

The Northwestern Lutheran

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Jan 25

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. 11.

Milwaukee, Wis., June 15th, 1924.

No. 12.

"MEIN SCHOEPFER STEH' MIR BEI"

(Confirmation)

My Maker, pilot me,
Be Thou my life's blest Light,
And lead me with Thine eye,
Till death ends mortal sight.
My heart in consecration
I give Thee as oblation.
All that my powers can render
To Thee and Thine I tender.
Thou wilt that I Thine own should be;
My Maker, pilot me.

My Savior, wash Thou me
In Thy so precious Blood
That cleanseth every stain,
And worketh boundless good.
My soul in peace abideth
When in Thy wounds it hideth;
From sin and condemnation
Thy grace grants free salvation.
Defiled, I know no Fount but Thee.
My Savior, wash Thou me.

My Comforter, grant power
To stem temptation's tide.
Rule Thou my heart's desires
When toward the world they glide.
Teach me to know my Savior,
And own Him Lord forever.
Let me, His Word receiving,
Walk in His paths, believing.
I need Thy strength each passing hour,
My Comforter, grant power.

Thou Triune God on high,
My One and All Thou art.
Implant Thine image blest
Deep in my mind and heart.
O may my soul be ever
A Temple of Thy favor.
Reveal in me, poor, lowly,
Thy love's compassion holy.
To own Thee mine, how blest am I,
Thou Triune God on high!

Translated from the German.

Anna Hoppe.

When my heart is troubled because of my helplessness and the weakness of my nature, my spirit is revived at the sound of these glad tidings: Christ is thy righteousness; Christ is thy salvation; thou art nothing; thou canst do nothing; Christ is the Alpha and Omega; Christ is all things; He can do all things.

—Ulrich Zwingli.

THE HOUSE WE BUILD, OR A POSITIVE FAITH UPON A POSITIVE FOUNDATION

Text: Matt. 7:24-29. References: James 1:22-25;
Matt. 13:1-23; 1 Pet. 2.

The words of Jesus in our text refer to the context, being introduced by the words: "therefore whosoever, etc." If we will take the time to re-read the whole Sermon on the Mount at one sitting (Matt. 5, 6, and 7, we will see that it is a fitting close for such a wonderful sermon, and refers to all the "sayings of Jesus." In still a wider sense it refers to all that has been revealed concerning Jesus, and that includes finally the whole Bible from cover to cover. So we may apply it to last Sunday's portion of the Sermon of Jesus; also to the whole sermon on the Mount; also to all we have ever read or heard concerning Jesus that is true: The Bible. Of each and of all it is true what follows in the close of this wonderful sermon of Jesus.

Jesus speaks of two kinds of hearers. You and I, who have been privileged to hear Jesus speak last Sunday, and for the Sundays of the last half year, and for a good many years, are included in one of the two classes. He speaks of people that "hear His sayings and do them"; and, secondly, (vs. 26-27) of those that "hear His sayings, and do them not." Both hear the Word of Jesus. Both are, to use the picture that Jesus here uses "building a house." And since we are hearing His Word too, either as it is written (Jh. 20:31) by reading it; or in according-to-that-Word preaching, for Jesus says to His disciples: "He that heareth you heareth Me," (Lu. 10:16) we might put as the theme of this portion of Jesus' Word: **the house we build**. Some of us are building our house where we wish to live happily forever **on rock**; and some of us are building the house where we expect to live happily for time and eternity **on sand**. Let us listen closely to this conclusion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, lest we hear His sayings also but fail to do them, and so build upon **sand**, and find disappointment in respect to the happiness we expected.

I. When is the House We Build, Built Upon a Rock?

Let Jesus answer: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house **upon a rock**." (vs. 24.) You will note Jesus is not speaking now of those that will not hear the Word of God, but of those that hear it and do it. What does it mean "to hear," and "to do?" If we have **heard** and **done** last Sunday, we will

know what **doing the will of God** is. (vs. 21.) Who enters into the kingdom of heaven? "He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." What is the Father's will? Jesus answers, John 6:40: "This is the will of Him that sent me (the Father), that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life." So "**doing**" the sayings of God, which reveal his **will**, is to not only **see the Son**, which may be compared to the **hearing** the sayings, but also **believing on the Son**. That is doing the **will of God**. The **will** of God in this day of grace is not to do the Law, to fulfill the commandments. God knows how impossible that is. It is telling us to fly. It can't be done. We have no power to do it. But looking to the first portion of this Sermon on the Mount, what saith Jesus: "I am come not to destroy the Law, but to fulfill." (5:17.) Jesus fulfilled the Law. For Himself? Nay. For us. Listen to Romans 3:21: "But now the righteousness of God **without the Law**, is manifested, . . . even the righteousness of God which is **by faith of Jesus Christ** unto all and upon all them that **believe**: for there is no difference, for **all** have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified **freely by His grace** through the **redemption that is in Christ Jesus**. (Ro. 3:21-24.) Summed up, **doing the sayings of Jesus** means **believing in Him** as the One Who "His Own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Pet. 2:24.)

Jesus says, a man building his house that way . . . on **faith in Christ** as the means of becoming righteous before God — is built upon a **rock**. It has a firm, unshakable foundation. It is the **rock** Jesus speaks to Peter of: "Upon this **rock** — the rock of Peter's confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God — I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18.) It is the **rock** of foundation God speaks of through Isa. 28:16: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." Peter refers to this passage in his first letter, 2:6: "Behold I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he that believeth shall not be confounded." "The foundation of God standeth sure." (2 Tim. 2:19.)

A man built that way is like a **wise** man that builds his house not right on the surface, believing that anything will hold, but such a man digs deep down till he rests upon the Rock Christ Jesus. He never makes it a matter between anyone else but God and him. He does not build upon authority of man, or church, or pastor, or tradition, or reason, or self, or skill, or learning, or education, or civilization, or any other man-made foundation, but always, in all these things, like the Bereans digs down to the rock-bottom: Christ. (Acts 17:11.) He always goes down to fundamentals, and there is but one: For other **foundation** can no man

lay than that is laid, which is **Jesus Christ**." (1 Cor. 3:11.) Such a person uses the Bible, the church, the pastor, his fellow-Christians, books, yea, **all things**, as a means to an end: "For Christ is the **end** of the law for righteousness to every one that **believeth**." (Ro. 10:4.) He does not, and no one can, feel satisfied until he rests, is founded upon the **rock, Christ Jesus** in his whole life, body and soul. Then only can he joyfully say: "Whether I live, I live unto the Lord, whether I die, I die unto the Lord; Whether I live therefore or die, **I am the Lord's**. (Ro. 14:8.) Such a person experiences the **blessedness** Jesus speaks of in the beginning of this Sermon of His. (Matt. 5.)

Such a man is at peace midst all unrest. When the rain of temptation descends he knows the Lord, His **foundation of rock**, the **rock of ages**, is his strength, he shall not be moved. (Ps. 16:8.) And when the drizzling rain of manifold trials and temptations fall down upon our house of faith we know "out of them **all** the Lord will deliver us." (2 Tim. 3:11.) Then the cloudbursts of persecution may fall down upon us, our foundation is sure, and so are we, (2 Tim. 2:19) "For the Foundation of God standeth sure, and hath this seal: The Lord knoweth them that are His." Then the showers of persecution may rain down upon us for forty days and forty nights, we are safe in the ark of faith founded upon the rock of ages, Christ, and we can lustily sing: "Rock of Ages, cleft for me; Let me hide myself in Thee."

Then the **floods** of sickness can come trying to upset our little house of faith, but we are founded on the rock, and we see by faith: This sickness is not unto death (misery) but that the Son of Man may be glorified thereby." (Jh. 11:4.) Then the waves of those floods of sorrow may be seen approaching right at hand, but we will trust in the rock that has bidden us come to Him upon the water. (Matt. 14:22-33.) "Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him." (Ps. 32:6.)

And when the singing winds of the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches beat up against us we can feel at perfect peace, we are founded upon the rock. (Isa. 26:3.) Yea, the hot blasting, desert winds from the valley of the shadow of death may bear down upon us, but we "shall fear no evil" (Ps. 23:4) Christ is our rock.

All these and all others of devil, and man, **rain, floods, winds**, of every nature and description, in your life or mine, "the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail, win out, against, (Matt. 16:18) for we are founded upon the rock. Our house of faith built upon Christ, **fell not: for it is founded upon a rock**.

II. When is the House We Build, Built Upon the Sand?

Again let Jesus answer: "Every one that **heareth** these sayings of mine, and **doeth them not**, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon

the sand." "Hearing and doing not," is the same as "Seeing the Son, but not believing on Him." (Jh. 6:40.) If we hear, and hear, and do not apply, do not take God at His Word, do not trust His loving promises, we are like famishing people that get heaps of invitations to eat at a richly laden table, but they never partake of the food to which they are invited. James speaks of such people in this wise: Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any one be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty (Christ is the end of the law for liberty) and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (1:22-23.)

