

The Northwestern Lutheran

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Wis

The Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers

Him not leave us, nor forsake us. 1 Kings 8: 57.

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FAITH AND HOPE

O holy Savior! Friend unseen,
The faint, the weak on Thee may lean;
Help me throughout life's changing scene,
By faith to cling to Thee!

Oft when I seem to tread alone
Some barren waste with thorns o'ergrown,
A voice of love in gentle tone
Whispers, "Still cling to Me."

Though faith and hope awhile be tried,
I ask not, need not aught beside;
How safe, how calm, how satisfied,
The soul that clings to Thee!

I fear not life's rough storms to brave,
Since Thou art near and strong to save,
Nor shudder e'en at death's dark wave,
Because I cling to Thee.

COMMENTS

Have You Use For This? Here is a new thing in cash registers; according to our best knowledge it is not yet patented and with a little ingenuity you can make it in your leisure moments if you have a little mechanical ability. If you know where it is needed—but let us tell you about it first. It is a box, not very large, so constructed that when a half dollar is deposited there is no noise or sound; when a quarter, there is a clear and very audible jingle; put in a dime and a bell rings; drop a nickel and a whistle blows; the coming of a cent is heralded by exploding a cartridge. You do not get the idea? But you will now; it is for church use. Among the many things with which the church must contend is the difficulty with which money for necessary work is secured. This great need drove a Pennsylvania minister to the invention of this ingenious collection plate. You can imagine the consternation of some unsuspecting pillar of the church whose Sunday morning gift is greeted by the explosion of a cartridge—especially after he finds out the meaning of the plot. But I fear the good inventor absent-mindedly forgot all about the little boys. Can you imagine a boy who would let such a glorious opportunity for noise slip by? No, you cannot. You can easily think of at least a half dozen boys who would beg mother for a half dollar on Sunday morning to put into the collection box and who would then run to the corner grocer and get that half dollar exchanged for fifty shiny pennies so that they might enjoy the

blissful music of fifty bangs—why that's better than setting off a bunch of cannon crackers on the Fourth, and right in church, too, and old Deacon Jones, who hates noise, holding the box. There can be no doubt, the church, where all the boys of the town might be found on Sunday morning, would be the church with the responsive collection plate. This is just another of those aberrations of the American church. It must be doubted whether this vile contrivance was really meant for use, but even so, it is a sad commentary on the unwillingness of many to support their church and also on the desperation with which the unfortunate leaders of such niggardly congregations must seek for means to find the money needed for the material wants of the very congregation that refuses to meet such obligations. One result of the deplorable condition is the indiscriminate begging, or collecting, that many American churches habitually practice. Everybody is asked to help them out. As a general rule, it might be stated that, if a congregation large enough to have the service of a minister must seek special schemes to raise money in its own circle for ordinary needs, it is sadly lacking in that devotion which one expects in servants of Christ. But if such a congregation is forced to go beyond its own circle for aid, it is imposing on others and pauperizing itself. So, perhaps, you would better wait with the construction of that new collection box; but you might offer to show the next man from some other church, who wants to collect from you, just how it is made, so that he can try it out on his delinquent fellow church member. H. K. M.

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Modern Methods Discussed Perhaps some of our readers who are also readers of the daily papers have read the following:

"The New York conference of the Methodist Episcopal church gave its approval yesterday to several essentially modern methods of drawing people to church. Among them were:

"Moving pictures in churches or church buildings.

"Brass bands or orchestras to draw general public.

"Gymnasium in connection with churches to interest young people."

As a fit comment on the above we print the following, also a clipping, with our full endorsement:

"'When the success of a church depends upon a paid choir or a moving picture machine, that church is ready either for regeneration or burial,' is one of the state-

ments made by Shailer Mathews, dean of the divinity school of the University of Chicago, in an article in the 'Biblical World,' sent out yesterday." G.

