

# The Northwestern Lutheran

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

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## GOD KNOWETH

I know not what shall befall me,  
God hangs a mist o'er my eyes,  
And so, each step in my onward path,  
He makes new scenes to rise,  
And every joy He sends me  
Comes as a sweet surprise.

I see not a step before me,  
As I tread on another year;  
But the past is still in God's keeping,  
The future His mercy will clear;  
And what looks dark in the distance  
May brighten as I draw near.

For perhaps the dreariest future  
Has less bitter than I think;  
The Lord may sweeten the waters  
Before I stoop to drink;  
Or, if Marah must be Marah,  
He will stand beside the brink.

It may be He has waiting  
For the coming of my feet  
Some gift of such rare blessedness,  
Some joy so strangely sweet,  
That my lips shall only tremble  
With the thoughts I cannot speak.

O blissful, restful ignorance!  
'T is blessed not to know,  
If it keeps me so still in those strong arms  
That will not let me go,  
And hushes my soul to rest  
In the bosom that loves me so.

So I go on, not knowing;  
I would not if I might;  
I would rather walk in the dark with God,  
Than go alone in the light;  
I would rather walk with Him by faith  
Than walk alone by sight.

My heart shrinks back from trials  
Which the future may disclose;  
Yet I never have a sorrow  
But what the dear Lord chose;  
So I send the coming tear back,  
With the whispered word, He knows!

—Mary G. Brainard.

## COMMENTS

H. C. L. The high cost of living is causing much worry and complaint. More minds are engaged with it than with any other subject. Everybody is planning and working in order that our country may not share the sad fate of the starving peoples of Europe. No one should neglect to do his share; but let us do it in the right spirit. Let the government investigate whether any one in particular is guilty of exploiting the suffering public and take steps to make this impossible; we must go deeper. The real cause is sin. Not the sin of some one else, but our own sin. The present food shortage reminds us of our gross ingratitude for the many blessings we have heretofore enjoyed and of our unfaithful stewardship. The first thing to do is to humble ourselves before our God and to seek His pardon in the name of Jesus. All our efforts will be in vain if the countenance of God remains set against us. He alone can save and bless, and none but penitent hearts are able to receive this blessing. Let tears of true repentance water the seed we place into the ground.

And then let us sow and plant in hope. Christ lives, and through him we have a gracious God, a dear Father in Heaven. He says, Is. 54: 7. 8.: "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer."

Let us pray: "Give us this day our daily bread," and then work in childlike trust in Him who will for Jesus' sake prosper the work of our hands. J. B.

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**"Teachers Shape Nation's Mind"** That is the head which an editor placed over the following editorial:

"Philadelphia—The board of education is making a survey of its forces to record those teachers who are alien by birth and not as yet naturalized. Commenting on this action The Public Ledger says: 'The influence possessed by an instructor of the young people is capable of wide extension. He molds their minds for the better part of their waking hours and wields a persuasion toward good or ill that is second only to that of the parent. When used in the wrong direction, this power may be sufficient to set a whole nation on the road to ruin. For it was the professorial class in Germany that furthered her militaristic spirit to its present rampant extreme and im-

—"Pleasure must first have the warrant that it is without sin; then the measure that it is without excess."—Adams.



planted with the earliest learnings the ideal of state exaltation to the exclusion of every moral consideration. It is plain that the educators of a country are among its most important assets or dangers. That a careful and wise judgment should be exercised in their choosing cannot be too often emphasized'."

Yes, it is true what the writer of the above wishes to impress on the minds of his readers: "Teachers shape nation's mind." That is true of the nation, because it is true of the individual. Remember this warning, you parent that read this, when you select a teacher for your child. G.

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**Cheap Advertising** The unsettled conditions of our day lend themselves to a variety of uses.

