celebrated Pastor H. Kirchner's twentieth anniversary as pastor in Baraboo. Combined with this celebration it also celebrated his thirty-fifth anniversary in the ministry. The service was held in the evening and every seat was filled. The school children with the choir under the able direction of L. Raabe enhanced the service by rendering two very beautiful numbers. The undersigned preached the sermon. The Lord has visibly blessed the work of Pastor Kirchner in Baraboo.

At the close of the service the president of the congregation presented the pastor with a gift. Thereupon a social gathering was held in the church parlors. May the Lord continue to bless Pastor Kirchner's work in Baraboo.

E. A. WENDLAND.

FIFTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Boese, Sr. Cudahy, Wisconsin

The fiftieth wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Boese, Sr., of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Cudahy, Wisconsin, was celebrated in a special church service on November 27, 1948. The undersigned spoke to them on the basis of 2 Cor. 9, 15. May our gracious Lord bless their remaining years on earth and finally receive them to glory! H. J. VOGEL.

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Pastor H. C. Haase Benton Harbor, Michigan

On December 12, 1948, the Rev. H. C. Haase concluded forty years of

faithful service as pastor of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Benton Harbor, Michigan. The congregation observed the anniversary in a fitting evening service, in which the pastors R. Gensmer of Coloma, Michigan, and H. Zink of Stevensville, Michigan, preached sermons extolling the grace of God in establishing the ministry of the Gospel on earth. The undersigned acted as liturgist.

In appreciation of the forty years of service given them by the ministry of their pastor, the members of the congregation assembled in the basement of the church for a dinner planned by the Ladies' Aid and at this occasion presented Pastor Haase with a gift of \$5,000.00.

Because Rev. Haase felt himself physically unable to do justice to the work in his congregation, which work in late years has multiplied with its growth, he, on his fortieth anniversary, resigned as pastor with the offer that he will be ready to serve St. Matthew's as his health and as conditions may warrant.

May the Lord bless His servant and grant him health and strength to continue enjoying the privilege of serving Him in His Kingdom.

E. J. BERG.

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

Mr. and Mrs. John Gens Danube, Minnesota

In the midst of their children and relatives Mr. and Mrs. John Gens, members of St. Matthew's Church, Danube, Minnesota, were privileged to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary on Sunday, November 7, 1948. The undersigned conducted a brief service.

H. C. SCHNITKER.

* * * *

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Folkerts Danube, Minnesota

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Folkerts, members of St. Matthew's Church, Danube, Minnesota, were privileged to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary November 25, 1948. The undersigned conducted a brief service. To express their thanks to God for His past mercies the jubilarians gave \$100.00 to the church for its mission program.

H. C. SCHNITKER.

CANDIDATES

The following candidates have been nominated for the office of Executive Secretary of the Board of Education, Wisconsin Synod:

Teacher Arthur Glende, Arlington, Minn.
Teacher Gilbert Glaesser, Beaver Dam, Wis.
Teacher William Kirschke, Milwaukee, Wis.

Prof. Carl Lawrenz, Thiensville, Wis.
Teacher Armin Rauschke, Mankato, Minn.
Pastor Melvin Schwenzen, West Allis, Wis.
Prof. Erich Sievert, New Ulm, Minn.
Teacher Herbert Sitz, New Ulm, Minn.
Teacher Leonard Stellwagen, West Allis, Wis.

Teacher Emil Trettin, Milwaukee, Wis.
Teacher Meilahn Zahn, Menasha, Wis.
Any suggestions in regard to these candidates are to be sent to the undersigned secretary by Tuesday, February 22. The Board of Education will meet for the purpose of calling a man for the vacant position on Thursday, February 24, in Jerusalem School, Milwaukee, at 9 A. M.

REV. HENRY GIESCHEN,
307 South High Street,
Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin,
Secretary, Board of Education,
Wisconsin Synod.

CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES

TWIN CITIES MIXED PASTORAL CONFERENCE

The Twin Cities Mixed Pastoral Conference (Synodical Conference) will conduct its annual sessions on February 15 and 16, 1949, d. v., at Pilgrim Evangelical Lutheran Church, 39th Street and First Avenue, South, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Roman J. Palmer, pastor. Chief essayist: Prof. Otto E. Sohn, Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, "The More Excellent Way." The Rev. Egbert Schaller of Nicollet, Minnesota, will present a paper on homiletics. A Communion service will be held on the opening day at 10:30 A. M. The Pastoral service will be held Tuesday evening, 7:30. Speakers for devotions and services have been appointed by the committee and notified.