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Have You a Moment's Time? What is the longest book, the book it takes longest to read? No doubt you have read very many long novels; you may have been in suspense from one week or month to the next while your family paper or your favorite magazine published a gripping serial. Some book may have so captivated you that you burned the midnight oil and could not part from it until you knew just what turn the hero's fortunes had taken. But the book that seems to be the longest of them all is not so very long when you take it up. That is the Bible, particularly the New Testament. If I but had more time, you hear some say, I would read the Bible more diligently. They show plainly that to them it is a very long book. Without intending disrespect, they intimate that it is quite a task to go through it. If, in some circles at least, someone has read the Bible from beginning to end, the performance is hailed as a record and it is permitted to stand without much competition for quite a while by the same people who have read enough penny dreadfuls and novels and magazine fiction to stack up ten times as high as the Bible every year or six months. Yes, the Bible must be the longest book of all. Most of us at some time or other grow enthusiastic over some book we have recently read and eagerly seize the opportunity to tell our friends about the interesting things we found there. In fact, most of us have friends who have a perfect mania for telling us what they have found interesting in their reading. All this is not very good evidence to support the case of those who say they have little time to read the Bible—unless there is so little time for this reason. How long do you think the New Testament is? In the Bibles on our desk we find that in one there are 340 pages, in the other, with slightly smaller type, there are but 240. That is about the length of a short novel. The libraries give you from seven to fourteen days to finish a book of that length, assuming that you use them in your spare time; for the public library is for working people who can only read in spare time. A month to read the New Testament would therefore be a very liberal allowance. A few weeks ago a pastor tested out how long it takes to read the New Testament aloud. He gathered twenty-six members of his church and began reading at six o'clock in the morning and by eight in the evening they had finished, taking turns. They read the last chapter in unison. Allowing an hour for luncheon, that was thirteen hours, a little more than half a day. Reading aloud takes about two or three times as long as reading for one's self. If one were trying to read a race, six hours would easily

suffice in reading the book from beginning to end. Yet you often have so little time, you say, that you shun the task of even starting it. Do not mistake the purpose of these lines, there is no gain in performing the reading as a task, the heart must enter and will enter if you but read. If you have only a minute or two, read a Psalm; if you have more time, read, not a chapter, but a whole Epistle or a whole Gospel; you have read three times as much on many an evening. After you have once begun in earnest, you will need little advice and still less encouragement. And you will never say, I've read the Bible, but rather, I am reading it.

H. K. M.

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Not Our Trouble A brother editor in a note to his contributors says: "He would, furthermore, let it be known that neither he nor the printer are handwriting experts, and requests, therefore, that all copy be written in a plain and legible hand, with pen and ink, or, if possible, be typewritten. It would also be well for all contributors to bear in mind that the editor has neither time nor the inclination to rewrite and recast all contributions made to the paper." We have no similar complaint to make; our brethren in the ministry show us extreme consideration; they hardly ever send us any communication. We would, therefore, inform our non-contributors that we are not mind-readers, which fact explains the sad dearth of news in our columns. If we are to publish news items, they must be communicated to us.

J. B.

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A Bit from the Police Court ". . . . then the eyes of the father and the mother had been opened. The girl herself began to understand what she had escaped. Taking her hands in his, the lieutenant addressed her in fatherly tones.

"Do you go to church?" he asked. She shook her head.

"Have you ever been in Sunday school?" Another negative shake. He turned in astonishment to the parents. Both confessed that neither had ever been to church or Sunday school.

"Is there a church near your home?" he asked.

"Yes, there's a little Presbyterian church right near," replied the mother.

"Well, I want you to promise me you'll see that your daughter goes to church there tomorrow morning and every Sunday morning until she is eighteen," said the lieutenant."

That is what the unemotional police court reporter wrote for his paper. It had been a case of criminal negligence on the part of parents, of the threatened destruction of a young girl's life. A horrible thing when parents' eyes are "opened" only when their child is balancing on the brink of disaster. Is it not then

almost too late for help? The policeman knew that all that he and the court could do would be utterly unavailing to mend matters. He also put his finger on the sore spot. All people concerned were heathen. He did more than the most policemen would have done by showing them the aching void in their lives. Whether or not his advice will lead to results in the regeneration of this wayward family, no one can tell. We need not discuss the question of the business of the church to help out police courts when other means to settle vexed questions fail. We need not point out the difference between "going to church and Sunday school" and being a Christian. But there are two things this little happening, which may be repeated in every American city every day, does illustrate: nothing can replace the moral training which the police lieutenant quite properly associated with the Christian church and the "iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those that hate Him." The only commentary that seems necessary is, that the iniquity of the fathers is nowhere more apparent and more sure of fatal consequences than where it takes the form of depriving the child of training and instruction in the Word of God. And that is one thing which many parents, members of Christian churches, are guilty of when they do not make use of the schools provided for us by the grace of God, especially the all-week parish school. "Why are Americans such conspicuous law-breakers?" was asked in our last number. The lieutenant seems to know one cause which accounts for a vast amount of lawbreaking. H. K. M.