He is a foolish man, Jesus says, fooling himself to believe that hearing, but not doing will save him. Seeing the right way, but not following it for safety. Fooling himself to believe that his house will stand. Believing to be a foundation unto himself. Believing by his works, his life, his good deeds, his righteousness, his ability, to build a house that will stand. Building without the blueprint of the Architect: Jesus. Building according to his own ideas, whispered to him by the imitator builder: the devil. 1,900 years too late, trying to bring about his own righteousness. Building upon sand. It reminds one of the virgins that took the lamps but no oil. Of the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof (Christ). 2 Tim. 3:5.

Such is the way of building advocated so arrogantly today, from pulpits, schools, and platform, and press. Such is the Liberalism falsely so-called, the Modernism, also falsely so-called for it is as old as the hills. It began in the garden of Eden. Such are the new-fangled religions advocated today: all imitations of the real thing: New Thought, and it is as old as the devil, who first had it. Christian Science, and it is absolutely contrary to everything Christian and true science. Spiritualism, and whatever is spirit and not humbug is not of God but of the evil one. All lodge religions lodging upon nothing else than works of righteousness which man can do. (Titus 3:5.) **All foolish building of a house upon a sand foundation.** For when the rain of temptations, trials, persecutions, descend upon that house; when the floods of sickness and sorrow come; when the winds of cares, deceitfulness, and death blow against this house, and beat upon it, it must fall, and **great will be the fall thereof. Why? It is built upon the sand of self, of man, instead of Christ.** Even then man may cling to the devil's false comforts, he may hear a whole lot of tommyrot about having gone to the happy grand lodge above, but listen to Jesus: It is a lie: the devil's deception.

My friend, **how are you building?** Upon the sand of self, or man? or upon the **rock of Christ?** You will be able to tell. How do you use the Word, the **blueprint** of building, the Bible. Do you consult it frequently. Do you see and build on the foundation, other than which no man can lay, **Christ Jesus?** (1 Cor. 3:11.) Are you using the services, classes, time, talent, energy, of yours and your fellow-Christians to build yourself more firmly? Not staying in the A B C class all the time? (Heb. 6:1.) Are you **hearing** day after day, **Sunday** after Sunday, but never **do** what God bids you: **believe.** If you do not you will not be able to stand when the evil day of trials, death, comes. Listen to the **positive, fundamental message of Jesus.** He is the one authority that can speak with authority as to this **building of your house.** (Matt. 7:28-29.)

W. F. B.

COMMENTS

Let Us Be Thankful Let us be thankful! It is true:

We have our cares and worries. There is the constant deficit in our synodical treasury. We do not always agree and pull together. There is room for improvement everywhere. But, have we ever stopped to consider how much cause we have to be thankful? You have undoubtedly read reports of the different conventions of large church bodies in these days. In them the hearts are divided; there are modernists and fundamentalist. We are still one. We know of no teacher of the church among us who does not faithfully teach the truths we all profess. Our professors are sound. Our missionaries are preaching the pure Gospel far and near. No reason for distrust anywhere, as far as doctrine is concerned.

That is God's gift to us, a gift that we have not merited, that we do not deserve. He has kept us in His Word out of pure grace and has preserved true unity in our church.

For this let us give Him thanks. Let us be thankful! Should we not for His grace love His Word and study it prayerfully; should we not watch and pray lest we, too, be led into temptation? There must be no weakening in matters of doctrine and of practice. This is the lesson those other conventions teach us.

Let us be thankful! If we are truly one in Christ, should we not lay aside all other differences that may occur in the congregation or in the synod, to labor together in the spirit of true brotherhood? Should not the great gift which God has bestowed on us, the pure Gospel, overshadow everything that could tend to divide the hearts among us?

Let us be thankful! If we are thankful for such missionaries and such institutions that deserve our fullest confidence, will we not rally to their support and consider it a privilege to foster them?

Let us be thankful!

J. B.

The **Northwestern Lutheran**, edited by a committee, published bi-weekly by the Northwestern Publishing House of Milwaukee, Wis., at \$1.25 per year.

In Milwaukee and Canada single copy by mail \$1.50 per year.

All subscriptions are to be paid for in advance or at least within the first three months of the year.

In the interest of, and maintained by the Ev. Luth. Joint Synod of Wisconsin 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, Acts 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.

New President of Christian Science The organization of the Christian Science society is a model of absolutism in the form of an oligarchy. Mark Twain quite aptly compared it with the Mormon system and felt sure that the church of Rome was not nearly so compact and so responsive to the will of the ruling group. All "churches" and societies going by the name of Christian Science must first be authorized to use that name by the "mother church" in Boston. Every individual who affiliates with any of these branches is not considered a full-fledged Scientist unless he joins the Boston mother church for himself. That explains the seemingly evasive statements one often hears from persons who are known to be rabid followers of the Eddy cult and yet solemnly declare that they are not Christian Scientists.

The mother church in turn delegates all power to a board of directors under which the vastly profitable publishing business is conducted and the not inconsiderable contributions of the members are expended. At regular intervals the central controlling body sends forth its carefully picked lecturers to speak in all communities where the faithful have some representation. Such stereotyped lectures are then regularly broadcasted in the rural press. In fact it is one of the characteristics of the watchfulness of the powers that control Christian Science that they are deeply concerned to have in every community, large or small, some person or persons who will make it their business to see that nothing appearing in the newspapers that might be detrimental to Christian Science go unchallenged or unanswered.

The new president chosen by the Boston church is Torrance Parker of Belmont, Mass. He is a lawyer. The chief work of the head of this body is administrative, very much like a business concern, and it is natural that a lawyer, an administrator, is chosen to head it.

At the annual meeting at which the new president was elected a report was read on the activities of the past year. On paper it reads most favorably. More

members were admitted than in any previous year; 56 churches and 82 societies were admitted as branches; of these twenty are located outside of America. The total number of such branches of the mother church is given as 2,117.

One need not be unduly impressed by these figures. Christian Science has had its day. It is still a profitable business but the heyday of its prosperity is over. Most of these branches are nothing more than tiny twigs.

H. K. M.

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A Better Way We have followed the rapid growth of laymen's organizations in the Lutheran Church with keen interest, carefully reading whatever we have been able to find on this subject. But we are compelled to admit that we have not yet been convinced that this is a healthy movement that will redound to the benefit of our church. The aim — we are not speaking of social organizations — is naturally laudable. One writer puts it thus: "All our laymen need to be in the work of the church, and in all parts of our Synod." That is undoubtedly correct; and this is the end towards which we all must strive. But what is the best means to this end? Surely not special laymen's associations or brotherhoods. We have before us the program for the meeting of one of these associations. Almost all the recommendations that were to be discussed pertained to synodical matters. Some of them appear to be wise; others would bear closer study. Among others we find the following:

"An organization fund for the purpose of developing a spirit of co-operation in all our laymen; a uniform system and the education of the laymen in their duties and responsibilities toward the church; this is the work of the laymen."

"A pension fund. The laymen are gradually to assume the work of the pension fund and to win members for this association until such a time when sufficient funds for the support of pensioned pastors and the widows and orphans of pastors shall be provided through the budgets of the congregations." And so the program continues. Our question is, Why is it necessary for laymen to form separate organizations in order to propose and discuss such measures and to create funds for such purposes?

Does their home congregation not discuss synodical matters in its meetings and elect a delegate, or delegates, to the convention of the synod? Are there no laymen on the various synodical boards and committees? The direct course to take would be that the individual member of the synod or a congregation would propose such plans for the betterment of conditions directly to their synod. As to the training of the laymen in their duties and responsibilities — why that is a part of the work of the home church. There would be quicker and more lasting results, if the mat-

ter were taken up right at home. Why induce a Christian to join an association for the support of super-annuated or invalid servants of the church, or for their dependents? He already belongs to the very organization whose duty it is to provide for them. Why not lay this matter before the church meeting and bring it home to the fellow-members in personal brotherly visits? It is not new machinery we need, but the right spirit.

We cannot understand why moneys should flow more freely when a more or less private organization makes an appeal to our Christian than when the church as they themselves have constituted it asks them for their contributions. The only explanation we have been able to find is that in such instance a particular cause is emphasized, while the synod naturally has to ask for moneys for all its treasuries. In addition, it is in such cases usually a sporadic effort, while the synod depends on the sustained efforts of its members.

Another argument introduced by a writer is this, that the laymen who live at great distances from each other are by these organizations brought together and learn to understand each other better. However, where the distances are great, this advantage would be enjoyed only by the delegates of the local organizations just as at the meetings of the Synod.