While Tom is quietly filling his pockets with the enormous profits which the hysterical willingly pay him for the wares he so prudently put by months ago, Dick is busy, too, but not quietly; he is by nature talkative, but now his tongue wags incessantly: what the present conditions demand that somebody do to somebody else, is his theme. Harry is another busy man. He is continually getting mixed up with the new-fangled movements of the day, he puts on the distinctive regalia, he goes through a few of the passes of the new cult, when who should happen by but that ubiquitous being—the staff photographer. There is an ominous click which Harry understands and—the next extra edition of the so-and-so paper shows the result. The other day he had just donned overalls and found out which end of a garden cultivator it is good form to grasp, when, lo! click! and the noon edition presented Harry to you as a member of the newly-organized Empty Lot Cultivators. Sad to say, Harry's name is sometimes drawn out and becomes Harriet; nothing but a group picture will then answer; beneath it we then read the legend: "The above group, left to right are, Mrs. ———" etc. We all have met Harry and Harriet; they are often the reason why we lay down our newspaper with a yawn. They are always doing the extraordinary thing and being caught in the act, thus they get cheap advertising. When Harry and Harriet join hands they are sometimes able to sway numbers into posing. Below is an instance:

#### Gardens Displace Sermons

Lexington, Mass., May 5.—The Follen Unitarian Church of East Lexington, taking advantage of the new law permitting farm and garden work on Sunday in this state, has decided to omit its morning services on Sunday during May and June in order that its members may devote more time to their gardens.

The above article does not assert that the Lord by a new revelation has shaken gardens and sermons out of their old relative position to one another: so we may with propriety assume that reference is made to some new state law. Then it would appear that somebody is

sadly mixing what is the Lord's and what is the state's. We would venture to suggest that if the "sermons" have the place intended by the Lord, perhaps He would feel moved to devote a little more attention to the "garden" part. Then, of course, there would be nothing to advertise. G.

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**A Creditable Showing** The Iowa Synod makes a creditable showing in the work of its jubilee fund.

It had originally planned to raise \$300,000. When about half of the congregations had been canvassed, it was found that the pledges exceed that sum by far, and the synod now hopes to be able to collect \$500,000. The collections in the Ohio Synod are approaching the \$250,000 mark. These bodies are pushing their campaign systematically and vigorously. This has something to do with the splendid success. But a method cannot accomplish anything, if there is not the right spirit behind it. The congregations contributing so liberally show a hearty interest in the work of their synod. J. B.

## THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

### Article XI — Of Confession

"Of Confession, our churches teach that Private Absolution ought to be retained in the churches, although in confession an enumeration of all sins is not necessary. For it is impossible, according to the Psalm: 'Who can understand his errors?'" (Ps. 19:12.)

The point made by this article touched the fabric of the Roman system at a very vulnerable spot. One of the great agencies by which Rome kept its people in spiritual bondage was the confessional. Though based on the Scriptural doctrine of the Ministry of the Keys, Rome had hedged the original Gospel about with so many man-made ordinances that nothing remained but law and terror.

Our Lord, in endowing His Church with the power to forgive (and retain) sins, did not give us any formula according to which this power was to be administered. It was to be available at all times and in all circumstances. None of His children was to be dispossessed by the imposition of restricting rules. It was Gospel. It could not be otherwise. When men sought forgiveness in true repentance they were to receive absolution.

The privilege of confessing and praying for forgiveness is daily exercised by Christians without any formalism. Luther points out that in the Lord's Prayer there is such confession, as also a declaration of the Christian that he forgives those who trespass against him, (the Fifth Petition). But quite properly the emphasis in the sacred act which we call Confession should be laid on the Absolution; that is plainly the intention of the institution.



If in the course of time, perhaps from the earliest times, Christians sought personal and private absolution, that is something that could not well be otherwise. And if in the course of time this private confession and absolution became set and practiced according to certain forms, this also is to be expected. The term "private confession," meaning such a method of procedure is therefore justified.

But Rome had set the form before the thing itself; it had made the method of more importance than the gifts which the sacred institution was to impart. It had ordained that confession was to be made at certain times; it had forced the people to make confession and to take communion irrespective of their personal desires or their fitness and earnestness in making the confession; it had prescribed the method of confession.