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An Expert's Opinion It must be admitted that we are here touching an old, old question. But the question is reopened semi-annually and we cannot quite escape it. It will continue to be brought to the fore as long as the present state of civilization exists. It concerns the value of the theater as a moral force. Some people cannot refrain from asserting that a play may have great value as a teacher; that it shows us what is good and what is bad and teaches us to shun the evil and to practice the splendid virtues that serve the "hero" so well for the fine end in the last act just before the curtain drops. And right here is where these very advocates of the excellence of the theater damage their case and challenge all reasoning people and most of all Christians, who have definite moral standards, to differ with them. A play may show the manners of a certain time or of a certain set of human beings; it may picture them in various actions that are either good or bad; it may be a slice of real life in all its realistic ugliness; it may be an idealized conception of some type of human represented by a person in the drama; it may be all that—but never is it a moral force, never. With perfect propriety one

might add that moving pictures and all works of fiction are subject to the same restriction. If it be contended that such judgment is passed by persons that know little or nothing of the drama, there is no dearth of testimony that must be accepted as competent. Just now a play is enjoying a run partly due to the extensive advertising given it by the "clergy"; needless to add, there are no Lutheran clergymen among these advertisers. They repeat the old fallacy that here is a moral play. Their enthusiasm provokes the cynical comments that follow:

"Well, then, let us get together and agree that many bad persons are happy and that many good persons are not. Let us admit that the theater as a forum of morals is a joke, convincing nobody who is not already convinced. An honest sermon by an honest expounder of the Word is worth, as a moral catholicon, all the happy endings that ever turned a play into a lie. Let us remember the belief of Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, the wisest of the playwrights, that the exhibition of the most miserable of his transgressing heroines never deterred a woman from doing what her passions told her to do. 'Experience,' said he, 'is not transferable.'" And this unfeeling critic who makes a joke of the moral pretensions of the play in spite of all the worthy clergymen and educators that so warmly endorsed it, is not a Lutheran preacher ignorant of the theater, but a man who has made it his life's work for the last thirty years or more to write criticisms of all the plays that appeared in America. You cannot very well say that he does not know what he is talking about. But there is no doubt that in a few months another cheap melodrama will come along and its enterprising press-agent will fool another half-dozen ministers and educators into praising it as a vehicle of great moral lessons and, instead of being laughed out of court as a joke, another great American play will be the talk of the ladies, and another manager will gleefully reap the golden harvest which the public is always willing to provide if you give it moral lessons in such form that it is not inconvenienced thereby. H. K. M.

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What Do You Read? The field of the fiction is to-day a rich harvest-field for the daring. The daring displayed is often gross sacrilege and the grosser it is the more it seems to please the perverted taste of the reading public. Just one instance. An authoress writes a book on the life of Jesus. A reviewer says: "The author disposes of the story of the resurrection by hinting that Jesus might have survived the crucifixion and appeared guardedly thereafter to His followers. She says there is much in the Gospel narrative to give color to such a supposition." Do you read such infidel rot and thereby encourage its production? G.

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PRAYER IN THE NAME OF JESUS ALONE PREVAILING PRAYER

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." John 16:23.

Praying is wrestling with God as Jacob wrestled with Him at Peniel, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Jacob was successful, for the Lord said to him: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." We ask, how can a man have power with God and prevail over Him? Some believe that they are able to obtain that which they desire by the very earnestness of their desire; but the mind of man will never wrest anything from God in that manner. Nor can this be done by importuning Him to the point of weariness. Jesus says, Matt. 6:17: "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." Others would coerce God in a different manner. They use certain magic formulae with some mysterious signs—"Besprechen"—and believe that these incantations, which often contain the name of Holy Trinity, have the power to compel God to do what they would have Him do. But this is witchcraft, which God has strictly forbidden, and "all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord." Deut. 18:10-12.