Some of the laymen may be brought together geographically, but we cannot escape the conviction that, on the other hand, divisions will be brought about by these organizations in the end. There is always a danger that an organized group within a large body will exercise an undue influence over the body. If it should choose to exert pressure on the synod in its sessions, even a majority of duly elected delegates would hardly be able to hold its own against such a body.

No, we believe that our Wisconsin Synod has found the better way — in the institution of our Delegate Conferences. They bring together the officers of the congregations belonging to the conference and at the same time afford all other members the opportunity to hear the affairs of the synod discussed and to state their mind on any particular subject. This body elects the delegates to the convention of the District and to the meeting of the synod. Through the discussions in the local congregation, the Delegate Conference, the District meetings and the synodical conventions all matters pertaining to our work are brought before all of our laymen and all have equal opportunity to offer criticism or advice.

We have the natural close contact between Christian and Christian in the congregation and between the Christians of neighboring congregations that opens the way for true laymen's work, brotherly admonition, comfort and encouragement. If we add, further, the

General Synodical Committee, in which our laymen are fully represented, we have the thing complete.

We have the system — all that is now required is that every man faithfully does his duty in the sphere which the Lord has assigned him. Reports that we hear from these delegate conferences sound very encouraging. Our people are actually beginning to take their place in our common work. J. B.

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Open Season for Conventions The season for church conventions is under way. To us it ever remains a strange sight to see Christians that represent the flower of a church coming together to discuss so many neutral things, things that a convention of mathematics professors might discuss with equal propriety if they chose to forget that they had met to discuss problems of their own profession. Christ and Christian doctrine are mentioned, if mentioned at all, in hidden clauses, by the way, at times when it can not be avoided.

The chief concern is to make copy for the newspapers. We know what the jolly journalists want for their readers: they would like a healthy scandal, next to that they favor a hearty fight. If these two sources of interest fail one can always fall back on political questions such as prohibition, world peace, the world court, or any other program of political legislation.

In recent years the journalists have learned the word fundamentalism and are not loathe to get a little thrill out of the controversy that attaches to that battlecry.

So we have had the Baptists, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Episcopalians in their conventions. The Methodists are a step nearer to healing the breach made in their ranks by the civil war. The Presbyterians, with the redoubtable layman, William Jennings Bryan, fundamentalist, using his political experience to good advantage, have elected a fundamentalist moderator but have otherwise left things quite untouched in the controversy that has left them divided, apparently, in two camps of about equal strength. Numerous skirmishes have been fought but both parties point to victory in each case and that lets us outsiders conclude that the old-fashioned compromise has again done its duty.

One sad indication of the trend of affairs in Presbyterian circles must be noted in the attitude taken on a resolution that required all "teachers in theological seminaries, members of the general council and of boards of the church to affirm or reaffirm belief in the doctrinal standards of the church as a requisite for appointment." This resolution was voted down. It simply means that seminaries, like colleges, are set adrift. If it suits a faculty or an individual professor to differ from the accepted confession of the Presbyterian church he may still go on teaching his subver-

sive doctrines. The decline of the American churches set in when their schools of higher education, particularly their theological training schools, were thrown open to any sort of instruction that it pleased the men who were elected to teach to offer. Fully in line with this pernicious principle of freedom in teaching is the attitude taken by members of missionary boards. They may have ideas on missions that are anything but in harmony with the confessed doctrine of their church. Having such views they will send out missionaries without being in the least particular what these missionaries will teach as the Christian doctrine; they will found and support schools which may (and frequently this is actually found to be the case) not be Christian schools in any sense but are merely outposts of occidental civilization in the oriental lands. Under such regime it is possible to read of joint festivals between Mohammedans and "Christians" in which mutual appreciation of the fundamental religious principles which are "held in common" is offered.

The Baptists, at their convention in Milwaukee, were offered an opportunity to go on record with a confession of biblical Christianity. A set of resolutions had been prepared covering a number of central doctrines of the Bible; they were simple and straightforward. One of the resolutions, the one on the Bible itself, may serve as a sample of its tone and spirit: "We believe that the Holy Bible was (a) written by men supernaturally inspired, (b) that it has truth without any admixture of error for its matter and (c) therefore is and shall remain to the end of the age the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried." The articles on Satan, sin, creation, the virgin birth, and religious liberty were a real confession of Bible doctrine. But the convention voted the resolution down. The newspapers promptly headlined the affair, "Baptists Vote Down Bible Infallibility." Fortunately not even a national convention of Baptists is able to dispose of the infallibility of the Bible by a majority vote on a set of resolutions.

In place of the "Milwaukee Declaration," as the resolutions were known, the convention approved the "Stockholm message to the Baptist Brotherhood," a statement on doctrinal matters that could not well be much thinner and much more washed out if its authors had tried to make of it a statement of what a confession ought not to be. This Stockholm message was adopted last year by the Baptist World Alliance then assembled in Sweden's capital. It declared in general and indefinite terms its belief in the Old and New Testaments, the Lordship of Christ, and in baptism by immersion of a believer as the only method recognized by the New Testament.

The net results of such conventions must be negligible. The faithful who look to them for inspired leadership are treated to a political caucus with all its disagreeable features of electioneering for votes by catch-penny slogans and other devices calculated to arrest attention rather than to help the church in performing its mission of saving souls. Now and then some convention, like that of the Methodists, enters the field of the showman and amusement vender and tries to legislate for its members just what is permissible and what is forbidden. This leads to endless rhetorical outbursts and is usually concluded in a manner quite as indefinite as marks the end of modern doctrinal discussions.

Mr. Tom Marshall, our favorite vice-president, has a way of saying things quite aptly. We recall his much-quoted pearl of political wisdom, "What this country needs is a good five cent cigar," and another pearl on the same string is his remark, just as quotable, "The preachers are doing too much legislating and the legislators too little praying." The end of it that applies to preachers in convention assembled is especially striking when one reads the reports of their proceedings.

H. K. M.

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"Borers From Within" Its sympathies are on the wrong side, but The Nation at least displays a discerning mind in what it says of the "borers from within" that threaten conservative religion.

Organized religion may be as conservative and as completely a part of the profit system as Upton Sinclair would have us believe, but at least it has its borers from within. The Y. W. C. A. meeting recently held in New York, was forced by the younger members to move to let down its orthodox evangelical bars and admit to equal membership Unitarians, Catholics, and all other persons who profess any variety of Christian faith. These young liberals also took their elders to task for discussing endless organization detail and ignoring the fundamental problems of the day. At the same time a strong group representing the Methodist Federation for Social Service has submitted to the Quadrennial General Conference a thoroughly radical and flat-footed program calling upon the church to fight for the abolition of the economic and other causes of war, to refuse its blessing or aid for any war, to work for industrial justice and the elimination of unearned income. The Methodist women fought vigorously for equality in the church and finally won the limited right to be ordained as local preachers. Thus the fabric of conservatism gradually crumbles.

We owe The Nation a debt of thanks for this testimony from the opposing camp that we are right when we warn our people against the very things of which it speaks. We have always contended that the unionism in the Y. W. C. A., Y. M. C. A., Boy Scouts, and similar organizations, inevitably tends to destroy faith and lead into unbelief.

The same result eventually follows when the church attempts to run the world instead of seeking to convert it. The Nation is right when it sees in

these events indications of the crumbling away of conservatism in religion, or, we might say, of religion itself. The arch foe of the church desires nothing more than that a church forget its God-given mission and dissipate its energies on things that do not properly concern it. Such a church will do very little harm to his kingdom, and he can regard whatever signs of life it will show with extreme complacency.

Yes, the Methodist Church did grant women the right to be ordained as preachers of the Gospel, though it still refuses to permit them to do general pastoral work. 1 Tim. 2:11-14, we read: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived; but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression." We still believe that the Lord knows what is best for his church and hold that the action of the Methodist convention was a step in the wrong direction. An exchange calls attention to the fact that one of the women became so incensed by the limitations imposed by the convention that she rushed to the platform and threatened the chairman, Bishop Bristol, with her fist. The ennobling influence of woman in public life with a vengeance!

Just what concept The Nation has of organized religion, we fail to understand. Its unholy joy in the work of the "borers from within" we do understand, as the Savior himself explains it to us, John 16:3: "And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me."

J. B.

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An Awful Condition In the Chicago Tribune of May 17th Doris Blake presents some facts which reveal a very sad condition of things. She says the following:

In 1923 almost 13,000 people of the United States committed suicide. The exact known number, according to the Save-a-Life League of New York, is 12,948. The oldest suicide was 97, the youngest 6. If all cases of suicide were known, the probability, in the opinion of the league, is that the number would reach fifteen or sixteen thousand.

