

The Northwestern Lutheran

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

Vol. 6.

Milwaukee, Wis., January 26, 1919.

No. 2.

EPIPHANY

Why fearest thou, O Herod,
A pure and holy Child,
Born in a stable lowly,
Of Virgin undefiled?
'Tis not thy throne He seeketh,
And not thy crown, O king,
'Tis not an earthly scepter
This monarch comes to swing.

Behold, the godly prophets
His coming long foretold,
And thousands prayed and longed for
This King in times of old,
The watchman on Mount Zion
Now sounds His trumpet blast,
For lo, the promised Shiloh
Comes to His own at last.

In Eastern skies resplendent,
His star Wise Men behold;
From distant lands they bring Him
Myrrh, frankincense, and gold.
With joy they kneel before Him
O'er Whose Epiphany
The heav'nly host rejoiceth,
For King of Kings is He.

Hark! Hark! A voice of weeping,
In Israel's domain,
For comfortless Judea
Mourns o'er its children slain;
In vain didst thou, O Herod,
Thy sword of carnage swing,
For God Himself protected
Israel's new-born King.

The prophet's dread prediction
In truth is now fulfilled,
Rachel indeed is weeping,
Innocent blood is spilled;
But oh, ye infant martyrs,
Torn from paternal love,
Ye cov'nant heirs, your portion
Is endless life above.

O new-born King, Thy coming
To Bethlehem, fulfilled
The seer's unfailing promise,
Penned as the Spirit willed.
Thy dwelling-place in Egypt,
And Nazareth of old,
Thy virgin-birth, dear Savior,
The Scriptures long foretold.

Thou art indeed Messiah,
As Heaven's hosts proclaim,
The promised Root of Jesse,
And Jesus is Thy Name.

Thou comest to Thy Temple,
O long-expected Lord,
Accept, we pray, our homage,
Thou great Incarnate Word.

Our arms cannot enfold Thee,
Like Simeon's of old,
Nor can we, like the wise men
Thy sacred form behold.
But oh, accept, dear Jesus,
The songs of praise we bring,
Thrice-welcome Guest, we hail Thee,
Our One, our All, our King!

—Anna Hoppe.

Milwaukee, Wis.,
Epiphany Sunday, 1919.

COMMENTS

The Prohibition Amendment is Winning At this writing thirty-one states have ratified the constitutional amendment which provides for national prohibition. If there ever was any doubt whether the necessary two-thirds majority could be gained for it, such doubt has now vanished. By the time you read this the five states needed may have been won by the "drys." But evidently that does not exhaust their energy or their ambition. We read that the founder of the anti-saloon league has formally announced the new objective of the organization: it is nothing less than the conquest of the whole world. The method of announcing this new aim is characteristic of the jumble of politics and religion that is peculiar to the prohibitionist. A meeting of "dry-workers" was called at a Methodist church and there a solemn oath was most solemnly administered by Mr. Russell, the founder of the original league. With dramatic gesture and with resounding phrase the world was apprised of the fact that the "demon rum" was to be fought in every quarter of the globe. It is this latter aspect of the movement, the heedless identification of prohibition with religion, that has made the whole cause so distasteful to Lutherans, even to such Lutherans who are quite glad to see the use of alcoholic liquors curtailed or discontinued. In their swan-song the "wets" are accusing three interests of being the power behind the dry movement. First, Rockefeller, which interest absorbs the corn output and by removing the brewer and distiller hopes to buy all the corn at lowest prices. Secondly, the meat packers who hope that cheap corn and grain will make

cheap meat, which in turn gives them increased profits; in addition these interests are supposed to control the canning business of the country which enables them to furnish grape-juice and other products to take the place of the vanished cheer. Thirdly, the manufacturers of certain prepared beverages, such as Coca-Cola, which is said to contain habit-forming drugs. But all this is in the nature of a post-mortem. The "wets" have lost, the "drys" have won; and the world of men and women is just where it was before. The next question is: which moral reform will serve as the next stalking-horse for those who insist that religion must be practical in their particular way?