THEODORE A. DANIEL, Secretary.

REDWOOD FALLS PASTORAL CONFERENCE

Date: February 22, 1949.
Place: Emmanuel Church, Wellington Township (G. Zimmermann).
Time: 9 A. M., C. S. T.
Speaker: Hugo Schnitker (H. Kesting).

Papers: Exegesis of 1 John 4, W. Dorn; What is the Scriptural Teaching on Offense?, H. Schnitker; When is it the Duty of the Church to Carry Out Church Discipline?, J. Bradtke; Exegesis of 1 Thess., Theo. Bauer.

N. E. Sauer, Secretary.

WINNEBAGO PASTORAL CONFERENCE

The Winnebago Pastoral Conference will meet February 21 and 22 at Redeemer's, corner of Forest and Hickory, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. First session will start at 9 A. M.

Topics: Is Gambling a Sin?, G. Schaefer; An Evaluation of Bazaars, Church Sales, etc., vs. Christian Stewardship, I. Habeck; Matthew 13, 24ff, R. Reim; Sermon Study for Sunday before Lent, P. Bergmann; Micah, W. Gawrisch; Essay on Bible Class, A. Koelpin.

Preacher: M. Drews; alternate, W. Wichmann.

Pastors wishing to stay overnight may announce with the host pastor, Robert Reim, 422 Forest Avenue, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

OSCAR SIEGLER, Secretary.

MANITOWOC PASTORAL CONFERENCE

Time: Tuesday, February 22, 1949, beginning at 9 A. M.

Place: Bethany Ev. Lutheran Church, Manitowoc, Wisconsin (Pastor A. Roekle).
Preacher: Pastor H. Pusehl (Pastor L. Koeninger).

ROLAND EHLKE, Secretary.

WEST-CENTRAL MINNESOTA MIXED CONFERENCE

The West-Central Minnesota Mixed Conference will meet at St. John's Lutheran Church, Wheaton, Minnesota (Rev. E. C. Hallstein, pastor), February 15 and 16. First session begins at 10 A. M. Please announce intended presence or absence to pastor loci.

E. BINGER, Secretary.

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE OF THE NEBRASKA DISTRICT

The Southern Conference of the Nebraska District will meet in delegate session at Lincoln, Nebraska, Pastor L. Gruendeman, on February 22 and 23, 1949. Opening session at 10 A. M.

Papers: Conclusion of 10 Commandments, A. Degner; Jonah, Its Message and Application, D. Grummert; Universal Priesthood and Public Ministry, S. Kugler; Scriptural Position with Reference to Church and Welfare Work, N. Mielke; Augsburg Confession, Article VI, M. Koepsell.

Speaker: R. Bittorf (J. Ruege).
Kindly announce to the host pastor.

W. SCHALLER, JR., Secretary.

CENTRAL PASTORAL CONFERENCE OF THE WESTERN WISCONSIN DISTRICT

Place: Eastside English Lutheran, Madison, Wisconsin, R. A. Siegler, pastor.
Time: February 22, 1949. Opening and Roll Call at 9 A. M.

9:15, Exegesis on Colossians, ch. 1; 10:45, Financial Report, Pastor J. M. Raasch; 11:00, Holy Communion; 1:30 P. M., Opening, Business Matters, and Election of Officers; 2:15, "Holy Baptism in Relation to the Doctrine of the Church," Pastor R. C. Horlamus; 3:15, Casual Questions.

Confessional: Dr. E. Kiessling; alternate, Pastor W. A. Eggert.

H. GEIGER, Secretary.

NEW ULM PASTORAL CONFERENCE

Place: St. Paul's School, New Ulm, Minnesota.

Date: February 23, 9:30 A. M.
Essays: Exegesis on Philippians 1, Pastor E. Schmelzer; A Study of New Developments of the Veterans Organization, Pastor C. H. Lueker.

Confessional Address: Pastor R. Schroeder (Pastor W. Schmidt).

W. FRANK, Secretary.

COLORADO MISSION DISTRICT DELEGATE CONFERENCE

Place: Golden, Colorado (O. Kreie, pastor).

Time: February 22, 23 and 24 (beginning 1 P. M., Tuesday).

Old Papers: Romans 2, 11, ch. 3, Kreie. New Papers: Romans, ch. 4-6, Kreie; Is the Church Responsible for the Morals of the Government?, Luedtke; The Christian Training of the Child in Contrast to the Method of the World, Witt.