Let us learn what is necessary to turn the heart of God toward us and to open His ear to our prayer. He is not an unwilling God who begrudges His creatures the good things that are in His hand. What He says, Jer. 32:41, of His people of the Old Testament applies as well to all other men: "Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul." It is God's delight to bless man and to make him happy. And still it is often impossible for Him to do this, and the cause for this lies in man. Is. 1:15 names it: "And when ye spread forth your

hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." The sins of Israel prevented God from hearing their prayers, our sins compel Him to be deaf to our petitions. God is holy and righteous. "The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth." Ps. 11:3. The righteousness of God compels Him to turn away from the sinner in wrath and to punish him instead of granting him blessings. Luther says in the explanation of the fifth petition: "For we are worthy of none of the things for which we pray, neither have we deserved them; . . . for we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment."

Our sins must be removed from us before God can hear our prayers. That can be done by no effort of our own. We cannot offer God anything in payment of our debt; we cannot expiate our crimes against Him by any self-inflicted pains; we cannot win His favor by our virtues or by our deeds of charity. Thus our sins would ever choke the fountain of His blessings, we would remain unheard.

But Jesus says, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you." "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Rom. 8:34.

"But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Hebr. 7:24, 25.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. . . . He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5:19, 21.

Christ is our cleansing from sin, our righteousness, our salvation. Through Him we are acceptable to God, His dear children, and heirs of everlasting life.

"At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." John 16:26, 27.

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal. 4:6.

In Jesus, and in Him alone, we have the right to pray; His name alone gives our prayer prevailing power over God; we are heard for Jesus' sake. God will not, cannot, refuse him who prays in the name of Jesus. Holding God to His promise of grace through the Savior Jacob wrestled with Him at Peniel and

prevailed. Admitting her unworthiness, the woman of Canaan clung solely to the grace of Jesus and wrested from Him the words: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Then none need be discouraged, none need to fear to pray; the name of Jesus is the key to the heart of the Father, and Jesus belongs to us all, for Scripture tells us so.

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebr. 4:14, 16.

J. B.

THE PULPIT AS A MEDIUM FOR ADVERTISING

In our last issue we took occasion to call the attention of our readers to a harmful form of advertising much in vogue at the present time—introducing foreign elements into the religious service for the purpose of creating a sensation. There is another form of abuse widely practiced today—using the church to advertise things that are foreign to her and her legitimate sphere of work. Regarding this latter practice, we submit the following editorial taken from the Evening Wisconsin:

"It is astonishing how many people there are who are constantly suggesting to clergymen subjects for their sermons. Clergymen have as a rule only fifty-two Sundays in the year, and every Sunday which is devoted to discussion of a secular topic represents time which might be given with good effect to doctrinal exposition or moral exhortation. Preachers, after all, are the best judges of the subjects which they should choose for their sermons, and it is a grave question whether the regimentation of the pulpit by secular exploiters adds to its efficiency. If special Sundays were arranged only at rare intervals, they would impress the imagination of the public much more than is possible when they are of frequent occurrence. And when a preacher selects a semi-secular or especially current topic of his own volition the influence of his address for many reasons is likely to be vastly greater than when his hearers are aware that he is speaking upon a theme which might not have occurred to him but for suggestions from outside.

"These reflections are occasioned by the reply which a New York clergyman, Reverend James B. Curry, pastor of St. James' Catholic Church, has written to the head of the street cleaning department of that city, in response to a circular letter asking him to speak on 'Cleanliness' at the services in his church on 'City Broom Sunday,' October 10th. Father Curry says:

"The enclosed circular was received at my resi-

dence last Saturday evening. It is a sample of many communications that reach us in the course of the year wherein city pastors are requested to recommend to their congregations the pet theories of faddists and fanatics who endeavor not only to foist upon an over-patient and long enduring people their peculiar fancies and fads but also to do so by the cheapest method of general advertising.'

"He goes on to observe that the street cleaning commissioner is a high salaried official, receiving \$7,500 a year, and no one can blame him for endeavoring to hold his job, which can best be effected by continuing the present administration, and he concludes as follows:

"The proximity of dates—City Broom Sunday, October 10, and election day, November 2—suggests at once the idea that you are seeking political capital through the pulpit exploitation of your administration and of your department. Clean streets would exhibit best of all the efficiency of your department; they would make a permanent exhibition of which your fellow citizens might well be proud. As for the clergymen, we preach for the salvation of souls, not for political capital.'

"No one will suppose that Father Curry is opposed to cleanliness, and everybody can see that he is concerned for the maintenance of the dignity of the pulpit, which also is an object worthy of consideration, though in this age there are many by whom it is overlooked."

G.