H. K. M.

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Theodore Roosevelt's Death

It is not peculiar to our form of government that what is perfectly clear in theory becomes clouded in practice. While the governing is supposed to be done by offices rather than by persons, it is everyday experience that there is perhaps no country that offers the individual in office so much latitude in exercising his functions and none that observes his person more closely. In no country is it more necessary to be popularly known if one wishes to hold office. In his long public career Theodore Roosevelt acted according to this general experience. The love of the spectacular was not entirely the outgrowth of his adventurous spirit, it may have come, in part, of his recognition of the fact that America likes color in its public men.

Now that he is dead there is an undefined feeling that his passing should be marked in some way. He occupied the "first page" so long that his tenancy ought to be prolonged enough to make the inevitable disappearance less unseemly.

Having been President for two terms, we mark his passing with the respect due to those whom God has placed in such responsible positions. Theodore Roosevelt was one of the many instruments whom God has used to benefit us in many ways. It is a matter of Christian faithfulness to show, where opportunity offers, a grateful understanding of God's dealing with men and through men.

One is taken back by the lack of balance which some Christians exhibit in offering this self-evident tribute of respect to a representative fellow-citizen. Some pastors were possibly particular admirers of Theodore Roosevelt; they may have seen in him much more than many of their fellow-citizens; to this no one will take exception. But when this enthusiasm invades their pulpits, as it did in the memorializing that followed Roosevelt's death, it ceases to remain a matter of personal privilege. It betrays once again the unwillingness of modern preachers to do their appointed task and their eagerness to seize upon any pretext that will enable them to stand in the calcium

light of public events. Even patriotism cannot cloak a sacrilege. And it is sacrilegious to speak of Roosevelt, even, in a Christian pulpit, in the manner of some preachers. Furthermore, it must embarrass the true friends of Roosevelt quite as much as it must startle those who were less demonstrative in their appreciation of the former president to note sermon subjects such as the following: "Roosevelt, the Christian"; "Roosevelt, the Hero"; "Roosevelt, the Prophet"; "God's Rough Rider."

If such things be tolerated, where will the line be drawn?
H. K. M.

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Will Persecution Return?

A popular English essayist asks the question. His line of thought is interesting and confessing the fear which he implies in his question we may fortify his arguments by some of our own. He says we are prone to take it for granted that religious persecution has gone never to return. That is always dangerous, to take something for granted. Religious, as well as other liberty, can only be had at the price of eternal vigilance.

A little more than four years ago Mr. Andrew Carnegie declaimed with great fervor: "War is a thing of the past." We would be as nearly right as he was if we were to believe that religious persecution is a thing of the past. Of course, the inventive genius of our day will find new terms for old. They will not call it persecution, but very likely prosecution, making it a regular and legal procedure. As our essayist further suggests: instead of the persecutors admitting that they are trying to exterminate a certain religion they will maintain they are merely holding an "inquest over something already dead." In fact, past history shows that this very thing has often been done. Many a scientific academy has decreed that old-fashioned Christianity is officially dead and professes to be quite unable to understand that it is so very much alive as to object to this summary proceeding.

The question at the head of this article was inspired by the perusal of a modern journal which contained a leading editorial pleading for religious toleration of the "broadest" sort. Tennyson's text about there being more faith in honest doubt than in half the creeds was quoted, developed, and diluted. In the same journal there were two different articles attacking two different religious bodies and calling upon someone—the public? or the state?—to deal sternly with them, to "crush" them.

The theory of religious toleration is no protection to us; not even in the United States of America. At all times it is the question of practice which concerns us. All Lutherans should be awake to the fact that unless they guard their treasure bravely, they will lose it. Professing loudly that they respect religious liberty, there are even now many men in our country

that are eagerly seeking the opportunity to wipe out our parochial schools; that is the persecution of the new sort. It is the most effectual because it is the most insidious. They strike the whole church by cutting off its children. Unbelievers at heart, they are willing to sacrifice the youth of the land to further the glory of the idol they have set up in the place of God.

Yes, indeed, they are quite tolerant when there is only involved one of the many religions of "honest doubt," of unbelief, of social theory; but they fore-swear their tolerance when they encounter the faith of the CREED, the ONE CREED of Jesus Christ and His Word.