This latter was perhaps the most iniquitous of all practices. All sins had to be mentioned and enumerated. Absolution was made conditional upon the completeness of the confession. It was said that the father confessor was a judge and that a judge could not "pass sentence" unless he knew the particular offenses which he was to adjudicate. And Luther replies, the father confessor is not the judge—God is sole Judge of all hearts; it is impossible to enumerate all sins, yet the absolution is only of value if the penitent is assured of complete forgiveness. The father confessor is not a judge but rather a clerk of the court empowered to announce the verdict.

Still, private confession is to be retained. Every Christian must feel free to come to his chosen minister of the Word at any time and tell him of the particular trials which he encounters upon his Christian way. This dare not be abolished. The zealots which broke loose during the Reformation and went to extremes in their fanaticism, decried all confession. They were intoxicated with their new freedom and put their own ideas above the Word itself. Though Christ may have instituted the Ministry of the Keys, they felt that they had outgrown the need of any such help. To them says the Augsburg Confession: private absolution is to be retained.

If Christians, however, would say: since there is no compulsion about confessing our sins, and since they need not be enumerated, therefore we shall not practice confession at all! If Christians would reason so, then Luther is willing that they go back to the tyrant, the pope, from whom they were just released. They deserve no better fate than that some taskmaster stand over them and crack his whip that they may never think of freedom. If Christians refuse the blessings of confession and absolution just because they are not forced to use them, then they scarcely deserve to be called Christians.

The rescue of this blessed Christian doctrine from the clutches of the pope, where it had been made an

instrument of torture for wounded consciences, remains one of the great accomplishments of the Reformation. It shows how a fundamental truth, justification by faith, leads us from one truth to another. Beginning with that the Reformers found step by step that it was necessary to regain hundreds of lost treasures which Roman greed had filched from the Church.

And they found the way to do it. They followed the guidance of Christ's Word and were led invariably to the right road.

We might add, for the sake of clearness, that we sometimes distinguish three kinds of confession: general confession, private confession, and the (Roman) auricular confession. The first is best exemplified by the confession in use in our Sunday services. The whole congregation joins in it and receives absolution. Private confession may be of different kinds. You may come to your pastor alone and make confession of your sins, with or without mentioning them in particular, thereupon you alone receive the absolution. Or you may merely come and declare your intention of making confession on a certain day, as is done before Lord's Supper, and then make your private confession together with others who have privately made this arrangement with the pastor. The third kind, auricular confession, as you will perceive, is not at all different from the second, excepting that the Roman church enforces it; and that makes it wrong.

The clear statement of principle in Article XI was augmented by Luther and his friends in many ways, both for the sake of inexperienced new pastors and for the sake of the sadly ignorant congregations that often had very little spiritual understanding. It was deemed wise to counsel pastors that they assist backward Christians in making their confession by helpful and proper questions and if understanding was entirely absent, not to permit them to receive Communion. Such counsel is not without value today.

H. K. M.

#### BLAMING LUTHER AGAIN

While Protestants in general, and Lutherans in particular, are planning special jubilee celebrations in honor of the 400th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, to which we owe our present open bible, freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, breadth of education, and most of all, the liberation of the Church from the Babylonian Captivity of Popery, and the restoration of the Gospel in its pristine beauty and purity, — the Romanist pulpit and press is doing all in its power to defame the character of the man who by the power of God was instrumental in laying the foundation which made all these blessings possible.

Luther has frequently been accused of being responsible for the present cataclysm in Europe, and it



has been remarked that "the ingenuity of the Jesuit brain is equal to formulating an argument against him to prove that all the iniquity in the world since his time is traceable to his teaching." It will not be surprising if Rome will convict him of tragedies which took place before he was born, and as the subject has been taken up in articles appearing here and there in the secular press, the founder of the Reformation will in all probability be blamed for weather conditions, for the predicted failure of crops, and the high cost of living, — perhaps even for the present fashions and modes of apparel.

In a recent issue of Figaro, a prophecy regarding the Anti-Christ and the Beast of the Scriptures, said to have been made by Brother Johannes in the 16th century, was quoted. In speaking of a battle taking place toward the year 2,000 on European soil, and symbolizing France by a Cock, England by a Leopard, Russia by a White Eagle, Germany by a Black Eagle, and Austria by "the other Eagle," the "Lamb" standing for "Justice, Mercy, and Faith," the "Brother" says in part:

"The battles fought up to then will be as nothing compared to those which will take place in the country of Luther, for the seven Angels will together pour in the fire of their censers on the impious Earth, which signifies that the Lamb will order the extermination of the race of Antichrist.