TOO OLD TO LIVE

Not infrequently a pastor will find that one or the other of their oldest members feel that they have outlived their usefulness. They are tired of life and are ready to die. "Why does the Lord not take me? I am ready for Him; my life is utterly useless." It is not always a simple matter to reconcile such complainants to their lot.

A pastor relates an experience he had in one of our congregations, in which a very fine answer was rendered by a dear old Christian mother. A number of old and weary women were gathered, as is their wont, and one of them voiced the complaint that she was ready to die and the Lord would not take her. "Of what use am I? What can I do here on earth to justify existence?"

Then said another: "Have you a family?"

"Yes."

"Have you a church, fellow Christians?"

"Why, yes."

"Then I know why the Lord still keeps you on earth; He wants you to pray for them."

And that is a beautiful answer, well worth preserving for future use with others and with ourselves, if the Lord should keep us on earth so long that we felt useless.

H. K. M.

WAR AND RELIGION

Has the war had something of the same effect in encouraging the growth of a religious spirit in the United States which it has unquestionably had in some of the belligerent countries—notably in France, where a marked revival of religious faith is noted by all observers?

The question is pertinent in view of the figures given by the Federal Council of Churches, covering the growth of the various denominations in 1915. These show that the churches, irrespective of denomination, had the greatest growth in their history. Of the 100,000,000 Americans, approximately 40,000,000 are listed as church members. When we recall that membership of Protestant churches seldom embraces the younger members of the family unless they have directly affiliated, it becomes plain that the proportion of those under religious influence is many millions greater than the federation's total.

It would of course be impracticable to demonstrate just what part, if any, the natural reaction toward spiritual things produced by the spectacle of Europe has played in this apparent quickening of the religious consciousness of the people. However, it is entirely justifiable to draw from the federation's statistics the conclusion that the common assumption that religion is losing its hold on the great mass of the people has been grossly exaggerated.—Chicago Herald.

A NICKEL FOR THE LORD

He wore a rose on his coat, but when the plate was passed gave a nickel to the Lord. He had several bills in his pocket and sundry silver change, but hunted about and found this poor nickel and placed it on the plate to aid the church militant in its fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil. His silk hat was on the seat; his gloves and cane were beside it, and the nickel was on the plate, a whole nickel.

On Saturday he met a friend; the cash register recorded \$1.35, and he handed the boy a dime. A nickel to the Lord and a dime to the waiter! He had his shoes polished and handed the Greek a dime without a murmur. He had a shave and paid his check of fifteen cents and "tipped" the barber a dime. He took a box of candies to his wife, paid forty cents for it, and tied with a dainty ribbon—and gave a nickel to the Lord.

Who is this Lord?

This man worships Him as the Creator of the universe, the One Who put the stars in order and by whose immutable decree the heavens stand—and he dropped a nickel on the plate to support His church—the Church Militant—which represents on earth the Church Triumphant.

The Lord being gracious and slow to anger and remembering his "frame" did not slay this man for his meanness, but gave him his daily bread. But the nickel was ashamed, if the man was not, for it slunk beneath the quarter which was given by a poor woman who washes for a living.—The Toronto Star.

THAT "DYING THIEF"

A man once asked, "Are you a believer in the Christian religion?" "Oh, certainly." "You are a member of some church, then, I suppose." "Member of a church? No, indeed; why should I be a member of a church? It is quite unnecessary; the dying thief wasn't a member of a church, and he went to heaven." "But of course you have been baptized; you know the command—" "Been baptized? Oh, no; that is another needless ceremony. I am as safe as the dying thief was, and he never was baptized." "But surely, since you will not join a church or be baptized, you will do something in acknowledgment of your faith. You will give of your means—you will help the cause in some way?" "No, sir; I do nothing of the kind. The dying thief—" "Let me remark, my friend, before you go any further, that you seem to be on pretty intimate terms with the dying thief. You seem to derive a great deal of consolation from his career. But, mind you, there is one important difference between you and him. He was a dying thief—and you are a living one."—Selected.

THE COUNTRY CHURCH

The commission on church and country life has uncovered a most deplorable situation in Ohio, that is, from the standpoint of the country churches. One out of every nine such institutions, we are told, has been abandoned in recent years. Only one-third are increasing in membership and two-thirds have ceased growing or are dying. Eighty-three per cent have less than one hundred members. Twenty-one per cent have less than twenty-five. Less than forty per cent of the rural population are church members.