We are at the very threshold of a period in which we must battle for our religious liberty anew. We are truly fighting not only for ourselves but for our posterity. We have no right to make even the slightest concession to the forces of unbelief that are cloaking their conduct and their persecution with many fine patriotic phrases. We can best show that we, too, are patriots by contending boldly and fearlessly for the very fullest and most complete reestablishment of the American principle of religious liberty in its general aspect as well as in its application to our parish schools.

For this struggle we need no alliances with other bodies. We shall be strongest if we fight our own battle, for then our motives will be purest. H. K. M.

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An Apt Pupil We have long been led to look upon the little brown man from Japan as a sort of pupil or understudy of the greater western nations. Who has not read the statistics that tell of the numbers of young men from the island country of Nippon, of their quiet application to their studies, of their ability to master the most intricate tasks their occidental masters set them and how, having gathered in their store of learning, they quietly steal back home to make the best use of it for the nation's progress. Well, we have every reason to be proud of the little fellow if what the Rev. Morton Dunning, Doshisha university, Tokio, writes is true. He says:

"Three of the effects, on Japan, of the war have become very clear; an enormous increase in the wealth of certain classes of people; inflation of prices of necessary articles of food and of commerce, and a tremendous impetus to the movement for the democratization of the country."

This last-mentioned is a glad surprise to everyone of democratizing tendency: who would have thought of Japan! As to the two former, we have known Christian nations, quite competent to be set up as models for other peoples, similarly afflicted. You see, if you must go far afield and toil early and late to keep your neighbor's estate free from weeds you can hardly be surprised if an occasional burdock graces your own

front yard. You can take care of this condition of things when you get your neighbor "cleaned up"; in fact, you can then do it at leisure and thoroughly, since you have no more wind-borne seed to fear from your neighbor's fields. Of course, while you are busy some of your own growth might go to seed and if it were a windy day, — well, we wonder where Japan got it, anyway. There is another disturbing feature in the Rev. Dunning's letter. He goes on: "This newly acquired wealth has led to a great increase in liquor drinking. It seems strange to read of the strides that prohibition is making in the United States, with breweries turned into candy factories, while at the same time immense new breweries are being built here."

This is truly distressing in our protege! Such a thankless little wretch! And after we have been at such pains to call his attention to our good parts, too! Well, it means more work for our specialists. When we get our own dear people safely through the little cleaning we are giving it and it is thoroughly "dry"ed we will send over a little group and take care of this matter on the spot. Meanwhile we sincerely hope the little man has not heard of the latest thing we are experimenting with: it would be so vexatious if our specialists had to speak Japanese. G.

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Croatia's Debt to Luther One of the races which is to form part of the new state of Jugo-Slavia is the Croatian element of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy that was. Though not well known to the rest of the world as a separate people with national aspirations, this hardy race was in possession of its own literature and fostered a passionate love for independence by urging every Croat to drink deeply of the fountain of Croatian history and legend. A traveler who visited the capital, Agram, or Zagrab, was astonished to find local bookshops doing a business of metropolitan proportions. He was little prepared to hear one of these Croats explain to him that this was only possible through the part that Luther played, quite unconsciously, in the destinies of Croatia. Immediately after the Reformation influential Croats who had come in contact with the Reformation in Germany desired to give their own country the glad tidings. One of them, Baron Ungnad, founded the first Croatian printing establishment at Tuebingen, a German university town. Many of Luther's writings were there translated into Croatian and in this way that language became a literary fixture. Owing to the enmity of the rulers of that day, the missionary efforts of Baron Ungnad and his friends failed, but the printing press continued to turn out books for the Croatian readers; they had become book-hungry. The counter-Reformation did its work well; in the whole country there are now practically no Prot-

The *Northwestern Lutheran*, edited by a committee, published bi-weekly by the Northwestern Publishing House of Milwaukee, Wis., at \$1.00 per year, by mail in Milwaukee at \$1.25 per year, in the interest of, and maintained by the Ev. Luth. Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Other States.