"When the Beast sees that he is lost he will become furious, and for many months the beak of the White Eagle, the claws of the Leopard, and the spurs of the Cock will furiously strike at him.

"They will cross rivers over the bodies of the slain, and these, in places, will change the course of the water. They will bury only the men of noble families, the leading commandants, and the princes, because to the carnage made by the armies will be joined the wholesale death of those who will die of hunger or the pest.

"The Antichrist will ask many times for peace, but the seven Angels, who walk in front of the three Animals defending the Lamb have declared that victory will only be granted on the condition that the Antichrist be crushed like the straw on the barn floor."

Some writers have termed Dante's "Inferno" and his "Purgatorio" especially, as the "hallucination of a diseased brain," in spite of its literary value, and as such it is easy for enlightened Protestants to wave aside the alleged prophecy of a 16th century monk, as an imagination of the Dark Ages, worthy of less credulity in this enlightened twentieth century than Anderson's Fairy Tales or Aesop's Fables—but that Luther should be termed the "Antichrist" and the country of Luther his domain, — the German people, the "race of Antichrist," shows an ignorance of Scripture, for which we must excuse the "Brother," as he

lived in a day when the Bible was a sealed book to the "Faithful" in the Church of Rome, forbidden to be read under severe penalties.

Whatever prejudice the present world crisis may bring upon things German, not the widest stretch of imagination, can, in this enlightened era, conceive the idea that the leader of the Protestant Reformation is identical with the prophesied Anti-christ, — and the German people "his race."

The blessings we enjoy, both civil and religious, as the direct result of the Protestant Reformation, the fact that with the extension of Protestantism persecution has ceased, and real Christianity extended to all parts of the globe, the thousands of beautiful, highly spiritual hymns the Reformation produced, the circulation of the Word of God by the various Bible Societies in millions of copies and hundreds of languages, together with the acknowledged leadership of the German race in literature, the arts, music, theology, science, — must convince all that these could not be the results of the activities of the prophesied Anti-christ, and the attributes of "his race."

Another portion of "Brother Johannes" prophecy reads as follows:

"The White Eagle, by the order of St. Michael, will drive the Crescent from Europe and will install himself at Constantinople. Then will begin an era of peace and prosperity for the earth, and there will be no more wars, each nation being governed according to its desires and living according to the rules of justice.

"There will no longer be Lutherans or Schismatics. The Lamb will reign and the supreme happiness of humanity will begin. Happy will be those who, escaping the perils of that period, will be able to enjoy the fruit of the reign of the Spirit and of the purging of Humanity, which can only come after the defeat of the Antichrist."

As it is claimed the above was written in the year 1600, the writer must have known from Luther's writings whom the great reformer termed "the Antichrist," and in order to remove the stigma from the head of the "Holy Father," he had to place it somewhere, and thus made the "heretic Luther" the target of his attack. While it is evident that Rome has not ceased to attack the great reformer, Protestantism in general, and Lutheranism in particular, we have the assurance of Scripture that "The Word of the Lord endureth forever," and while that Word endures, the Lutheran Church, firmly entrenched in, and built upon that Word — shall not perish from the earth.

The Scriptural Prophecy of the Anti-christ and the Beast is of a far different nature, and its fulfillment differs as vastly from the predictions of "Brother Johannes," as the Scripture and its doctrines differ from Romanism and the traditions of Popery. But who is the Anti-christ of the Bible? Have we a Scrip-



tural portrait of him? Was Luther's conception of him based on Scriptural evidence? This the writer will endeavor to show in another article to follow.

A. H.

### AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENTS AND THE CHURCH

For some years the rural church has been receiving quite a bit of attention by the efficiency experts and the apostles of uplift in general. Has the rural church no friend left that it should be left undefended against the host of uplifters that are bound to improve it, whether it needs it or not? Must the rural church tolerate this impudent interference in its affairs, just because it comes in the guise of helpful advice?

