

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 KING

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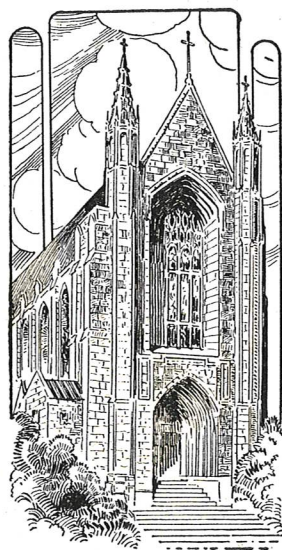
Number 8

THE DOOR

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

John 10, 9

A DOOR is a medium of passage; by the door we leave the house; by it, others come from without to enter our homes. Jesus Christ is the door to God. "There is one God, and



one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all." 1 Tim. 2, 5. Christ is the Peace-maker who reconciled God and sinners. Therefore Jesus also said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." And St. Paul writes, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." Romans 5. In the Epistle to the Ephesians the Apostle adds, "Through Him we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access by one Spirit unto the Father." How much is expressed in the homely parable, "I am the door!" The most

glorious truths of our salvation hinge on it.

Enter By Faith

"I am the door of the sheep." The true sheep of Christ, the believers, enter by him, the door. They hear His voice, and by grace they believe it. Once afar off, they were made nigh by the blood of Jesus; once enemies and strangers, they are now His friends, the sheep of His pasture. They believe in Jesus Christ. This is the mark of real Christians, the sheep of His flock. Many hear of Christ, many call Him Master but few obey Him, few believe Him and His Gospel. Unless we enter by the door, that is believe in Jesus Christ, we are not saved.

The Fold Is Safe

By the door the sheep enter into the fold, a plot of ground separated and strongly enclosed in order that the sheep might be protected against thieves and robbers or wild beasts. The flock of Christ is separated from the world. It is in the world, but not of the world. It is under the protection of Christ and "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." "Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hands. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one." John 10, 28-30. Jesus is "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." Hebr. 7, 25. Indeed, the enemy must destroy Christ Himself before He can prevail against the sheep of His fold.

Inside the Door

Unless we enter by the door, we can have no knowledge of the fold. No one knows God except He draw near

to Him through His Son Jesus Christ. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." — How great are the blessings which Christ bestows upon those who "enter by Him"! "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Believers are "filled with joy and peace in believing, and abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." Rom. 15, 13. They are washed in the blood of Christ, they are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, they are fully justified through the merits of Christ, they are sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. "They shall go in and out, and find pasture." Jesus has said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8, 31. The sheep of Christ's flock are led forth into green pastures. They are led into the treasures of His Word. Their communion with Jesus is free and unrestrained. They come with boldness to the throne of grace; they pour out



their hearts before Him. How pleasing is the testimony of one of the sheep — and all may make these words their own, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down

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Editorials

So This Is Easter Just lots of people were unable to keep this war and world conditions generally, and Easter apart. Newspapers and speakers and preachers expressed the idea that the Easter hopes of the world lay in the success that our armies will achieve on the battlefields. All the world will experience a new birth when all this fighting and bloodshed is over and from it will emerge a new world dedicated to some new proposition that will finally put an end to all wars — and forever. That will be Easter. Easter to these people has nothing but a symbolical meaning. Of course, we do not expect the newspapers and public speakers to preach and teach religion, and some "preachers" as well, but we may expect of them also to leave our Easter and its meaning alone. We don't expect them and don't want them to tell us that the resurrection of Christ, who died for our sins on the cross, proclaims His victory over death and devil and sin and that His resurrection is the very basis of our hope of salvation. But neither do we want them to tell the world and us that Easter is "the symbol of rebirth and out of this present confusion and chaos a new social and political order shall arise" in which all peoples of the earth shall finally find that peace and happiness which the Creator meant all men to have on this earth. That kind of talk is just bosh and nonsense. Easter means and stands for no such foolishness. That kind of philosophy is strange to the Bible and emanates from the mind of man. The world may be "experiencing the travails of a new birth." We are not going to find fault with that statement. But whether that "new birth" is going to bring blessings or a curse upon the world we are not going to say. As we see it today we can find no sign of blessings. But, and we want to say emphatically, this has nothing to do with Easter and the meaning of Easter. Whoever will use that word and put the meaning on it stated above is guilty of a gross misrepresentation of the basic Scriptural truth. "Christ was raised again for our justification." That is what Easter means; so God would have it.