Entered as Second Class Matter Dec. 30th, 1913, under the Act of March 3rd, 1879.

Acceptance for mailing at the special rate of postage as provided for in Section 1103, Act of Oct. 3rd, 1917, authorized Aug. 26th, 1918.

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

Address all news items to Rev. F. Graeber, 3709 Sycamore St., Milwaukee, Wis.

Send all business correspondence, remittances, etc., to Northwestern Publishing House, 263 Fourth St., Milwaukee, Wis.

estants. About three-fourths of the population confesses the Roman Catholic faith and of the remaining fourth the great majority is Greek Catholic. The new conditions will hardly be more favorable to the spreading of the doctrine of Luther than were the old. The Catholic confession has been too closely allied to Slavic national feeling to be dropped easily. As it is, Croatia owes Luther a great debt, yet it has gained nothing by the opportunities it had.

H. K. M.

JESUS THE FRIEND OF THE PEOPLE OR NATION

To some this is an ambiguous statement—Jesus the Friend of the people or nation. Believing in Him as the Savior of man such a conception of Jesus would convey in their mind the sense of nationalism and a secularised Kingdom of Christ, as, indeed, the latter conception seems to hold sway in our times. Thus there are people in our country, notably the National Reform Association, who for years have been using their endeavors for inserting in the preamble of the American Constitution a clause by which the people of the United States acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Lord of our nation. They call attention to the fact that in Scripture Christ is especially called "King of nations," "Ruler over the nations," "Prince of the kings of the earth," that it is said of Him: "All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him," Ps. 72, 11, and from this they infer, that our nation, as a people, ought to acknowledge the divine authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and make His Word, the Bible, its fundamental law, and its moral and civil code the basis of all civil legislation, and then we would hope to see a reign of righteousness in every department of State.

Others still go further. They think that the object of Christ's coming into the world was to establish "a

new order of society—a society in which all men should have a maximum measure of freedom and enjoyment of life's blessings." Says one of the advocates of this modern idea: "Two thousand years ago, the lowly Nazarene, Jesus Christ, beheld the oppressions and wrongs inflicted on the many by the powerful few of His day—by those in power of church and state. He had a wonderful vision of a new order of society. Universal brotherhood, peace, plenty, justice, righteousness and humanity were to be the prevailing features of that new social order He proposed. He called this vision the Kingdom of God—or Good. In modern times He would have chosen to call it the Democracy or Republic of God."

And, then, there is the League of Nations, now arresting the attention of all the world—a matter by the way termed by its chief promotor as 'the final enterprise of humanity'—a league of nations which in the estimation of many shall be based on "the world-righteousness of the Kingdom of God" in which Christ reigns. Thus **P. T. Forsyth**, Dean of the Faculty of Theology in the University of London, writes in his pamphlet, "The Roots of a World Commonwealth": "This is a war crucial for the New Humanity, for the world-righteousness of the Kingdom of God. It is a conflict of the kind which made Christianity at its heart a struggle for the world-righteousness in all nations. This is at stake for which Christ died—the world-righteousness among the peoples of the Kingdom of God. Such a war is a function of the world's Redemption for all who have not sectarianised or sentimentalised that word. It is part of that historic translation of the world's deliverance by righteousness into the Kingdom of God which is the first charge upon the conscience of the Christian nations."

Thus also **Bishop Gore** of London would hope to see Christ and His Church be the ruling force in the League of Nations. In a pamphlet on this subject he writes: "Confessedly the League of Nations will rest on no religious basis and will have no authoritative religious sanction such as the Middle Ages would have provided or professed to provide. Nevertheless, it will rest upon the idea of a fellowship of humanity, supreme in its interests over all separate national claims, a fellowship based on justice and the rights of weaker as well as stronger nations—an idea which has mainly had its origin in Christian thought or imagination, and which is the product of a civilization at least deeply leavened by Christianity and to which the name of Christ is still the name above every name."