Curiously enough, the number of male deaths by self destruction was double that of the female — the males 8,632, the females 4,316.

What can the reason be for this appalling destruction of human life by its own hand?

N. M. Warren, president of the league, blames the rapid pace of modern life.

"As long," he says, "as people, young and old, continue at this high pace of living, we may not be surprised at an even greater harvest of suicides."

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The triviality of reasons for self-destruction is not the least remarkable phase of the thing. The fact that those possessed apparently of the means for the most comfortable form of living grow sick of life and choose the cowardly way out is another startling disclosure in the league's report.

Conspicuous in the death roll is a large number of persons socially prominent, educated and wealthy. In the list appear the names of sixty-two physicians, forty-eight lawyers and judges, fourteen ministers and church leaders, thirty-two college students, sixty-four bankers, seventy-two brokers, forty-three actors, twenty-six editors and writers, thirty-two clubmen, fifty society women, more than one hundred wealthy men and women, many ranked as millionaires, and 110 presidents and owners of large business concerns.

One woman committed suicide over the death of her canary bird. A girl died of gas because she was not allowed to be a regular flapper. A spinster drowned herself, leaving a note in which she simply said: "Damn the men!" A young man left no other excuse behind than that things were too slow and he wanted to try a new experience. Another grew discouraged fighting the subway jams.

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"Sickness, poverty, loneliness, and remorse are the most frequent causes among adults," reads the statement of the league. An authority has stated that 20 per cent of the suicides of our country were due to business failures last year. Probably one-third of all suicides each year are insane, and another third of all, sane and insane, are the result of some sex troubles. The increase in self-destruction among women in recent years doubtless is due to woman's newly acquired personal liberty. Many have joined the 'fast set' — not necessarily questionable — with its endless social whirl, dinners, dances, and cigarets, which often cause physical collapse and nervous breakdowns, frequently ending in disaster, disgrace or death.

"During the last five years about 4,000 children, between the ages of 5 and 18, have been on the suicide list, a number, fortunately not having succeeded. One girl made twelve different attempts to die. Most of these children and young people ended their lives because of unhappy home conditions, youthful marriages, and the jazz spirit of the times."

The reasons advanced in the above for the conditions presented are merely symptomatic. The deep underlying cause of the world's despair is that mankind in general is to-day without God, it is God-less. What appears of fear and love and trust is given to idols, generally speaking. We might write pages on this contention but it is not necessary for the thinking Christian. The prophets words are again true in our time: "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts."

It is just as apparent that there can be but one real help for our world: back to God. Not a backward way under man's guidance but under the leading of God. Repentance is the strait gate. The true church of to-day has no business meddling with quack nostrums in its treatment of a perishing world; the Gospel alone can save. "Work, for the night is coming."

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G.

In Behalf of our Statistician The Lutheran Herald reports that we Lutherans came within three and a half thousand members of losing our third place among the Protestant denominations. The explanation for this is not that we

have been losing members or that other churches have been gaining so much more rapidly than we, but that we have been careless in making our statistical reports. While it may matter little whether or not our numbers are given correctly, so long as we are only winning souls for Christ, the Christian character demands that all things that we do be done well. So also in this instance. So we offer the following article from the Lutheran Herald in behalf of our suffering statistician, hoping that it will help lighten his labors:

Pastor Kieffer in presenting the facts to the statisticians in the general bodies and district synods in America, emphasizes the fatality of leaving blank spaces in place of membership figures on the statistical blanks. The call says: "All gatherers of statistics should make it a rule never to accept a blank from any congregation under the 'membership' and 'property' rubrics. The question arises, 'How can this be avoided when the reports are not presented by pastors?' The statistical secretary must put forth every effort to find the facts." The method suggested when pastors refuse or fail to give complete statistics are, search previous reports or minutes, consult officers of synod, or of conference or circuits, call upon neighboring pastors to furnish the facts, and after every effort has been put forth to secure them in this way, estimate according to well-established percentage rules.

Pastor Kieffer's appeal closes: "You see what is at stake. I believe it is better now to present the case openly and fairly than to wait until the statistics for 1924 have been gathered and then lament that we have lost our place statistically in the religious life of America, and that it might have been avoided had there not been so many blanks reported in the 1924 statistics."

Our long suffering district secretaries, not to mention the general secretary, will stand shoulder to shoulder with Pastor Kieffer. They can tell a long tale of woe when it comes to the ingathering of statistics.

Strange, but nevertheless true, that there seems to be a lapse in otherwise consecrated and zealous men working in the vineyards of the Lord, a lapse when it comes to filling out statistical returns and sending them to the secretary, and doing so with promptness and despatch. Some there always seem to be who make their returns conspicuous by their absence.

Let the secretary rave and tear his hair, if he will; let him in his annual report speak about the unfortunate fact that his figures are not complete, since it was impossible to get the returns from every pastor; let him send his incomplete report to the general secretary, and so on down the line; let the general statistics for Lutherans in the United States be incomplete; let the Church slip back among the church bodies because others have outstripped her in point of numbers, he who is the real delinquent wends the even tenor of his way, supinely oblivious of the fact of any lapse on his part.

Yet the accuracy, or even approximate accuracy, of statistics — and unless they are accurate they have little if any value — comes back to the individual pastor. If he does his duty, well and good if not — then what's the use! —

Moral: Let every pastor get out his statistical report as accurately and as promptly as he can. It will be a great satisfaction to him himself; it will gladden the weary heart of the district secretary, again not to mention the general secretary; it will enable an accurate general survey; and last but not least, it will put the church statistically and numerically where it belongs in the family of churches in the country. — Why deprive yourself of this pleasure?

J. B.

Bishop Brown, Heretic The Episcopalians have a way of getting almost unlimited publicity for their heresy trials. Using the verbiage of the middle ages and employing an elaborate court personnel the stage is set for effects that offer rare thrills to the jaded senses of the modern public.

At the recent Cleveland convention the trial board of the house of bishops sat as a court to conduct the heresy trial of Bishop William Montgomery Brown, erstwhile of Arkansas, now nearly seventy years old, a tall, whitehaired man of scholarly bearing whose person is quite likely to gain for him sympathy which his views do not merit. He was charged by three bishops, Hall of Vermont, Francis of Indianapolis, and Gravatt of West Virginia, with holding, uttering, and spreading doctrines that are at variance with those of the Episcopal church in his book "Communism and Christianity."

The proceedings move along quite as those of any other court. There is a prosecution consisting of clerics, in this case two of them are of the accusing bishops, assisted by secular attorneys who are depended upon to urge at the right moment all those legal points which may be required to offset similar legal points made by the defense. The defendant bishop has his array of legal advisers and clerics.

The trial opened with the presiding Bishop Murray intoning the Creed in which those present joined him, including the accused Bishop Brown. One must be somewhat familiar with the court practice of ordinary courts to be able to follow the reasoning of both parties in approaching the issue. When roll is called Brown answers "Here," but immediately his attorney takes the floor to explain that by answering "Here" his client merely announces his presence and readiness to dispute the jurisdiction of the court. The lawyer then proceeds to state the grounds upon which he disputes the right of the bishops to try one of their fellow-bishops for heresy. He argues that the very existence of the Episcopal church is proof of his contention that no single bishop nor any group of bishops can control any other bishop; the denial of the jurisdiction of the Roman pontiff over the English bishops was the foundation upon which the Episcopal church is built. The court did not permit itself to be declared incompetent in this summary fashion and the trial proceeded.

In the subsequent arguments it was sometimes difficult to determine who were on the orthodox side and who were the heretics, for at one time the defendant seemed to be valiantly fighting for the authority of the Bible, while the church advocate, for the prosecution, contended that the Episcopal general assembly, if so minded, might abrogate the Apostles' Creed. The argument, stripped of the complications injected by the lawyers, was to the point that the Episcopal

church as such determined its doctrine and that the defendant was to be judged by such established and accepted doctrine, that it was not admissible to have any single member of the church, be he bishop or anyone else, give his opinion as to what might properly constitute the teaching of the church on any question raised by the Bible.

The defense finally, through Bishop Brown himself, presented its case with far more effectiveness than one might have expected by calmly asserting that the defendant "believed every word of the Bible." This equivocal statement — equivocal because the accused was known to hold ultra-radical opinions on everything that was taught by the historic church — became more clear when Brown added that he should be permitted to determine for himself the "manner in which he believed." If he chose to interpret Holy Writ symbolically he should not be considered a heretic. In detail three points were offered by the defense: First, interpretations of doctrine are a mental process and "the only possible uniformity of doctrine is one which leaves to the individual member liberty to accept words according to his individual grasp of them"; secondly, the history of the church shows that it was never attempted to make its ministers believe in a certain way, but the only rule laid down was that they should hold certain doctrines, the manner in which they were interpreted was left to them, as the example of Origen and his symbolic interpretations would show even for the earthly church; thirdly, it was contended that Christianity was but the outgrowth of ancient pagan religions, their forms, ceremonies, and facts having been carried forward bodily and applied symbolically to Jesus of Nazareth.