W. J. S.

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Confirmation Is Over — What Now? In many Lutheran churches confirmation is now over for another year and in many others it will soon be over also. What now? If past history is any indication and if one dare judge by it, it is safe to say that of the great number of young people who were received into membership by the rite of confirmation some will not be with us very long. Not a few will turn their back on the Gospel they have learned, confessed and promised to conform their life to even unto death. Why this spiritual death rate continues year after year is clearly stated in the Scriptures. Peter in his Epistle tells us that "the devil as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." And Christ Jesus sheds light on this vexing condition in His parable of the Sower. He tells us there are those whose hearts are like the hard roads which the Word of God can not penetrate; there are those in whose hearts the Word can not sink deeply enough; there are those whose hearts are encumbered with cares and worries of this world which will not permit the Word to have free course; and finally

there is the good ground (hearts) in which the Word finds lodgment and brings forth fruit unto everlasting life. This explanation of the Lord, however, does not encourage us to fold our hands now and think in our heart "there is nothing we can do about this falling away." Christ is only describing a *condition* for us but is not dispensing with the individual case. He still expects everyone of us in the Church to follow each case of back-sliding with persistence, believing that the back-slider can be won again. It is not for us to decide his status and forget about him. Much harm has been done in the church by this attitude toward those who after confirmation seem to be through with the church. Some of them have been left to themselves and abandoned as hopeless. Perhaps the apathy of the members toward them has contributed as much to their spiritual delinquency as any other factor. Let every one of us take a lively interest in these young people. Let us remember them in our prayers. Above all, let us be an example to them in faith and life. Here lies our responsibility.

W. J. S.

* * * *

Readjustment Of Veterans That is what everybody is talking and writing about, talking and writing about, who talks and writes at all for public consumption. These people have in mind the young men (some not so young) who today are in the armed forces of our country. These people are thinking about these men and their return to public life and normal pursuits when this war is over. It is well enough to keep these men in mind and their return to civilian life (and may the merciful Father hasten the day). Yet we don't quite understand all the ado that is made about their return and how we are to receive them. There is no question that there are some that will have to do some adjusting in their treatment of these men. Many, in fact, will have to do this. Many of these men were sorely neglected before they entered the armed forces — neglected in the homes, schools and by society; — they were left often (so some say) to shift for themselves and to get along as well as they knew how and under the conditions they themselves created, perhaps. That didn't work out so well. But be that as it may, the pendulum is now rapidly swinging to the other side. Now they are beginning to plead that when those men return do this and do that and don't do this and don't do that. They tell us, or propose to tell us, what these men will want to hear and will not want to hear. It is fortunate that neither the Christian Church nor the Christian home will need to make any adjustment in this respect when the men return, if indeed they have been Christians. Nor will the Christian men returning home expect special care and attention and treatment. The Gospel by which they were begotten again and made children of God knows no distinctions or special privileges — "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3, 28). These returning men will be glad to again take their place in the Christian Church and take up where they left off. No one will need to worry about them; they will know their place and occupy it and be thankful to do so. All this the Gospel which they believe will do for them.

W. J. S.

STUDIES IN THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

BY PROFESSOR JOHN MEYER

ARTICLE XXVII Of Monastic Vows

I

FROM the *Catholic Encyclopedia* we quote a few statements on the meaning of monasticism, or monachism, as the *Encyclopedia* would prefer to call it. "The basic idea of monasticism in all its varieties is seclusion or withdrawal from the world or society. The object of this is to achieve a life whose ideal is different from and largely at variance with that pursued by the majority of mankind; and the method adopted,

no matter what its precise details may be, is always self-abnegation or organized asceticism." Monasticism is not to be considered as an end in itself, it is a means to an end. "Monastic asceticism means the removal of obstacles of loving God. . . . Life has come to mean renunciation. Broadly speaking this renunciation has three great branches corresponding to the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience."

Since, according to this statement, obstacles to a true love of God are removed by withdrawing from society and the common forms of social life, it is evident that social life is considered as of a lower order, as being in itself the source of dangers, or at least inseparably coupled with dangers which hinder the life of true love toward God. Now it is true that when sin entered the world, all forms also of social life were contaminated and lost their original purity. But that does not make these forms sinful in themselves, or the source of sin. Sin still has its seat in the human heart, out of which the evil thoughts proceed. Sin will take occasion from the forms of social life for its outbursts, abusing them. But if any one will renounce the forms of social life in the hope of thereby escaping from the attacks of sin he will be deceived. Sin will attack the monk and the recluse with the same fury, perhaps with even greater fury, than it does any one living "in the world."