"Let the Church of Christ, then, marshal all its divided forces to welcome and keep to the front in the attention of mankind this League of Nations, based on the recognition of the fellowship of nations, and force it into practical realization. So it may not only make the nations feel that Christ is the Prince

of Peace, but also make the greatest possible contribution to the widely-revived aspiration after religious reunion amidst the separated fragments of Christianity. A conference of free nations to determine their disputes may be the harbinger in the remote future of a really ecumenical council of Christendom."

Without doubt people of the first and latter type are sincere in their intentions. They would like to see the inhabitants of the land and the peoples of the world do homage to Jesus Christ as the Ruler of all nations. Notwithstanding their sincerity, however, such a conception of Christ and His Kingdom is contrary to the principles of Christianity. It is the Calvinistic idea, that a league of nations, the governments of the world based on justice and righteousness and leavened by Christian principles, are the Kingdom of God on earth. Jesus never so much as intimated that there finally should be a league of nations with Him at the head as Ruler, nor that secular magistrates and national governments should place their temporal power into His hands. Much less did He come into this world to establish a new order of society in which universal brotherhood, and plenty, and peace, and economic and political equality should be the prevailing features. On the contrary, when the Jews—not even excluding the disciples—expected in Him, the Messiah, a worldly ruler, a sovereign, a king who would subdue the Romans that had taken away the sceptre from Judah, and restore the once glorious kingdom of Israel, and thus establish its national independence, Christ resented such an expectation on the part of the Jews as contrary to the very nature and purpose of His Kingdom on earth. Nothing was further from our Lord's intention than to head a movement of Jewish emancipation, and to become a worldly ruler. Nor would He have the least thing to do with politics and temporal matters that were properly to be decided by civil courts. When, at a certain time, someone asked Him, "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me," He repudiated the very idea embodied in that man's presumption, saying, "Man, who made me a judge or divider over you." And when, finally, Jesus was arraigned before Pilate on the very charge of claiming to be the king of the Jews, and of having declared Himself a worldly ruler, it was then and there that Christ for all times to come, defined His position as to His relation to all political questions, stating unambiguously, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." John 18, 36.

Nevertheless, the statement heading this article is the truth. Jesus ever has been and is to this day the true Friend of the people or nation, and He is that as the Lord of nations. For He is truly the Lord of nations, both, in the sense of His divine majesty, as

well as in the sense of His saving power. There is a Supreme Governor who rules over all, who establishes and again dethrones kings and rulers, who bids nations come and go, and who, according to His divine Providence, makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. In this sense Jesus is the Ruler over the nations.

But also in the sense of His saving power. While in the time of the old dispensation it had pleased God to select one nation, to make that nation His chosen people with the exclusion of all the remaining nations of the globe, and to entrust to that single nation His promises and testimonies, He has in the time of the new covenant prepared a salvation that shall not be confined to a single nation or people, but shall be universal. He would have all men saved, no matter what people they may represent or what may be the form and character of their government. And thus Jesus is the Friend of all peoples and nations. He has no special regard for powerful, enlightened and civilized nations. He cares for all alike with a solicitous, exacting and particular love. He makes on all the same claim for a universal and particular care for others. He anticipated the judgment that "with God is no respect of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." Acts 16, 35. Hence He talks about "the whole world" as the sphere of the Gospel, and finally He sends His disciples to "make disciples of all the nations."

Confining ourselves to a particular people or nation, no man, however great he may be and however much he may have done for the benefit of his people, has proven himself a greater friend to his country, than does Jesus. The primary features of true friendship for one's own country are patriotism and loyalty. That Jesus Christ was a patriot, who felt in His blood the passion of the love of country, is apparent in His agonized cry over apostate Jerusalem. What was it that drew those tears from His eyes when He looked at Jerusalem for the last time? It was love for the city, love for His people and country. It grieved Him that Israel, His beloved people, was doomed, and that Jerusalem was destined to immediate and complete overthrow at the hands of the Gentiles. Surely, His patriotism is not of a narrow or selfish character, but a patriotism associated with true love and magnanimity looking after both the temporal and spiritual welfare of the people, and of every individual member of the same.