Bishop Brown in telling his story on the stand left no doubt as to the meaning of these contentions, if there was any doubt left to dispel. He told how, late in life, forced to retire from active duties for a period of two years, he left his earlier beliefs behind when he began to study the writings of Darwin, Spencer, Haeckel, and others. He sought counsel from churchmen at this time in his troubled conscience but in the end found that he must stand on what modern science had shown him to be the truth. He then re-interpreted his former beliefs in the light of the new knowledge he had gained and the result was in the last instance this charge of heresy.

The verdict of the trial court was rendered after a week of such discussion and the defendant was pronounced guilty of the charges preferred against him. Just what this means is not yet known. It might mean degradation from the rank of bishop in the hierarchy, or it might mean that he is to be unfrocked.

Not familiar with the detailed history of Episcopalianism in America we are unable to say more than that to our knowledge it is the first instance of a bishop

being convicted of heresy. The ranks of Episcopalianism are quite hospitable to many shades of religious thought. At the present time there are any number of prominent clergymen whose orthodoxy is known to be fully as tenuous as was Bishop Brown's. The charges were brought against him on the basis of a book that was published and had attained a circulation of fifteen editions; perhaps that was the determining thing in lodging the charge against this particular heretic. And then again, as his title, "Communism and Christianity" might indicate, perhaps the bishop dabbled a little too much in radical political thought and if there is one thing that the Episcopal church stands for it is ingrained toryism. A little pinkish hue to one's political views, especially for parlor purposes, is not considered fatal for it enables one to say, "We also have our liberals," but when pink shades over into red it is quite another matter. It is possible that Bishop Brown was convicted not because he was so unredeemably heretical but because he was somewhat colorblind.

H. K. M.

BIBLE STUDY

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

(Conclusion)

The chief lesson to be learned from the history of the Divided Kingdom during the first two centuries, the story of the Division and the Decline, is that it is half-heartedness and hypocrisy that eventually lead to disaster and destruction.

To be sure, the fendish woman Jezebel thoroughly debauched the northern kingdom and, through her daughter, Judah also, but after all, the wickedness of her day was merely the foul outward eruption of the deeply-seated trouble, the 'sins of Jeroboam'. And even though it was a spectacular struggle between the forces of righteousness, as concentrated in the lone person of Elijah, and the forces of evil, as represented by the heathen queen, and though the chronicler of the Books of Kings devotes much space to it, it was an equally hard and more hopeless fight that was waged by the first literary prophets, in the face of seeming betterment, against the half-heartedness and hypocrisy of the later generations. The 'sins of Jeroboam', the constant refrain of the somewhat mechanical chronicler too, is the succinct expression for this hypocrisy, which roused the wrath of honest Amos, and it is his and the other prophets' writings to which we have to turn for a vivid picture of the time and for a fuller understanding of the causes for the quick approach of the day of the Lord.

The sending of Jonah to Niniveh is the *Auftakt*, as it were, to the coming events and directs our gaze to

the East, whence the storm is gathering that was to sweep the Chosen People away.

The deportation of the northern tribes, surely, was a clarion call to Judah to repent. But this and the continued pleading of the prophets, the several reforms that actually were instituted, all this was not an earnest that Judah was to have another chance. No, the house of David must likewise fall.

There towers at the gateway to this Period of Deportation, and singularly too: midway between Sinai and Calvary, the greatest of the prophets both as witness of the fall of Samaria and as Judah's herald of disaster, and Isaiah's very preaching was destined to harden the hearts of the people, lest they be converted. In the light of the prophets' commentaries, the reforms that were several times inaugurated were not what they would seem from a cursory reading of the historical books, and the fact that good men like Hezekiah and Josiah could not read the signs of the times aright is a token of the judgment that even then was upon the house of David.

And so there came the day when Judah, too, was carried away out of their land, a day of distress to the suffering heart of Jeremiah, and the final fulfilment of what the Lord had said at Sinai in view of the waywardness of His people: 'In the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them' (Exod. 32:34).

It was only a small number of the Chosen People who availed themselves of Cyrus' and the later Persian monarchs' permission to return to their home land after the fulfilment of the Seventy Years, and so the Babylonian Captivity marks the beginning of the dispersion of the Jews, a people without a country, which is a fact to this day and which no Zionist movement of our day will change.

The Restoration of those who did return ushered in no decisive change in their life. But for the central fact of the Promise, the Chosen People had fulfilled its dire destiny of demonstrating, by its delinquency, the futility of the Law, under which covenant it had gone forth from Sinai upon its mission. 'The law worketh wrath'. As for the worship of the true God and as for the Promise, these had been kept alive by the prophets and the 'remnant' and presently were permanently fixed by the assembling of the Old Testament Canon (ca. 400 B. C.).

GENERAL HISTORY NOTE

THE END OF THE SEMITIC AGE

To elucidate in what Semitic civilization, that held such universal sway for centuries of history, consisted, it remains to be added that its chief factor in the early centuries was the cuneiform system of writing (syllabic), which was adopted by the peoples of Western Asia at an early date; even the Egyptians, whose hieroglyphs had advanced to the alphabetic stage, employed cuneiform in their diplomatic correspondence. Another Babylonian gift to material civilization was the invention of measures of time, length, weight, and capacity

(duodecimal system), largely persisting to this day. Their practice of astrology gave impetus to the study of astronomy (zodiac, calendar). The highly organized system of jurisprudence has been alluded to before. Semitic art, barring a few examples of rare genius, delighted in gorgeousness and colossal size, and in this, together with its lack of perspective, gave true expression to the dominant traits of the Semitic character: the lust of power and of wealth.

M'ne, m'ne, th'qel, upharsin.

The history of the Chaldean Empire is closely interwoven with Bible history and there has been outlined. Under Nebuchadnezzar, its founder, Semitic power once more flared up in a full burst of splendor and then went out. A wonderful vista into the ancient world of the period is disclosed by the story of the distinguished position at the court of Nebuchadnezzar and the regency, during the world-monarch's madness, of Daniel the Jew. The short-lived empire fell before the Persians in 538 B. C.

It was a solemn hour in the history of the world when Babylon fell. Not, however, because of the capture of a mighty city, a city as large as our great capitals today, with buildings as high as our vaunted sky-scrapers and, moreover, enclosed by walls three hundred feet high and seventy-five feet in diameter; nor because it meant the overthrow of the mistress of the world; but — because it was the Lord. The Lord God of Shem was casting off the race that had honored Him not; the first great chapter in the book of nations had been written.

THE ASCENDENCY OF JAPHETH

Cyrus the Great of Persia, a prototype of Christ in that he was 'the righteous man of the East whom God called by his name before he knew Him, to whom He gave kings as dust to his sword' — thus the prophecy of the great seer of Judah quite two centuries before (Isa. 41:44); the conqueror of Babylon and inaugurator of Aryan rule in the world; the founder of the greatest Oriental empire; the ruler who issued the remarkable decree of restoration of the Jews in behalf of Jehovah's temple; the man whose simple but majestic epitaph on the tomb at Pasargadae read: 'O man! I am Kurush, the son of Kambujiya, who founded the greatness of Persia and ruled Asia. Grudge me not this monument!' — to him must be accorded a special place in the history of the ancient world.

JEWISH HISTORY 400-40 B. C.

The Jews henceforward merely marked time, developing under Persian, Greek, Maccabean, and Roman rule the peculiar forms of their national life familiar to us from the New Testament (scribes, synagogue, etc.) and biding the coming of the Messiah, interpreted by all but the faithful few in a worldly way.

Greek Domination.

With the conquest of the Persian empire by Alexander the Great of Macedonia (ca. 333) the Jews came under Greek domination. Alexander himself, on his march to Egypt, entered Jerusalem and is said to have offered sacrifice in the Temple; he did not deprive the Jews of their freedom of worship or of their government.

With the division of the empire upon Alexander's death by the Diadochi, Palestine first was allotted to Syria but soon acquired by Ptolemy Soter of Egypt and held by his successors for upward of a century. The most important events of this period were the transplanting of about 100,000 Jews to Egypt and the Septuagint (LXX) translation of the Old Testament, made at Alexandria at the instance of Ptolemy Philadelphus

ca. 250). There was no oppression, the Jews in Palestine being governed by their high-priests under the Ptolemies.

The Seleucidae wrested Palestine from Egypt in 198 B. C., and with this Syrian supremacy began a period of cruel oppression. Every attempt was made by Antiochus Epiphanes to destroy the worship of Jehovah and to introduce Greek customs and religion among the Jewish people. The year 167 marks the destruction by him of Jerusalem and the Temple, which finally kindled the flame of revolt.