Speaker: Roth (Unke).
Please announce yourself and delegate to the local pastor.

R. UNKE, Secretary.

ORDINATIONS AND INSTALLATIONS

(Authorized by the Proper Officials)
Installed

Professor

Kalb, Gustav, as instructor at Lutheran High School, Racine, Wisconsin, by Arnold Koelpin; Third Sunday after Epiphany, January 23, 1949.

Pastors

Krause, G. O., in St. Matthew's Church, Marathon, Wisconsin, by Edw. H. Kionka; Third Sunday after Epiphany, January 23, 1949.

Krubsack, Joseph D., in St. Andrew's Church, Goodrich, Wisconsin, by O. Lemke; First Sunday after Epiphany, January 9, 1949.

Neubauer, Harold A., in St. Paul's Church, Tp. Dallas, and in St. Paul's Church, Tp. Prairie Farm, Barron County, Wisconsin, by H. C. Nitz; Third Sunday after Epiphany, January 23, 1949.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND THANKS

During the fall term, donations of canned goods and vegetables of all kinds for our Seminary kitchen were received from the congregations of the pastors listed below. Frequently these donations were also accompanied by substantial gifts of money either for our Kitchen Fund or for the Seminary Chapel Fund. In such cases the amount is indicated in parentheses. A modern organ for our chapel is now being built by the Wicks Organ Company and should be ready for installation in the month of May. Our Chapel Fund has therefore achieved its primary purpose. We plan to use the funds which still remain and others which may come to us in the future for various other improvements at our Seminary.

Wadzinski, A. (\$28.00), Schultz, Arnold (\$25.00), Kuether, H. A. (\$47.50), Burkholz, Paul (\$25.00), Gieschen, P. (\$10.00), Hartwig, W. (\$2.00), Schroeder, E. (\$7.00), Sauer, W. F. (\$62.50), Schaefer, G. A. (\$25.00), Dahlke, J. C., Schaller, G., Marti, R., Habermann, E., Segler, O., Senger, F. H. (\$9.00), Brenner, J. F. (\$2.00), Goede, R. (\$12.00), Rische, M. (\$3.00), Huth, E. J., Schwertfeger, H., Henning, O., Zink, W., Diehl, H. J. (\$3.55), Lorenz, A., Barthels, Geo., Henning, O. (\$1.00), Hallauer, L. (\$16.00), Rohr, A. von, Kneueppel, F. C., Hartwig, W. J., Voss, A. P. (\$81.25), Wiechmann, R., Brandt, F. M. (\$3.00), Halboth, Arthur F. (\$25.00), Otto, R. (\$1.00), Hallauer, L. (\$5.00), Tacke, E. and Koehler, H. (\$10.00), Lehmann, L. G. (\$2.00), Schroeder, E. C. (\$1.00), Toepel, K. (\$7.00), Boldt, G. (\$10.00).

We likewise wish to acknowledge donations from: Bible Class of St. John's Lutheran Church, Milwaukee (\$107.25), Ladies' Lutheran Missionary Society, Lake Mills, Wis. (\$5.00), Mrs. George P. Mayer (\$500.00), Ladies' Aid, First Ev. Lutheran Church, La Crosse, Wis. (\$10.00), Ladies' Aid, David Star Church, Kirchhahn (\$16.75), Also two anonymous gifts of (\$500.00), (\$150.00).

The following sums have been added to the Organ Fund as Memorial Wreaths:

In memory of: Mr. Ervin Fischer, by Rev. Harry Schaar, \$2.00.

In memory of: Mrs. Lydia Meyer, by the Seminary Board, \$18.00; Rev. G. Bradtke, \$5.00; St. Lukas Church, Milwaukee, \$5.00; Prof. Henry Meyer, \$3.00; Miss Lydia Meyer, \$3.00; John Meyer, \$3.00; Arnold Meyer, \$3.00; R. C. Freihube, \$5.00; F. W. Sampe, \$10.00.

In memory of: Pfc. Ralph Taylor, by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Schlei, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Hollander, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Pleuss, \$3.00.

In memory of: Mrs. Louise Debbert, by Rev. H. C. Nitz, \$6.00.

In memory of: Miss Anita Zimmer, by Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Hookstead, \$5.00.

In memory of: Oscar Redlin, by Rev. Adolph von Rohr, \$10.00.

To all these donors we wish to express our sincerest appreciation and thanks.

Lutheran Theological Seminary,
E. Reim, Bursar.