Let it, therefore, be taken for granted that Christ gave His sanction to patriotism as a solemn duty of every citizen of a nation. But let it also be known that the patriotism which Jesus sanctions is far from common patriotism. The patriotism which is common is always narrow and selfish. It always claims prerogative rights, seeks its own selfish interests, even to the extent that it claims God and His power for its own

nationalist ends, an experience by the way not unknown to us. But the patriotism which Jesus can bless always has the true interest of the people at heart, both as to its temporal and spiritual welfare. Nor is it nationalistic, that is disregarding the welfare of other nationalities. It sees the nation as the instrument of a divine purpose wider than itself. The nation is the servant in a cause which is to minister impartially to the needs of all mankind.

But there can be no patriotism without loyalty and obedience. Was Jesus loyal to His country? Was He obedient to the existing laws of the state? And would He have all citizens obey the laws of their country? It was He, who said: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." And He Himself, the Lord of Lords, was subject to the civil powers, rendering obedience to them even to the point of death. And thus He would have every citizen of a nation be law-abiding, enjoining upon all of them the duties toward the civil government, obligating them to its respect, support and obedience in all matters not contrary to the Word of God. He would have them understand, that civil government is an ordinance of God—a divine institute; that the design of the government, as stated in His Word, is the protection of the good and peaceable members of the society, and the restraint and punishment of the lawless and disobedient, and thus, enjoying the advantages and blessing under their government, they should be most conscientious and consistent in the discharge of their duties.

Nor would Jesus as the Friend of the people urge force or violence in order to obtain liberty from oppression on the part of those in power. He never agitated the people against oppressors of any kind, and so does not now; but He admonishes them to abide by the civil laws, use lawful methods for redress, and above all to commit their grievances unto the Lord. He would not have them fight for a liberty which would only satisfy their carnal desires, but He offers them in His Word the liberty wherewith He has made all men free, the liberty from sin and the curse of the Law. Much has been said of the liberty of the world, the liberty of peoples, universal freedom, for which we have been fighting in this war. Yet all the liberty of the world is vain, if its roots lie not in the fact that Christ, the Son of God and Savior of mankind, has set men's souls free from bondage and made them loyal to God. It is Jesus who is the author of true liberty, and incidentally also of personal and civil liberty. There is the key to freedom from domination of men. And offering true liberty in His Gospel to all the world Jesus proves Himself the Friend of every people or nation.

J. J.

Let "Deserved" be written on the door of hell, but on the door of heaven and life,—“The free gift.”—Baxter.

“THE RELIGION OF SELF-FORGETFULNESS”

“The religion of self-forgetfulness” is a designation some one has applied to that which is at the present time parading as the “Christian” religion of the future. This name sounds attractive, it appeals to the human mind. But what is this religion? We are assured that it is “the old religion, but with the husks stripped off and the life-giving truth laid bare in the hearts of men.” What is the truth in the old religion, and what were the husks? The Rev. Dr. John Hayes Holmes, who has recently announced his decision to leave the Unitarian denomination and proposed to his church that it also forsake the Unitarian sect, tells us:

“If the great war has revealed anything in religion, it is that sectarian churches of Christendom are no longer to be tolerated. . . .

“The new religious unit will not be the one belief, nor even the one spirit, but the one field of service.”

A minister just returned from service in France as a Red Cross hospital chaplain declares that the boys are coming back with religion in their hearts, but indicates that it is not religion with any denominational handle to it.

And then the writer who quotes these two gentlemen continues:

“And what does it mean to be a Christian? Does it mean to be a good Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist or anything else and go to church every Sunday in the year? That will not suffice.

Does Christianity mean the eternal seeking after and dwelling upon one's own salvation or the salvation of one's particular church by the acceptance of a form of doctrine and the belief in certain scriptural facts? It is that type of Christianity that has enabled men to worship God on Sunday and affront him on weekdays.

The thing which laid hold of the hearts of the soldiers and which they come back and tell us about with the light in their eyes was the exalted experience of total forgetfulness about self, of unstinted pouring out of self for others. In that experience they found the truth of true religion and they mean to translate it into terms of everyday living.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven.” And what is the kingdom of heaven but the great comradeship of those who serve God by unselfish, devoted service to humanity?