We fail to find anything wrong with the rural church, even in the writings of the uplifters. The general impression is that the rural population is improving its material living conditions more rapidly than any other group of citizens; they are gaining access to more and better schools, they are cutting down the distance to their nearest urban centers, they are financing their business (for farming is become a business) like other merchants, excepting that they are often in a position to exact better terms and more consideration than others with less valuable resources. And just as the farmer improves his lot, his church shares the outward prosperity. Whether spiritual growth keeps pace with this material welfare may be doubted—but the Agricultural Experiment Station cares nothing for that anyway.

What is the object of making the rural church the subject of circulars and bulletins? One of them, recently issued by the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Wisconsin, gives us the needed answer. Briefly, it is this: In rural communities there should be "strong" churches, serving as social centers for the whole neighborhood; the small, "weak" church should disappear and should amalgamate with its stronger neighbor.

The plan is beautifully simple. "A joint commission from the national religious bodies could formulate the principles upon which to reorganize the rural districts, so as to give every farm family the chance to belong to some strong church."—Everything can be done by commission! Just a few "principles," a map, a pencil and the whole problem of the rural church could be solved. The North half of Blank township gets its "strong" church, the South half another one. The three, or four, or five small "weak" churches may have had a few principles of their own, but if a national commission ever lays down a set of principles, these would naturally supersede any principles held by any body less imposing.

Where to get the minister of the new church? Nothing easier! From the state college of agriculture. Our bulletin No. 278 blandly says: "Training-

schools for country pastors, situated at the state colleges of agriculture, would give pastors enthusiasm for country life, and a knowledge of rural problems, both social and economic." And besides, if any difficult situation should arise, could not the pastor write or telegraph the Agricultural Experiment Station and would he not get a perfect solution by return mail?

There are a number of questions agitating our mind. Who gives the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Wisconsin the right to make suggestions such as these? If the people ever gave them the right, it is time to revoke it. It is time to send them back to their experiments with seeds, and breeds, and feeds—and relieve them of their experiments with creeds.

Give any state commission the slightest encouragement to dabble in religious affairs and it will promptly hatch out a state church—be the egg upon which it sit ever so addled. What a horrible nightmare a rural church would be if modeled on the suggestions of bulletin 278! With its pope sitting in the office of the Agricultural Experiment Station!

But we have not exhausted the beauties of bulletin 278: "The farmers' church strengthens the habits of family life upon which successful farming depends. The pastor or priest is an adviser upon social and economic matters of importance." Family life is indeed a habit which the whole human race has found impossible to shake off. It is said that in the cities, hotels and rooming houses have somewhat modified family life, though even there it is not abolished. But the farm may be quite different. Perhaps the Agricultural Experiment Station has volumes of statistics to prove that family life in rural districts is sadly on the decline, that children camp on the other end of the "eighty" instead of staying at home, that mother neglects her duties over her whist clubs and the mad social whirl of high society, that father is too chummy with the hired man and never talks to mother and the boys. All this is hard to believe, but it may be so.

If the country church strengthens "habits of family life" that is very fine; but must it be a church of the Agricultural Experiment Station model?—And then the extremely valuable advice of the pastor upon matters social and economic. There is no telling how well qualified a pastor who holds a diploma from an agricultural college may be in these affairs; it is entirely possible that he may have learnt how to organize a community picnic, or a baseball league, or a sewing club, or a literary society. But we shall always doubt whether any man who chooses the profession of the ministry will ever be qualified to give advice on economic matters—and have his advice acted upon. We also know farmers. The farmer who would have to go to his pastor for advice on farming is yet to be found; he would rather mortgage his farm to the last acre—and we believe he is right. A pastor is great



in practicing economy — and his wife must be greater — but teaching economics is quite different.

We found the greatest theorist on merchandizing (and he was also the most voluble expounder) in the smallest store in which we ever made a purchase; and the store finished its career in shorter time than any other of which we ever heard — it lasted about two weeks and a day. A pastor who considers his mission to be the rendering of economic advice would last about as long, in spite of the finest and most complete assortment of economic theories.