* * * * *

The following donations have been received from student publications equipment at Michigan Lutheran Seminary:

St. Stephen's Altar Guild, Adrian, Michigan, \$5.00; St. John's Ladies' Aid, Wayne, Michigan, \$31.00; Rev. R. G. Koch, Zilwaukee, Michigan, \$5.00; Trinity Lutheran Church, Jenera, Ohio, \$25.00; Immanuel Ladies' Aid, Findlay, Ohio, \$3.00.

To these donors our heartiest thanks.

G. R. MARTIN.

* * * * *

For Church Extension Fund — in memory of Mrs. Louie Pottratz from the following by Rev. Wm. Lindloff: Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Schoneman, Mrs. Louise Hafer, Mrs. Ottilie Rutz, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Drumm, Mr. and Mrs. Eng. Score, Mr. and Mrs. H. Conrad, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Girard, Mr. Wm. Zarsky, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Amundson, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Berge, Mr. Arthur Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Leo Bergman, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Heper, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Sundermayer, each \$1.00; Mr. C. T. Kappelman, 50 cents; Mr. and Mrs. Carl Lange, Mrs. C. L. Pottratz, Mr. Louis Pottratz, Mr. Richard Pottratz, Mr. Albert Pottratz, Mr. and Mrs. Leo Pottratz, Rev. and

Mrs. H. Rutz, each 50 cents; Mr. Ewald Pottratz, Miss Louise Pottratz, \$5.00; Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lange, \$4.00; Mr. John Lange, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Kiecksee and sons, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Schroeder, each \$2.00.

WM. LINDLOFF.

BOOK REVIEW

The Seven Ways Of Sorrow. By Pastor E. Wagner and Professor W. G. Polack, L. L. D. Print, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri. Price, \$1.50 net. Pages 115.

The double series of Lenten sermons contained in this book are designed to give the busy pastor food for thought. The first series carries the following heading: The Way to Gethsemane; The Way to Calaphas' Mansion; The Way to Pilate's Court; The Way to Herod's Palace; The Way to Rome's Tribunal; The Way to Calvary's Cross; The Way to Joseph's Tomb.

The second series is a meditation on the great hymns for Lent. The following hymns come into consideration: A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth; Rock Of Ages; There Is A Foundation Filled With Blood; Upon The Cross Extended; Just As I Am; In The Cross Of Christ I Glory; Soul, Adorn Thy-

self With Gladness; O Sacred Head, Now Wounded. A Scripture passage pertinent to the text is always used with each hymn. These sermons are well organized and the thoughts easy to follow. The Lenten preacher will find them worth while reading.

W. J. S.

This Is Life Eternal. By E. Clifford Nelson, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Print, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Price, \$1.75. Pages, 140.

This unusual collection of Lenten sermons is based on the Ten Commandments headed by some word taken from the passion story. The sermons portray the transgression of the Commandment well enough, often very well, but we miss the Gospel in them, the sufferings and death of Christ, which we look for during the Lenten season. But make no mistake, the preacher, though he will not always be able to agree with the author, will find a wealth of material to ponder.

W. J. S.

When Thy Face I see. By Armin C. Oldsen, M. A. Print, Ernst Kaufmann, Inc., Chicago. Price, \$2.25. Pages, 131.

The book contains sermons for the Lenten and Easter season. Its contents is: the

Glorified Look; the Steadfast Look; the Sorrowful Look; the Agonized Look; the Friendly Look; the Understanding Look; the Compassionate Look; the Gracious Look; the Triumphant Look; the Holy Supper; God and Humanity; Living Forever. It is clear why the title of the book reads, "When Thy Face I See. The sermons are well worth reading.

W. J. S.

Live To Win. By Oscar C. Hanson. Print, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Price, \$1.75. Pages, 145.

The contents of this book is especially prepared for young people. Those who will take the time to peruse its pages will find much to think about. It is well written and interesting.

W. J. S.

Till He Come and Thy King Cometh. By Fred H. Lindemann. Print, Ernst Kaufmann, Inc. Price, \$2.00 per volume. Pages, 124 and 144 respectively.

Whether one will agree with the author in all he says or not, these two volumes contain a wealth of material on the Lord's Supper. No one will read them without getting some blessing. We recommend them for serious study.