Religion, pure and undefiled, has come out of the war. In reality, it is the old religion, but with the husks stripped off and the life-giving truth laid bare in the hearts of men.”

Disregarding the specious argument this article directs against denominationalism, we gather from these various statements the following information on the “new” religion: Differences in doctrine should not divide men from each other; doctrines are not essential to Christianity; they belong to the husks that have

so far hidden the true religion from our view. Faith counts for but little, if for anything; it is service that is all-important. The Jailor at Philippi was entirely wrong when he worried about his relation to God and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved"; he ought to have demanded, Tell me where and how I can serve. And what shall we say of Paul who so sadly misdirects this man," Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," instead of admonishing him to forget himself and immediately devote himself to the service of humanity?

"The religion of self-forgetfulness" is a misnomer, as a closer examination will clearly show us. There have been at all times, and perhaps especially during these last years, many instances of noble sacrifice of self for others; men have subordinated their individual interests to the common good; many have renounced selfish ambitions in order to serve. We have no desire to belittle any of the many noble deeds that have been performed in this spirit. Yet, these deeds have no spiritual value, unless the flow from a heart that is truly forgetful of self before God. And that is most decidedly not the case when such service is made a substitute for the religion of faith in Jesus Christ.

God has in the Holy Scriptures revealed His Truth to men. He demands implicit faith and willing obedience. "To this man will I look," He says, "even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that **trembleth at my word.**" We are admonished: "Brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and **avoid them.**" They who declare that doctrinal differences should not divide, that so much does not depend on what we teach and preach, say to God: Lord, we know that you demand faithful adherence to your Truth and clear testimony against whatever contradicts it, impressing on us the all-importance of your Word; but, you see we have in common interests of such great importance that we simply cannot respect your demands on us, lest the cause of humanity suffer. Man is asserting himself against his God, setting up his reason against Divine Revelation.

God declares all men sinners, not excepting those who have performed deeds of valor or have rendered self-sacrificing service: "There is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." God exalts the service of our Lord Jesus Christ as the only service by which man can become acceptable to Him: "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

They who consider any service a man may be able to render as being meritorious before God are opposing their own righteousness to the righteousness of Christ; they are boasting of themselves instead of glorifying

Him who "of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

Instead of being the religion of self-forgetfulness, the "religion of service" is the religion of human self-assertion. It is, perhaps, possible that a man for a time forget his individual self in order to glory in his collective self over against his God. There was a wonderful unanimity among the builders of the Tower of Babel, made possible only by the selfdenial of the individual. Every one subordinated his personal interests to the common cause; but in this cause humanity rose in pride and defiance against its God.

True self-forgetfulness is the surrender in bitter remorse of one's pride of works; it is the renunciation of our human reason in a faith that simply accepts and trusts; it is the mortification of our flesh and childlike submission to the will of God. Its fruit is service without a thought of credit or merit. The sinner is nothing—God is all. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of work, **lest any man should boast.**" Paul's religion is the true religion of self-forgetfulness: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

J. B.

CEREMONY OF THE HOLY FIRE

"For the first time in generations the ceremony of the Holy Fire in Jerusalem has been observed without the presence of a single soldier. The Turkish Government had always stationed large numbers of troops in the court of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and within the church itself; their brutal roughness, together with the fanaticism of the different sects had always led to riot and bloodshed. But the British military governor of Jerusalem determined that this year the ceremony should be observed without the presence of soldiery. It was a bold decision to make, but he himself was present with his staff and had asked two members of the American Relief Committee to stand in front of the mass of Armenians to keep any turbulent spirits in order.

The church was packed to the doors and the excitement was intense; Greeks, Armenians and Copts were intensely jealous of each other, the Greeks being the most troublesome. But the whole ceremony passed off quite peaceably."—The Missionary Review of the World.

The festival referred to in the above is not among those instituted by God for observance during the Old Testament dispensation. Its observance probably dates from the time of Judas Maccabaeus, 164 B. C., and his re-dedication of the temple. (See 1 Macc.