We believe it is time to appoint a commission to investigate and define the function of an agricultural experiment station. As a beginning we would say that the rural church is quite capable of working out its own problems and must do so if anything is to be accomplished. Furthermore, any interference, if ever so well-meaning, must be resented as an impropriety and an infringement of the liberty to worship without government supervision.

H. K. M.

#### NEW RELIGIOUS CENSUS

The Bureau of the Census in Washington is now engaged in the work of another census of religious bodies and schedules have been mailed to the pastors of every Lutheran Church in the United States with the request that the schedules be filled out and returned without delay. The returns have been most gratifying, but many churches are still to be heard from. It is most important, in order that the Lutheran Church may receive its full representation that each pastor respond promptly and all are urged to attend to the request of the Government without delay.

The general statistics for the Lutheran Church at the close of the year 1906, as then compiled by the Federal Bureau of the Census, and with which the new census will be compared showed that there were 12,703 organizations connected with the Lutheran bodies and that the total number of communicants as reported by 12,643 organizations was 2,112,494. At the close of the year 1906, the number of ministers in the Lutheran Church was 7,841.

The increase in the present census of the Lutheran Church will depend upon the completeness of the returns from the individual churches.

#### "USE THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE"

In the "Minneapolis Journal" we recently found an editorial under the above caption which startled us. We are naturally interested in a more extensive use of the English language, and have advocated this for our church people, but we can not see any reason for such radical action as is advocated in this editorial. We quote:

"One of the problems to be dealt with by the government at Washington is that presented by the foreign-language press. Practically all of the foreign-

language press, including those newspapers printed in an enemy language, profess to be loyal to the nation. But the use of the enemy language in newspapers presents dangerous opportunities for treasonable matter intended to stir up conspiracies. . . .

"In view of the undoubted loyalty of the bulk of the enemy-language publications, it would scarcely be fair to order their suppression, although such a measure has been urged. But there can be no objection to an order that all such publications must use the American language and no other. To do anything less invites conspiracy against the safety of the republic.

"In time of war it is only fair that the enemy-languages be forbidden entirely as a means of conveying news or expressing opinions. These newspapers should do their talking in such a way that every one may know and judge of what they are saying. . . .

"We have, in fact, been altogether too liberal in allowing foreign cults in our midst. The first duty of the newcomer here is to learn the language, and to no alien who has not acquired it should naturalization be permitted. It has been taken for granted that the desire and necessity of the immigrant to become American would suffice to preserve the lingual unity of the country. That was true once, but it seems no longer altogether true. Alien cults are established in our midst, and every means is employed to maintain and to promote them. . . .

"We must not be content with reliance upon negative gravitation, so to speak. Americanism must be taught, preached, propagated. Patriotism should be taught in all schools. Our language should be insisted upon, **socially and legally.**"

The editorial also praises the Catholic archbishop of Chicago for ordering that only English should be taught in his parochial schools, and adds that our public schools might well emulate this act of patriotism. To summarize: All German newspapers are to be printed in the English language. "Foreign cults" should not be allowed. This must mean religious services in any other language than the English. Linguistic unity is necessary to make us one people. The English language should be insisted upon, "socially and legally." Only one language should be taught in our public schools.

We can not understand by what process of reasoning a person at this time in our history should become nervous about the predominance of the English language in the United States. Such fears were expressed by Benjamin Franklin a hundred years ago, but with our one hundred years more of national experience, it is quite evident that his fears were absolutely without foundation. The idea of forcing people coming by the thousands from European countries to immediately adopt the English language socially, in their religious services, and not be allowed to have a newspaper in their own language, either for religious education or



for studying American institutions, is too absurd to spend any time arguing about. It would be going back many hundred years in civilization to adopt such measures. No civilized nation would advocate such a program. The Chinese used to consider themselves the sons of heaven and looked down upon all other people as living on the outskirts of civilization and being merely chattering animals. They built the great Chinese wall, trying to shut out the profane from seeing the glories of their kingdom; but now the foreigners have broken through, and the Chinese are commencing to learn things from other nations and allowing other languages to be spoken in the celestial kingdom. We can not believe that the editorial writer in the "Journal" has carefully considered what he wrote, but it must have been written in a weak moment of war fanaticism without careful consideration.