W. J. S.

TREASURER'S STATEMENT
July 1, 1948 to December 31, 1948

Receipts	
Cash Balance July 1, 1948.....	\$ 53,441.20
Budgetary Collections:	
General Administration	\$150,254.86
Educational Institutions	32,907.93
Home for the Aged	2,210.74
Spiritual Welfare Commission	1,609.61
For Other Missions	306,623.04
Indigent Students	1,291.50
General Support	10,295.95
School Supervision	544.84
Revenue	77,521.91
Total Budgetary Collections and Revenues	\$583,260.38
Non-Budgetary Receipts:	
Proceeds from Bonds Reserved for Northwestern Lutheran Academy Dormitory	65,000.00
U. S. Government Bonds Sold	200,000.00
Payments on Mortgage Receivable	1,900.00
Miscellaneous	760.00
Total Receipts	\$850,920.38
	\$904,361.58
Disbursements	
Budgetary Disbursements:	
General Administration	\$ 21,309.80
Theological Seminary	30,731.24
Northwestern College	81,542.85
Dr. Martin Luther College.....	68,171.59
Michigan Lutheran Seminary..	34,662.09
Northwestern Luth. Academy..	17,107.12
Home for the Aged	9,221.07
Missions — Gen. Administration	215.80
Indian Mission	52,114.61
Negro Mission	14,303.02
Home Missions	190,611.75
Poland Mission	6,564.45
Madison Student Mission	1,006.64
Spiritual Welfare Commission	2,087.76
Winnebago Lutheran Academy	250.00
General Support	29,005.00
School Supervision	3,537.38
Total Budgetary Disbursements..	\$562,342.17

Non-Budgetary Disbursements:	
Payments on Northwestern Lutheran Academy Dormitory	66,306.01
On West North Avenue Property	146,801.34
Total Disbursements	\$775,449.52
Cash Balance December 31, 1948	\$128,912.06
C. J. NIEDFELDT, Treasurer.	

DONATIONS SENT DIRECTLY TO TREASURER'S OFFICE	
For December, 1948	
For Spiritual Welfare Commission	
Carl J. Grief, Mesa, Arizona.....	\$ 1.00
Ladies' Aid Society of St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, Green Bay, Wisconsin	5.00
St. Paul's Ladies' Aid, Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin	10.00
Mr. Merrill Buck, Manitowoc, Wisconsin	3.00
Mr. Wm. J. Miller, Paulina, Iowa	1.00
Jehovah Senior Walther League, St. Paul, Minnesota	1.00
	\$ 21.00
For Missions	
N. N., Janesville, Wisconsin	\$ 25.00
	\$ 25.00
For Church Extension Fund	
Memorial Wreath in memory of Mrs. H. Oestreich, sent in by Rev. Ed. Zell	\$ 20.00
Memorial Wreath in memory of Herman Fuldner, given by Mr. and Mrs. Strassburg, Mr. and Mrs. Venz, Mr. and Mrs. Genske, Mr. and Mrs. Minkwitz, and Pastor and Mrs. Hallauer.....	15.00
Rev. and Mrs. Carl C. Henning and Otto and Hertha	5.00
	\$ 40.00
C. J. NIEDFELDT, Treasurer.	



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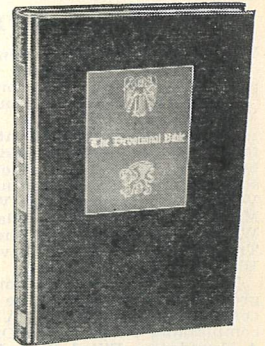
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(Luke and John)

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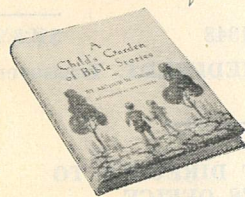


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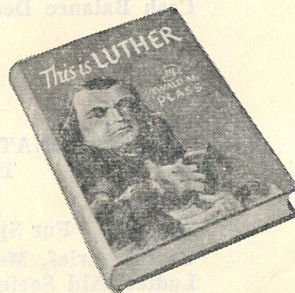
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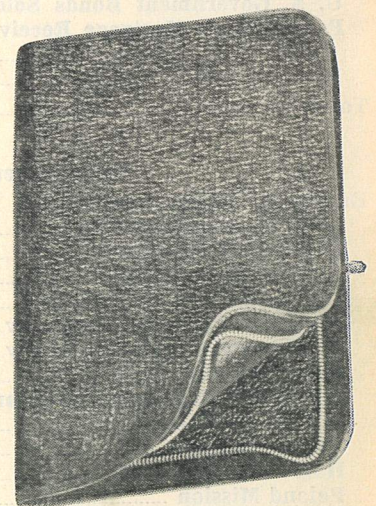
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