1:42—50 and 2 Macc. 1:18.) The heathen had desecrated the sanctuary and defiled the altar of the Lord. When Judas had almost finished re-taking the Holy City he had the temple cleansed, the altar torn down and built anew and the worship of Jehovah again instituted. A rabbinic legend relates that when the temple was cleansed a cruse of oil was found, a quantity ordinarily enough for one day's use: this supply lasted for eight days. This probably led the Jews to give their festival a duration of eight days; on the first day of the celebration in their homes the Jews would light one candle, on the second, two; on the eighth there were thus eight tapers burning.

The festival taking place in our month of December, some have thought to see a connection between it and the winter solstice, while others would trace our Christmas illumination back to this source. G.

A FATHER'S LOVE

The Illinois State Penitentiary is at Joliet. My good friend Dr. Brown visits the prisoners there. One case especially drew his attention, and while we were sitting waiting for meeting time the other day, he told me of it. The case was that of a young boy, who was not overly bright, and crippled or withered in his hand and foot, and his poor face anything but pleasant to look upon. He had been sent to the penitentiary for stealing chickens and shipping them away. The boy hadn't been in the prison long when the father was sent up for a precisely similar crime. The father made but one request of the judge who sentenced him and that was that he might be put in the same cell with his boy. The warden granted his request. Dr. Brown found them there in the cell together as happy as could be. The father told Mr. Brown how much he loved the boy. And Brown proceeded to tell the father that love like that was worthless when they were chums in crime—when he had to stop talking. The father was protesting.

"Oh, sir," said the old man, "wait a minute. I'm no criminal, sir. I just had to be near my boy and that's the only way I could think of getting next to him. I love him. I couldn't sleep at night without him. I couldn't think of him being locked up here all alone. So, well, I'm here. This is my boy." And he hugged that ill-shaped boy to his heart and comforted him.

The sinless Jesus came into this old penitentiary of a world and to share our cell and to take our crime upon Himself. "He brought me to the banqueting house. His banner over me was love!" Oh, let him bring you, too.—Rev. Paul Rader.

"I ceased from monkish workings and entered into righteousness and rest. All those texts which had pounded upon me, now danced and sang around me for gladness."—Luther.

OVERCOMING PREJUDICE

"I would not have one of the new sect in my house, and if one of them should come in he'd go out again in a hurry." So said an old Brazilian woman named Joanna, and so much was she in earnest that when one of her sons discarded his evangelical faith and returned to a life of sin she actually rejoiced. She seemed quite unyielding to every appeal. If a caller introduced the subject of religion the conversation was closed at once, and the visit at an end. Prayer was the only means left. Then the time came when Joanna fell ill and as she continued to grow worse, one of the church deacons who was a sergeant in the Brazilian Medical Corps, decided to seize the opportunity. He found her illness within the scope of his skill and set about treating it at once, with encouraging result. After a few visits the old woman's curiosity outran her reserve and she inquired why he, a stranger, had come to help her. Here was the opportunity sought and she was told it was for the sake of One who had gone much farther to help her. What did he mean, she wondered. Quietly listening to the story of divine love and sacrifice old Joanna found herself convinced that there was at least one good person in the "new sect." Her interest aroused, she learned new truths at each visit of the doctor until she announced herself ready to accept Christ and His Gospel.—The Neglected Continent.

THE LORD COMES TO BLESS

While Dr. Arnot was pastor at Glasgow, his attention was called to a woman who was in great distress, being unable to pay her rent. So he went to her for the purpose of giving her assistance. He rapped at the door, listened and believed he heard someone in the house. He rapped again. The third time he rapped very hard, listened, but heard nothing. After waiting a little while, he made a great noise, and finally went away. A few days afterwards he met the woman on the street and said: "I was at your house the other day; I heard that you could not pay your rent, and I came to assist you." "O, was that you. I was in the house the whole time, but I thought the owner of the house had come to demand the rent, and as I had not the money, I kept the door locked." This woman was a picture of the sinner. He thinks God comes to demand something of him, while in reality God comes to give and to bless. Sinner, open your door and allow Him to enter! "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Rev. 3:20.—Selected.

"He that hath light thoughts of sin, never had great thoughts of God."—Owen.