The press in the country which represents the people is the private press, the small papers, not controlled by larger interests. The metropolitan press is very often owned and controlled by large corporations, and they naturally look out for their interests, and the editor will have to obey instructions or get out. It is a dangerous condition of affairs. Just now we need to emphasize and exercise our constitutional rights of free speech and a free press. Let us not be intimidated to give up this inalienable right.—Lutheran Herald.

#### LENDING A HAND.

"A word spoken in due season, how good is it." There are men and women, who, however preoccupied they may be, always find time to write a letter of congratulation and good will to those of their friends to whom a bit of good fortune has come, or a sympathetic message to those who are in sorrow, distress or bereavement. These kindly letters cost little in time and effort, but on the one hand they sweeten and flavor some deserved success, or else, on the other, they serve to assuage the pangs of disappointment and grief to lighten, though ever so little, the burden. There are few things in life more easy of bestowal than sympathy, and yet there are few things more commonly withheld. Somehow, most of us are too envious to rejoice with those that rejoice, and too selfish and uninterested to sorrow with those who sorrow. Let us practise lending a hand a little and note how the gift will return to the giver a thousandfold increase.—Walther League Messenger.

#### THE ROAD TO ROME

The Catholic Standard and Times is responsible for the facts and comments here given, and further comment is hardly needed. "Accounts in the New York papers indicate how extensive is the 'borrowing' of the Episcopalians from the ceremonies of the Catholic Church, says the Brooklyn 'Tablet.' Thus it is found that among the Lenten devotions this year is the re-

vival of old St. Paul's Chapel, Trinity parish, of the 'Way of the Cross.' The devotion which is given every Friday afternoon at 5:05 o'clock is designed to last about half an hour. That it is popular is indicated by the large attendance at the services.

"In order to bring the service within the compass of the time allowed, the report goes on, the stations are reduced to ten, which are represented by engravings of the scenes of the Passion. These are hung on the columns of the chapel. The stations are the following: 'Jesus is condemned to death,' 'Jesus receives His Cross,' 'Jesus falls under the weight of the Cross,' 'The Cross is laid upon Simon of Cyrene,' 'Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem,' 'Jesus is stripped of His garment,' 'Jesus is nailed to the Cross,' 'Jesus dies upon the Cross,' 'Jesus is taken down from the Cross,' 'Jesus is laid in the sepulchre.'

"There is a procession of the Episcopal clergy, with lights, meditation, instruction, prayer and a stanza of the old Catholic hymn, the Stabat mater, at each station. The outline of the service is that of the Anglican manual, "Treasury of Devotion."

"The following historical note appears on the leaflet, distributed in conjunction with the services: "The Via Dolorosa at Jerusalem was recently marked out from the earliest times, and has been the goal of pious pilgrimages ever since the days of Constantine.

"There is a tradition that the blessed Virgin Mary used to visit daily the scenes of Christ's passion, and St. Jerome speaks of the crowds who used to visit the holy places in his day. On the conquest of Palestine by the Mohammedans, in consequence of the difficulties of visiting the Way of the Cross, stations began to be set up in church in many parts of Europe, and this devotion became general early in the eighteenth century.

"The devotion may be said privately either in the church or at home. The pictures are an aid to devotion, but are not indispensable; the stations should, however, be marked by a cross. It is customary to make the stations on Wednesday and Friday, especially during Lent.'

"The omission of the fourth station, 'Jesus meets His Mother,' is notable. No mention is made either of the fact that the ceremony is borrowed from the Catholic Church."—The Lutheran.

#### LAST HOURS OF STRINDBERG

Few men have been honored and praised as the Swedish poet Strindberg, who died in Stockholm a short time ago. He was, alas, a leader of modern anti-Christian thought, and had railed frequently against the Bible. He was a rationalist and an infidel.