Thus underlying monasticism is an erroneous doctrine of sin and its source, a practical denial of original sin. The quotation from the *Catholic Encyclopedia* traces the rules of monas-

tic life to "three evangelical counsels." Moses, it is thus assumed, gave us the Ten Commandments in which he tells us what is absolutely essential to a God-pleasing life. To omit any of the things there commanded is sin. Yet a man, especially when he is aided by the Holy Ghost, can do more than the irreducible minimum prescribed by Moses. Therefore Jesus in the Gospel added some advice how a man can achieve a greater holiness. He gave "evangelical counsels." A man does not sin by disregarding these "counsels," but by following them he may even acquire a surplus of good works.

This is plainly a serious confusion of Law and Gospel.

It was necessary that our fathers say something about the institution of monasticism. They had further occasion to do so because of abuses that had crept in. The Article falls into three main divisions, of which today we shall briefly consider the first.

I. Some Abuses Connected With Monasticism

What is taught on our part concerning Monastic Vows, will be better understood if it be remembered what has been the state of the monasteries, and how many things were daily done in those very monasteries, contrary to the Canons. In Augustine's time they were free associations. Afterward, when discipline was corrupted, vows were everywhere added for the purpose of restoring discipline, as in a carefully planned prison. Gradually, many other observances were added besides vows. And these fetters were laid upon many before the lawful age, contrary to the Canons.

NOTES

Our fathers speak of abuses first because from that starting point it will be easier to understand the basic error underlying the system. The abuses are not accidental, but are the legitimate fruit growing out of the poisonous root. At first monasteries were voluntary, free associations, but soon it became evident that more stringent means must be employed to maintain discipline.

Monasticism had its beginning in Egypt. Three names stand out prominently in its early development. The first man was St. Anthony, who retired into the desert about 285 A. D.,

where he lived as a hermit. He died in 356 at the age of about 113 years. Many followed his example and the number of hermits grew by leaps and bounds. Then another man, by the name of Pachomius, began to gather the hermits in colonies. A third man, Shenute, introduced the monastic vows.

Many also entered into this kind of life through ignorance, being unable to judge their own strength, though they were of sufficient age. Being thus ensnared, they were compelled to remain, even though some could have been freed by the kind provisions of the Canons. And this was more the case in convents of women than of monks, although more consideration should have been shown the weaker sex. The rigor displeased many good men before this time, who saw that young men and maidens were thrown into convents for a living. They saw what unfortunate results came of this procedure, and what scandals were created, what snares were cast upon consciences! They were grieved that the authority of the Canons in so momentous a matter was utterly set aside and despised. To these evils was added such a persuasion concerning vows as, it is well known, in former times displeased even those monks who were more considerate. They

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CAN THE CHURCH BE POPULAR?

Read John 15, 18-25

EVERYBODY would like to be popular. Public figures even hire press agents whose duty it is to keep their names in public print and to see to it that their clients receive favorable publicity. There is a feeling that by the judicious use of publicity any movement or institution can be made popular, and many think that that holds good also for the Church.

It would be foolish indeed for the Church to court the disfavor of the world or to go out of its way to arouse the ill will of the public. But is there any hope that the true Church of Christ can be popular in the world? That is a question which Jesus answers in the negative, with an emphatic No.

It will be said that Jesus certainly was popular if ever a man was. No one ever drew such crowds and won such popular acclaim. But that was true only as long as they did not understand His sayings. When they finally discovered His real aim and mission in life, then they went back and walked no more with Him, then their rousing hosannas gave way to the "Away with him, crucify him."

The Doctrine of Christ's Divinity

The true disciple is like his master, and the church which properly calls itself the Church of Christ stands for exactly the same things for which He stood. Jesus said: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Abiding in the word of Jesus is an outstanding characteristic of the Church of Jesus.

First of all, it has the same conception of the person and work of Jesus. It accepts Him as the eternal Son of God, even as Jesus Himself claimed to be the Son of God. This claim was not popular then, and it is not popular now, nor is the church which makes it. The church which has as one of its key doctrines the deity of Jesus Christ can't expect anything but mockery and scorn.

People today consider themselves too modern and intelligent to swallow that doctrine. They are willing to acknowledge Jesus as the noblest man mankind has ever produced, but they draw the line at accepting Him as the Son of God. They consider that an old superstition which insults modern intelligence, and they have nothing but contempt for those who are so backward as to regard Jesus as divine. That hurts and, knowing that this doc-

trine can be held only at the price of unpopularity, many in the visible church have discarded it. They overlook the statement of Jesus: "The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."

The Doctrine of Salvation

Another reason why the church which abides in the truth of Jesus can not expect the favor of the world is because of the way of salvation which it teaches. Jesus accounted for the hostility of the world in the words: "Because they know not him that sent me." Jesus claimed that the Father had sent Him to redeem sinners. He made the uncompromising assertion: "I am the way, . . . no man cometh unto the Father but by me." He claimed that He had come to give His life a ransom for many and that His sacrificial death was the only thing that could accomplish man's salvation.