Maccabean Independence.

A priest named Mattathias raised the banner of revolt, and after his death his five sons in succession led the efforts of the Jews for freedom. The greatest of them was Judas, surnamed Maccabeus (the hammer). In 165 he took possession of Jerusalem, and after his death his brother Simon won the recognition of the freedom of Palestine. Other Maccabean princes extended the boundaries of the land over Edom, Samaria, and Galilee. Under a succession of these rulers, also called Asmonean kings, Palestine was virtually independent.

Roman Supremacy.

In 63 B. C. Pompey the Great, after his conquest of Syria, entered Jerusalem, but the representatives of the Maccabean line were allowed to reign until 40 B. C., when they were set aside and Herod the Idumean (Edomite), later surnamed 'the Great', was made king by the Romans. His history however, properly becomes a part of the New Testament story.

It is here, when the alien Herod ascends the throne, that 'the sceptre departs from Judah', thus signaling the approach of the fullness of times and of the fulfilment of Israel's greatest mission: to give the Savior to the world.

"THAT WOMAN JEZEBEL"

Rev. 2:20

She was broadminded. She had no quarrel with those good people, who halted between two opinions, who served both Israel's God and her god Baal. What she hated unto death, was that stubborn, narrow, exclusive spirit of Elias, who said: The Lord is God, all others are idols. And her mind was not changed by the intervention of the Lord. That evident, undesirable miracle, which caused all the people to shout: "The Lord, he is God! The Lord, he is God!" which moved them to have the murderers of the servants of the Lord, the prophets of Baal executed, so enraged her, that she swore a solemn oath to kill Elias.

The neck of Jezebel was finally broken. She became meat for dogs. Her bones were buried in an inglorious grave. Her spirit however lived on. It still lives. The church of the New Testament, like that of the Old, has always had to do and will always have to reckon, with the spirit of that woman Jezebel.

Her spirit sought to crush out and exterminate the Christian church in the beginning. The Roman empire in the days of St. Paul was honeycombed with clubs and guilds, burial and other societies. Some were formed for permissible, some for laudable pur-

poses, like the burial of the dead. All these societies were, however, so inseparably combined with idol worship as wet with water. They had their peculiar gods according to country and tribe, to whom they sacrificed and prayed. As Romans they all had a common god in whose service they could unite. Him they called "the Lord," "the Great God," "the Savior of the World." That was the Roman emperor. These clubs and guilds and fraternities also had their halls and meeting places, which served both as temples and banquetting halls. Here they met not only to deliberate and dispatch their business, but also to feast, to relax and to worship their god. Here the pigeons and the pigs were killed and dressed and prepared for the banquet, after certain worthless parts had been offered up to the idol-god. Here they drank wine in wine growing countries, of which the idol also received his cup or share. Thus they united with their idols by sharing with them the same holy meat and the same holy drink. Thus they also united with each other and called themselves Adelphoi or brothers, because they all partook of the same holy, sacrificial meat and drink. To these banquets they also invited their friends. This we know from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. And I have before me such a written invitation. It was dug up from a rubbish heap of Oxyrhynchus in Egypt, where under a rainless sky the dry desert sands preserved the original letter for about 1,800 years. It is addressed to an unnamed friend and reads as follows: "Antonius, son of Itolomeus, invites you to dine with him at the table of the Lord Serapis (an Egyptian god) in the house of Claudius Serapius on the 16th at 3 P. M."

Such were the surroundings of the early Christian convert from the heathen. Many Christians undoubtedly had been members of these clubs and guilds and societies before their conversion. The question at once arose whether they could remain there and participate after accepting Christ as their Lord. To the Christian with Jewish blood in his veins this was no question at all. He had always, even as Jew, since the days of the Babylonian captivity managed to steer clear of all participation in gross idol worship. To him this was an unclean thing and an abomination. But the Christians coming from the gentile world felt differently in the matter. As Christians they were convinced that an idol was nothing in the world, a piece of wood or stone. And meat offered to idols was no more than other meat. Why should they not go to those banquets with their friends or tradesmen as before? Not to worship the idol, of course, but for mere business and social purposes. This question with others was finally referred to the first general Council or Synod at Jerusalem. Acts 15. And the unanimous opinion of that representative church body, really ruled by the Holy Ghost, was: "That the Christians from the Gentiles abstain from the pollu-

tions of idols." v. 20. "That they abstain from meats offered to idols." v. 29. Thus the question was settled for the time, but only for a time.

When the Gospel spread to Europe, to that great commercial center Corinth, it flared up with renewed force. Paul, therefore, in his first letter to that church finds it necessary to devote three chapters to that question alone. 1 Cor. 8-9-10. After ventilating the subject from all angles, he comes to the conclusion: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils (devils or demons here means heathen gods or idols) ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils." 1 Cor. 10:21. Thus the question was again very definitely settled. But it could not rest.

Christians, on account of their withdrawals, were looked upon askance, yea, as enemies of the government and the commonweal. Their trade and business relations suffered. At first the outbursts of persecution were local, stirred up by the Jews or some trade guild, like at Ephesus, but by and by the opposition became universal, organized, determined, clean-cut. The young church refused to worship idols, the so-called "Lord," and "Great God," and "Savior of the World" not excepted. Giving all due honor to Caesar, they, nevertheless, proclaimed another, namely Jesus, to be the Lord, the great God and Savior of the world. She thus was accused of teaching customs not lawful for Romans to receive or to observe. In the conflict which arose at this point many of the original witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus, together with others, lost their lives. Of the Apostles, John only survived, and he was banished to a lonely island called Patmos on account of his testimony. The young Christian church seemed in danger of being crushed by that mighty world power, the Roman empire, animated by the spirit of that woman Jezebel.

At this juncture "That Woman Jezebel" came to the aid of the church in some of her members. A liberal party arose and gained power in some of the influential churches of Asia Minor. A close study of the Seven Letters of John to the Seven Churches reveals the principles of these liberals. They were not liberals in the modern sense of the word. They clung to all the fundamental articles of the Christian faith. Their moral lives were beyond reproach. But, said they, why stir up strife? Why arouse the enmity of the heathen by being so exclusive? Why not take part in those customary banquets connected with idol worship? Why not eat of things sacrificed to idols? We need not believe in idols. We can keep our faith, have peace, preach the Gospel, save the church and have all the opportunity in the world to lead Christian lives.

However, what John thought of "that woman Jezebel," of those liberal principles, comes out clearest in his letters to the church at Thyatira, where that

liberal spirit had complete control. By the Son of God he received the following order: "And unto the angel of the church at Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God, who has his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service and faith, and thy patience, and that thy last works are more than the first." Rev. 2:18-19. Greater praise could hardly be bestowed on any church than the praise this church here got from the Son of God. Her faith, her love, her patience and her works first and last are lauded. And in these she has even made progress, the latter being greater than the first. But now comes a withering reproof. "Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not. Behold I cast her into a bed (onto a banquetting couch according to the original) and those that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And will kill her children with death." 2:20-23.

Is it possible that a Christian church of the aforementioned standing, should have suffered a woman publicly to teach in her midst, who was known to seduce the servants of the Son of God, the members of that church, to commit bodily fornication with her, and who was known to be a harlot with a litter of illegal children? No sane person should ever have hit upon such a thought.

What then is the meaning? The masterkey to the whole letter are the words: "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel to teach and to seduce my servants to eat things sacrificed to idols." This one single sufferance relieved the whole tension then existing between the church and the world; it was the very backbone of that liberal movement.

But why does John make so much of the fornication she taught and put into practice? Its true, those heathen and idolatrous feasts were not strictly moral. Dancing girls were hired to perform their stunts for the amusement of the guests, and some of the men, not all by any means, went from surfeiting and drunkenness in the banquetting hall to chambering and wantonness elsewhere. But would a Christian of the above description do such a thing? And above all, would a Christian church tolerate the teaching of such a thing? Never.

What then can John mean by fornication and the children of the harlot? He who reads his Bible running knows. All through the Old Testament God pictures his relation to Israel or the church as that of a husband to his wife, Israel being God's bride and lawful wife. And the New Testament calls Christ the bridegroom and the church his bride. As often there-

fore as the church of the Old Testament got mixed up with idols and idol worship, we read that she went a whoring after idols, that she became an adulteress. Isaiah therefore says of Jerusalem: "How is the faithful city become an harlot!" Is. 1:21. She, who had once been faithful to God, her lawful husband, had now become a harlot by serving idols alongside of the Lord. That's what Jezebel taught Israel to do in the days of Elias. That's what this woman Jezebel did in the days of John in the church of Thyatira by teaching and seducing the servants of the Son of God, the bride of Jesus Christ to eat of things sacrificed to idols, to take part in idol worship. She thereby taught them to commit a kind of fornication and adultery by far more defiling and damning than the sin of a married man who violates his neighbor's wife or daughter. Such a man is unfaithful indeed to his own wife and to his neighbor besides. And that is bad, as all honorable men will agree. But the Christian who stoops to another god, to idol worship becomes unfaithful to his God and Savior. That's worse.