The Berliner Tageblatt, a German daily which is recognized as being under Jewish influence and which can not be accused of being friendly toward the Bible and religion, thus tells the story of the last hours of



this famous poet: "It was Monday evening, about 9 o'clock, when Strindberg regained full consciousness. He took hold of the Bible which had been at his side all the time (since he became sick), and said with an audible voice, 'I am through with life, the account has been closed, and this (pointing to the Bible) alone is truth.' After that he did not speak again, but smiling during the few remaining moments of consciousness, he pointed out that he wanted the Bible placed upon his breast when life was extinct."

Thus, the poet, leader of infidelity, and opponent of Christianity during his life, died with a testimony to the truth of the Word of God upon his lips. "O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"—Missionary Review of the World.

### DOING HER DUTY

I called one day on one of my members, just as she was whitening the front steps. She got up all in confusion and said:

"Oh, dear sir, I did not know you were coming to-day, or I would have been ready."

I replied: "Dear friend, you could not be in better trim than you are; you are doing your duty like a good housewife, and may God bless you!"

She had no money to spare for a servant, and she was doing her duty by keeping her home tidy. I thought she looked more beautiful with her pail beside her than if she had been dressed according to the latest fashion. I said to her:

"When the Lord Jesus comes suddenly I hope he will find me doing as you were doing; namely, fulfilling the duty of the hour."—Pittsburg Advocate.

"He enjoys much who is thankful for little. A grateful mind is a great mind."—Secker.

"Faith is not a sense, nor sight, nor reason, but a taking God at His word."—J. H. Evans.

### ITEMS OF INTEREST

The press reports the proposed consolidation of several Lutheran synods, the General Council, the General Synod, and the United Synod South. The plan comes from the Joint Committee on the Quadri-Centennial, which evidently desires to make this year of jubilee mark the beginning of a new era in the history of the Lutheran Church in America.

#### Noonday Lenten Services at St. Louis.

The Lutheran Witness prints the following interesting report on the noonday services held at St. Louis during Lent: The Lutherans of St. Louis held a very successful series of noonday services for a period of six weeks during Lent in a theater in the down-town district. The attendance was 30,

000, or an average of 1,000 daily. On Good Friday, the last day of the services, about 2,200 were present, and a few hundred had to be turned away. The number of strangers attending was large. A Tract Committee distributed 30,000 copies of tracts, among these being 5,000 copies of Luther's Catechism. The Catechism was asked for by many in the Inquiry Room. Many good results of the services are known. Our Lutheran Church has been brought to the attention of the public. Paid advertisements were run in the papers daily. An old resident of St. Louis, a non-Lutheran, remarked that he has never known an "unknown church" to have been brought so suddenly to the attention of the public. Some pastors report that strangers have come to their services through the noon-day services. The total expenses, amounting to about \$2,300, were paid for by a number of members of our churches. These members are satisfied that their money was well spent.

### California Religion

Strange conditions seem to exist in parts of California. In places there are more churches than communities can support, on the other hand great communities with only a very small Protestant church membership. One small town with 674 inhabitants has nine churches. San Francisco, with a population of 525,000 has but 100 Protestant churches with a membership of 15,713. Los Angeles, on the other hand, with a population of almost 600,000, has 281 Protestant churches, but only 58,686 members. In one section of the latter city, with an estimated population of 50,000, there are only a few struggling churches.—Exchange.

### Holy Carpet Taken on Pilgrimage to Mecca

The passage of the "holy carpet" through Suez on its way from Cairo to Mecca was one of the few spectacular events to break the monotony of war time in Suez, a considerable procession of Mohammedans accompanying it in its pilgrimage to Mohammed's tomb.

The procession in Suez started from the freight station, where the carpet had previously arrived by special train. The pilgrims, representing various tribes and races, bore banners and played discordant music upon tomtoms.

As the carpet, surrounded by a guard of Egyptian infantry, passed, immense crowds of natives lining the streets saluted while their women folk, who were at the windows and on the roofs of the houses, made a curious wailing. After the carpet had finished its tour of the town it was taken back to the railway station and conveyed by special train to the docks, where it was reverently loaded on a British ship en route to Jeddah, whence it was conveyed to Mecca by camel.

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