These findings, admits the commission, are not considered peculiar to Ohio. As its survey is extended, the commission expects to disclose similar conditions in most other states.

It will be interesting to hear the explanation which the leaders of the denominations affected have to offer for the astonishing decline in the appeal of the country church. It will be interesting, too, to learn just which denominations have been most affected.

The president of the Massachusetts Agricultural college has already proposed a remedy. He says these things will restore the country church to its pristine state of popularity and usefulness: Good roads, better

farming, encouragement of agricultural college extension courses, community beautification, public health and recreation, temperance, better schools, Saturday half holiday for agricultural laborers, community athletics, observance of religious and patriotic holidays and home-coming weeks, community planning and contentment with farm life.

This is a pretty big program and one that relates to the uplift and increased appeal of country life in general, rather than to the specific need of the country church.

In the old days, when the meeting house was the Sunday mecca of the rural community for miles around, roads were worse than they are to-day and there were no extension courses, community athletics or Saturday half holidays to promote a receptive frame of mind. The church did not require such adventitious aids, it did not require a smooth road to tempt worshippers to its portals.

It is conceivable that the conversion of the country church into a sort of social center would stimulate recourse. But even if it did, would the cause of religion be served? The mere employment of the building in a more extensive way would not mean that the essential appeal and influence of the church as a source of spiritual sustenance had been augmented. And that, we take it, is what those who have their heart in this work are thinking of, or else they would suggest the school as a center of social and community activity rather than the church.

It would seem that if the decline of the country church is to be explained and remedied, the cause must be looked for not in the conditions of country life—for those have been worse than they are today—but in the policy and administration of the churches themselves.

If that is done, it may be found that much the same conditions and influence that are undermining the hold of the church in the cities are operative in the country, that the same denominations that are declining in the country districts are declining in the cities, while those that are flourishing in the one are flourishing in the other.—Free Press.

OVER-EDUCATION

Luther Burbank says that overeducation is bad for children. It is his belief that the wrecking of the nervous systems of the little ones is not infrequent. Mr. Burbank is not a talkative person, and not lavish in expressing his opinion. When he does express one it is received with respect.

Occasionally there is something told of the phenomenal lad who cuts his teeth on Greek roots, and utters himself in the terms of higher mathematics at the age when he should be cooing, and not saying anything in

particular. Once in a while some youth still in knee pants knocks at the gates of the university, and the error is made of admitting him without waiting for his pants to grow.

From time to time there is a picture printed of an extraordinary girl who chatters in six or eight languages, is a shorthand expert, a philosophical adept, reads Sanscrit or music with equal facility. The mother of this prodigy pleads guilty of having been the teacher, and even offers to impart her system of instruction to other parents who may desire the household cluttered up with freak kids.

Happily these extremes are rare. The normal boy or girl is able to face the requirements of school, and these requirements are losing the old rigidity that once made them dreaded. Yet there are children urged beyond their capacity, and the injury done them is deep, and in its effects lasting.—Pasadena News.

COLLAPSE OF RELIGION FEARED IN SOUTH AMERICA

A complete collapse of the Christian faith in Latin-America was declared to be impending in a report submitted to the Congress on Christian work in Latin-America by the commission on survey and occupation.

The report declared that in all the southern republics practically universal unbelief exists as far as modern learning has proceeded. The commission asserts that the people may be roughly divided into four classes: A violent anti-clerical party, many of whom carry their opposition to religion of every form; the more or less well-reasoned skeptics and atheists who look indulgently upon religion as harmless for women and for the lower classes, but who are themselves indifferent; the "dissatisfied, if not disillusioned and groping companies of souls who soon pass on to cynicism and hardness of heart"; those whose "period of doubt and breaking away is ahead of them as they are overtaken by free education."

The report says that a surprising number of women are beginning to share the skepticism of their husbands, and that Theosophy, Spiritism and similar cults are rapidly taking the place of Christianity in numerous sections. In Bolivia alone, it is said, three-fourths of the members of congress and of the well-to-do business men and nearly all of the government students are sworn enemies of the church, while similar conditions prevail in practically all the sister republics.

The report lays the blame for many of the evil conditions it enumerates to the influence of American and other foreign business agents who have invaded the southern countries in search of trade.—Milwaukee Journal.

"Christ hath many heirs, but no successors."—Watson.