As to the fear that the church will be crushed if she does not become more tolerant on this point and permit fellowship with idol worshipers, the very opposite is true. For thus the latter concludes: "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will not lay upon you none other burden. But that which you have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received from my Father. Rev. 2:24-27. Ps. 2:8-9. "He that hath ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." v. 29. All churches are meant. Now a word of application. Our country is honeycombed with lodges. They are, as many of these as have a chaplain, prayers, memorial services, a burial service, dyed-in-the-wool with idolatry. Their religion is not the Christian religion. Their God is not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The name of Jesus Christ is purposely eliminated from their prayers. Their way to heaven is not the way of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus, but the way of works. Their prayers therefore are spiritual sacrifices offered up to an idol. The old question again faces the church four-square everywhere: Can a servant of the Son of God partake of things offered to idols?

The influence of that woman Jezebel in the midst of the church is evident. Not only has she control of individual churches, but of whole church bodies. She raises her head in hundreds of ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who by word and deed, even by their own example teach and seduce the servants of the Son of God to become oath-bound members of these

modern idolatrous organizations, to take part in the sacrifice of lips they offer up to an idol, yea, to be chaplains and leaders in this idol worship.

O that the eyes of all Christians were opened to see the uncleanest of all sins, that abominable sin of adultery and fornication committed or at least permitted by every church which teaches or permits her adherents to become oath-bound members of these idol worshiping fraternities. The word of the Lord by the mouth of Isaiah: "How is the faithful city become an harlot!" stands against each and every one of these churches. Upon their head falls the withering rebuke of the Son of God hurled against the church of Thyatira, though they be yet so orthodox, progressive and flourishing otherwise. One thing only can save these churches with their ministers today, and that one thing is — repentance. God grant this to us all for Jesus' sake.

J. F. B.

LETTER OF THANKS

Yakima, Wash., on Holy Easter Day,
April 20, 1924.

To the Joint Synod of Wisconsin and other States,
by the Commission for Home Mission in the
Pacific Northwest District.

Dear Brethren:

Having for years received support for the ministry in our midst, we, the Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Yakima, Wash., have been blessed by God in such a measure, that, considering His blessings received and hoping for His further assistance, in our regular meeting of April 6th we have felt encouraged to adopt the following resolution:

"that from July 1st of this year we will not ask for further financial support by Synod, but become self-supporting."

Grace Church is heartily grateful to the Wisconsin Synod for the plenteous kind help experienced, and herewith wishes to extend its thanks to the Synod.

May our dear Wisconsin Synod grow in faith and love, that she may be a strong champion of the Gospel, able to spread its truth!

By order of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Yakima, Wash., signed by the Board of Trustees: Frederic H. K. Soll, Pastor and Chairman; F. Quade, Vice-Chairman; Geo. Ehlers, Secretary; Geo. Dochow; S. Brockelmann; Edw. Dobratz; R. H. Garbe.

THE ROMAN QUESTION

To the Editor of *The Living Church*:

I hope you will soon be able to find room in your columns for a full publication of Dr. Barry's paper at the Priests' Convention. This seems to me an exceedingly important matter.

In saying, as reported, "As a basis of negotiation we may accept the Primacy of Peter and the allocation of

all jurisdiction to the Bishop of Rome," I hope that Dr. Barry does not speak for very many Catholics beside himself.

Whatever primacy our Lord may have given to St. Peter is very questionable; St. John 21:21, 22. St. Peter certainly claims none for himself; II St. Peter 3:2. But whatever it may have been, if any, there is nothing in any way to connect this primacy with Rome or with any other city. Not only is there no evidence in the New Testament or any other First Century author that St. Peter ever saw Rome (the evidence is the other way); but, more important, there is no title deed or formal grant of any kind transferring St. Peter's authority to any city (Rome or other). You could not inherit a five-cent piece in any court in Christendom on the testimony that Rome offers to show inheritance of St. Peter's primacy; much less can you sway the fortunes of Christendom for untold generations.

Leaving out St. Peter, such primacy as Rome had was due to her being the capital of the Roman Empire (Council of Chalcedon, Canon 28, and early writers generally). As the Roman Empire has been extinct now for 1,448 years, I think the Roman Primacy, so-called, may also be out of date.

I confess I rubbed my eyes when I read: "the allocation of all jurisdiction to the Bishop of Rome." I think of a pretty long line of Englishmen who have thought the other way. Wilfrid, Archbishop of York, in the Seventh Century, appealed to Rome, the first who ever did. Egfrid and the Witan of Northumbria (as did afterwards the Synod at Easterfield) ruled that Wilfrid's act was a public offence, and cast him into jail.

At the Norman Conquest, "William thereupon appealed to the Pope, promising that if he came into possession of England he would see that the *English clergy submitted to the authority* of the Roman bishop." Under Henry II, the Council of Clarendon forbade all appeals to Rome without the king's consent. Under Edward III, the Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire expelled all foreign clergy from the country, declared that "all who should sue for redress in the papal courts should be put out of the protection of the law in England, and forfeit all their goods to the same," and that any who brought papal letters into the land were condemned to forfeit all their possessions. There was not much papal "jurisdiction" left in England after that, legally.

These were naturally followed by the Act of Convocation under Henry VIII, that "the Bishop of Rome has no greater *jurisdiction* conferred on him by God in this kingdom than any other foreign Bishop;" by Elizabeth's refusal, in 1570, when Pope Pius IV offered to accept the English Prayer Book and the English Reformation, if England would yield the supremacy; right down to the Seven Bishops who went to the Tower rather than read James II's declaration of indulgence for the papalists.

This pretty definite stand of English Catholics for a

matter of 1,200 years I do not think we are going to throw away just now.

The best book I know for a view of the papacy from the Roman side is Janus, *The Pope and the Council*. Janus occupies forty-six pages in giving an account of the forgeries by which the popes established their power, and, at that, gives only the merest sketch of them. The fraud by which the Sardican canons were passed off as Nicene, or tried to be, by pope after pope; a forged donation of Constantine to be shown to Pepin; a forged donation of Pepin, to be shown to Charlemagne; the immense forgery of the False Decretals, which the popes put in force against the protests of the Frankish bishop and others; the forgeries of Gregory VII to advance his "reforms"; of Gratian, in his famous *Decretum*, still in authority in Roman law; of Innocent III; and of Boniface VIII; not to mention the forged Greek Fathers, on which St. Thomas Aquinas founded his treatment of the papacy; and forgeries, interpolations, and perversions in the Canons and Fathers of the Church, without number. It is sad to say, but nevertheless true, that the papacy as we now see it, is the result of centuries of fraud; unblushing, and yet successful. And yet Dr. Barry proposes to "allot jurisdiction to the Pope"!

How much place the papacy really holds in Catholic Faith and Catholic Tradition is, I think, evident from these sentences of Janus, which I do not think can be gainsaid: "A Latin theologian composed a catena of spurious passages of Greek Councils and Fathers. St. Thomas, who knew no Greek, found himself at once in possession of this treasure of most weighty testimonies from the early centuries." "He therefore did *what the scholastics had never done before*, he introduced the doctrine of the Pope and his infallibility, as he got it from these spurious passages, and often in the same words, into the dogmatic system of the *Schola*." "At Rome it was perceived at once how great was the gain of what had *hitherto been taught only by jurists and codes of canon law*, becoming an integral part of dogmatic theology." In other words, the papacy is so un-Catholic a thing, and so foreign to Catholic Tradition, that it did not become a part of dogmatic theology until the *Thirteenth Century*; and then only on the basis of a *forgery*.

Dr. Barry is accustomed to speaking to a thoroughly Catholic and highly intellectual congregation, and he does not realize the harm that these statements of his do to us who are on the firing line, and who are trying hard to make people understand that Catholic and Roman are not synonymous; and that the Roman is, in fact, a very poor Catholic, because he has both *altered*, and *added* to, the Faith. Three people in my mission field spoke to me the following Sunday, much disturbed, about Dr. Barry's utterance. They had seen the report of it in the local paper, and were much upset. I do believe, in advancing dangerous theories, some consideration is owing to us who are in the mission field.

— Edwin D. Weed in The Living Church.

DISTRICT MEETINGS

West Wisconsin District

The West Wisconsin District, D. v., will convene from June 25 to July 1, noon, at Marshfield, Wis. (Rev. O. Hensel). Opening services on June 25, ten o'clock a. m. Papers will be read by Prof. Wm. Henkel and Pastor O. Hensel. Sermons will be delivered by President G. Thurow, O. Kuhlrow, A. Sauer, L. Kirst, Jul. Bergholz.

All reports and communications must be in the hands of the president by June 18.

Three papers will be read viz.: Die Stellung der Frau im oeffentlichen Gemeindeleben, Prof. Wm. Henkel.

Das Verhalten der Gemeiden, der Pastoren, der Christen ueberhaupt in Berufsangelegenheiten, Rev. O. Hensel.

Divorces, Rev. G. Pieper.

The credentials of the delegates must be signed by the chairman and the secretary of their respective congregations, and must be handed to the secretary at the close of the opening services.

Application for quarters must be made to the resident pastor in due time. L. Kirst, Sec'y.

Southeast Wisconsin District

The Southeast Wisconsin District will meet in Trinity Church at Waukesha, Wis., from July 9th to 15th (Rev. P. Brockmann). Opening services will take place at 10 o'clock A. M. Wednesday. A paper will be read by the undersigned on Etliche Zuege aus dem Leben Eliae — fuer unsere Zeit. — Another paper will be read by the Rev. W. Keibel on Christian Giving. — All credentials of the lay delegates must be signed by the chairman and secretary of their congregation and must be handed to the secretary of the Synod at the close of the opening services. — Every congregation is requested to pay for lodging and board of their delegates. All requests for quarters are to be sent to the local pastor, Rev. Paul Brockmann, 1076 White Rock Ave., Waukesha, Wis. Delegates are requested, when making application for accommodations, to state whether they wish to have lodging and board, or only board. All reports and petitions to the Synod must be in writing and are to be in the hands of the president of the Synod, the Rev. C. Buenger at Kenosha, Wis., before June 25th.

Henry Gieschen, Sr., Sec'y.

Pacific Northwest District

The Pacific Northwest District Synod will meet from June 25 to 29 at Grace Church, Yakima, Wash.

Papers will be read by the Revs. F. Schumann, R. Fenske, and Wm. Lueckel. Wm. Lueckel, Sec'y.

North Wisconsin District

Pursuant to an invitation of the First Evangelical Lutheran congregation of Manitowoc, Wis. (Rev. K.

Machmiller, pastor), the North Wisconsin District of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and other States will there convene from June 25th to July 1st, a. c.

Opening services will be held Wednesday afternoon at 2:00 o'clock.

Two papers will be read, one by the Rev. O. Theobald on "The Deity of Christ"; the other by the Rev. Ed. Zell on "Delegate Conferences." The theses for the Rev. Theobald's paper are: 1) Enmity against Christ as evidenced by attacks upon His deity. 2) Certainty of Christ's deity based upon the certainty of the divine origin of the Bible. 3) The assurance of faith and salvation derived from the knowledge that Christ is truly the Son of God.

Registration for quarters is requested by the local pastor, the Rev. K. Machmiller, at the latest by June 15th.

All petitions to be made should be in writing and in the hands of the District President, the Rev. Ad. Spiering, New London, Wis., by July 1st.

The credentials of the delegates must be signed by the chairman and the secretary of their congregations, and must be handed to the secretary at the close of the opening services.

G. E. Boettcher, Sec'y.

FROM OUR CHURCH CIRCLES

Eastern Conference

The Eastern Conference will convene on June 17th and 18th in Newburg, Wis. (A. Petermann, pastor).

Services will be conducted on Tuesday evening in the German language.

Preacher: Wm. Rader (P. Burkholz, Sr.).

Papers to be read by the Pastors Gundlach, Wajahn, Kneiske, H. Gieschen, Petermann, Brockmann.

Timely announcements for quarters are requested by the local pastor; please state whether you desire full quarters or only meals. Paul J. Gieschen, Sec'y.

Installation

Authorized by President W. F. Sauer, the undersigned installed the Rev. Roy H. Vollmer as pastor of the St. John's Church of Dempster, S. Dak., the St. Paul's Church in Havanna Twp., S. Dak., and the Zion's Church in Hidwood Twp., S. Dak., on Rogate Sunday.

Address: Rev. Roy H. Vollmer, Dempster, South Dakota. Herbert Lau.

Commencement Exercises

The present school year at the Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich., will close Tuesday, June 17th. The closing exercises, D. v., will be held in the evening of that day in the school hall of the St. Paul's

Congregation. There are 13 scholars in the graduating class, 3 girls and 10 boys. All are cordially invited to attend.
O. J. R. Hoenecke.

The commencement exercises in Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., will take place June 17th, at 9:30 a. m. A cordial invitation is herewith extended to all our friends.
E. R. Bliefernicht.

Change of Address

Rev. A. W. Hueschen, 110 E. Williams St., Owosso, Michigan.

Notice

From recent occurrences it is evident that a wrong conception obtains in our circles in regard to our attitude toward the St. Paul's Church at Oconomowoc and its pastor, Rev. Theo. Kissling. We, therefore, call attention to the following passage of the presidential report submitted to the West-Wisconsin District during its synodical meeting at Columbus, Wisconsin, 1922, and to the synod's resolution in this matter.

Presidential Report (Page 12): "In Oconomowoc a substantial minority of the members of the St. Paul's Church felt itself obligated to organize a new congregation and thus to protest against the brutal force of the majority, which, in an unholy manner, overrode the dictates of conscience and Holy Writ. The newly organized St. Matthew's Congregation has applied for acceptance into the synod. May the Lord champion the cause of the down-trodden and endow the members with such hearts as will yield in all humility to the divine Word and joyously render the sacrifices necessary for the erection of appropriate parish buildings."

Synod's Resolution in Reference to this Report (Page 51) Paragraph I: "The synod deeply deplores this (lamentable) schism within the fold of St. Paul's Congregation at Oconomowoc, likewise the fact that the opposing faction has not as yet shown repentance.

The foregoing statements naturally determine our attitude toward St. Paul's Congregation at Oconomowoc and its pastor.

G. E. Bergemann,
President, Joint Synod of Wisconsin,
Minnesota, Michigan, and Other States.
G. M. Thurow,
President, West-Wisconsin District.

BOOK REVIEW

Stoeckhardt's Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans. Reprint. Price \$3.50. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

The first edition of this valuable commentary having been sold out, there was an urgent demand for a reprint of the same, coming not only from Lutheran, but from non-Lutheran

quarters as well. It is, therefore, laudable on the part of Concordia Publishing House for having complied with such demand in reprinting this commentary. Stoeckhardt's commentaries, particularly the one on Romans, his masterpiece, are too valuable to be "shelved." They will ever be read and studied with much interest and benefit as well.

The present edition is a splendid one, printed on good paper with clear type, and in substantial buckram binding.
J. J.

Book of Concord. The Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. With Birth Indexes and Historical Introductions. Price \$3.50. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

This is a reprint of the English text of the Concordia Triglotta, which was published as a Memorial of the Quadricentary Jubilee of the Reformation in 1917. Its purpose is to serve those who are unable, or for some reason unwilling, to consult the Lutheran confessional books in the original languages (Latin and German). There is room for an entirely English edition of our Lutheran confessions, and we hope that our English Lutheran laymen will avail themselves of the opportunity of drawing from this prime source of Lutheran confession in their vernacular. Not being so bulky as the Triglotta the book is convenient for constant use.
J. J.

The Lord's Prayer. By William Dallmann. Second Edition. Price \$1.50. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

A republication of this excellent book on the Lord's Prayer. May it be purchased and read by many!
J. J.

The Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans A. D. 70. From the Narrative of Josephus as Retold by Dean Milman in His "History of the Jews." By L. H. Becker. Price 35 cents. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

This is one of Concordia's Red Book Series, and presents in a brief, but acceptable manner the story of the Destruction of Jerusalem. It is beautifully illustrated and well adapted for Juvenile Literature. We heartily recommend the booklet.
J. J.

Statistical Year-Book of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri and other States for the year 1923. Price \$1.00, postpaid. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

The vast array of statistics contained in this Year-Book of the Missouri Synod is a valuable adjunct to the current history of the Lutheran Church in America.
J. J.

Home Department Questions on Primary Leaflets for Sunday School. Price per set of eighteen lessons, 5 cents. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

A new, but feasible venture in Sunday School work. "The plan of this undertaking is to send Primary Leaflets on Bible stories to such children who for physical reasons cannot be brought to Sunday School, and to furnish, at the same time, a question sheet on which the children thus enrolled in a sort of Home Department of the Sunday School may write their answers and send them on to the Sunday School. It is believed that in this way many a child could be interested in, and gained for, the work of the Sunday School which is now not reached at all because, owing to the distance, it cannot be brought to the Sunday School proper as in rural districts."
J. J.