"The heir of a great estate, while a child, thinks more of a few shillings in his pocket than of his inheritance; so a Christian is often more elated by some frame of heart than by his title to glory."—Watson.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

A New Aid Fund

A recent news item from Antigo, Wis., informs us that incorporation papers have been filed for the Lutheran Emeriti Association, a "non-stock, non-profit sharing corporation with the object of creating by special contribution a fund for the support of superannuated pastors, theological professors, parochial school teachers and their wives."

\$75,000 Gift to Pastors' Relief

Dr. William Hiram Foulkes, general secretary of the Presbyterian board of ministerial relief and sustenance, which is raising a fund of \$10,000,000 for pensioning its retired ministers and missionaries, to-day announced the receipt of an anonymous gift of \$75,000. The fund has now reached the \$4,000,000 mark.

Will Raise Cash to Aid Ministerial Pension Fund

The council of the Milwaukee Episcopal diocese has voted to accept the plan worked out by Bishop Lawrence, Massachusetts, to pension retired and disabled clergymen.

The plan calls for a fund of \$5,000,000. A diocese may join or not, as it sees fit. Each parish will pay an assessment of 7 per cent of the minister's salary, and he will be retired at 68 on a pension equal to one-half his salary. His widow and minor children will be entitled to pensions also.

There are 4,420 ministers in the church in this country, and the average pay is \$1,200. Seven hundred less than \$1,000. The campaign to raise the fund will start in the spring, and Milwaukee will be one of the main centers.

Methodist Sunday Schools

The growth of the Sunday schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America was shown in reports of officers at the annual meeting of the board of Sunday schools for that denomination held at Chicago a short time ago. This board has jurisdiction over all Sunday schools of the Methodist denomination in America and the primary object of its annual meeting is to prepare a budget for the current year to meet the expenses for literature and other incidentals necessary for carrying on the work. These schools, according to the reports submitted, now have a membership of 4,598,000, an increase of almost 600,000 for a period of four years. The income during this same period has increased from \$97,480 to \$161,850.

Churches Gain Half Million

According to Dr. Henry K. V. Carroll, associate secretary of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, the number of church members in the United States and territories in 1915 was 39,380,718, a gain over 1914 of 653,640. This includes Jews affiliated with synagogues. Dr. Carroll

says the war apparently did not seriously affect the prosperity of the churches of this country, although there was a decrease of 158 in the number of church edifices. The churches gave \$1,650,000 more in 1915 to foreign missions than in 1914, but gifts to home missions fell off \$750,000. Greater gifts went across seas.

The total of clergymen is 180,607, an increase during the year of 1,700. The total of churches is 225,334.

NEW BOOKS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

On account of lack of space, the Northwestern Lutheran will not review books and other publications, but merely announce their appearance for the benefit of our readers.

Comfort for the Sick. A monthly leaflet, edited and published by Rev. B. P. Nommensen, Milwaukee, Wis., 1231 Kinnickinnic Avenue. Price per copy, per annum, 15 cents; five copies, 30 cents; ten copies, 50 cents; twenty-five copies, \$1; 100 copies, \$3.

CULLED BY THE WAY

His Good Idea

The serious looking man was trying hard to listen to the speaker's eloquence, but the squalling of an infant in the row of seats directly ahead gave him little opportunity. Annoyance gave way to irritation and irritation in turn was superseded by resolve. He leaned forward, touched the mother on the shoulder, and in a dispassionate tone asked:

"Has your baby been christened yet?"

"Why, no, sir. Why do you ask?"

"Merely because I was about to suggest that if he had not been christened you might name him Good Idea."

"And why Good Idea?" asked the woman.

"Because"—the man struggled hard to repress his feelings—"it should be carried out."

A Helpful Sermon

A Brooklyn minister gave a most scathing discourse on the evil effects produced by bad example, and exhorted all good members of his congregation not to countenance by their presence such a place of iniquity as Coney Island. At this one of the church wardens, in evident excitement, snapped his fingers.

At the close of the service a member accosted the church warden and said:

"How was that for a sermon?"

"Great. Why, it reminded me that's the place where I left my umbrella."

Not Necessarily.

"Do you believe in marrying for love?" asked the sentimental girl whose face was her principal misfortune.

"Not necessarily," replied the gray-haired parson. "As a rule, I usually marry for money."—Indianapolis Star.

The Goat

A goat Christian is a church member who strays about the town six days in the week, but stays in the shed on Sunday spending the time in eating newspapers.—Ex.