That is the doctrine of salvation to which the true Church of Christ has clung ever since. Paul said that in his preaching he was determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Peter asserted that besides Jesus there was none other name under heaven whereby men could be saved. John writes of Jesus: "He is the propitiation for our sins." That, in fact, was the basic message of all the apostles. When in the course of the centuries this doctrine of salvation had been corrupted and made dependent, at least in part, on man's own behavior, God through Luther brought to the forefront again the message of salvation alone through the blood of Christ. The church which does not proclaim this doctrine has no right to call itself a Christian church though that does not prevent many from doing it.

This Doctrine of Salvation Is Unpopular

Many consider it too humiliating. It takes all the credit from them and gives it to Christ. They don't want to lower themselves to say: "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling." They prefer to believe that they are such upright people that God must look with favor upon them. They talk of being saved by the Golden Rule, by doing unto others as they

would have others do unto them, by living on the level and on the square and doing the right thing by their fellow man. They talk of being saved by character and right living.

That is the popular way of salvation in our day and not the way of salvation through faith in the redeeming blood of Christ. In fact, that is considered a monstrous doctrine. People profess to be horrified at the thought that God could be so cruel as to sacrifice His own Son. The public in general, especially that part of it which prides itself on its advanced knowledge, has nothing but contempt for the church which makes salvation dependent solely on the atoning words of Christ. Jesus said: "These things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."

Orthodoxy

As a matter of fact, any insistence on purity of doctrine is roundly denounced in our day. Doctrine is supposed to be out. Orthodoxy, that is, upholding the doctrines of the Bible is considered outmoded and is labeled as a dead and sterile religion. Recently a columnist commented favorably on a letter from a young minister who wrote: "I am convinced that if the church is to be made vital for people today considerable reinterpreting must take place. My sermons come closer to, what might be called, the art of living than to orthodox theology."

This young minister had thrown the doctrines of the Bible overboard as not vital enough for our day and had substituted his own ideas on, what he called, the art of living. The columnist looked upon this young preacher as very progressive and gave him credit for having found a new and effective approach to religion. The world never overlooks a chance to throw slams at orthodoxy, which is only a big word for loyalty to Bible teaching. If it is said of a church: It is an orthodox church, a church which stresses doctrine, that in itself stamps it as queer and as narrowminded in the eyes of the public.

Solid Front

The world simply can not see any sense in insisting upon pure doctrine. It thinks that people who do that have warped minds. It says: What difference does a little doctrine make? Let the churches forget their differences. We are all headed for the same place.

Let us get together and be on. The split-up condition of the church is a scandal and is dissipating its strength. Instead of holding aloof because of this or that doctrine let us present a solid and united front to the forces of evil. Let us all unite our efforts to do away with juvenile delinquency, to bring about a just peace, to produce a warless world and in general to make this world a decent place to live in. Those are worthwhile objectives, while all this squabbling about doctrine doesn't do anyone any good.

That sounds very glamorous and intriguing. There is only one thing wrong with it, and that is that it is not the religion of Jesus and the Bible. Jesus said: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." When He sent out His disciples to evangelize the world, He added: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." He did not say one word about an outwardly united front without inward unity nor of achieving anything by the sheer weight of numbers. That is an invention of the world. He never spoke of His followers as an impressive crowd but called them a "little flock." He warned: "Wide is the gate and broad is the way which leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat (in other words, that is the popular way), while strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

What Saith the Lord?

The Bible does not put a united front above loyalty to God's truth. When the world describes us as separatists, it is describing us as God wants us to be if this separation is based on doctrinal loyalty. God said: "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate." Referring to those who had departed from the pure doctrines which they had been taught, Paul wrote to the Romans: "Avoid them." Making the Christian religion a popular religion will not work without emptying it of what it stands for. Jesus said: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

Why not, then, abandon the idea of letting the world feel the impact of the Church? Why not turn the Church into a secret society or retire into a corner where the world will never be exasperated by the teachings of the Church? The Lord does not want it that way. He wants the Church to

shout His message from the housetops. For one thing, a few souls will be plucked like brands from the burning by the Church's message. Then, too, when Judgment Day comes, the Lord does not want anyone to have the excuse that he had never been told. The Jews of Jesus' day certainly could not say that. Jesus said: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloke for their sin. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin, but now have they both seen and hated me and my Father." Another time Jesus said: "This gospel on the kingdom must be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." All are to hear the Gospel, so that when the judgment comes they may have no excuse.

Let us not have any illusions about it. If we continue in the word of Jesus, we shall not be popular but we shall be hated for His name's sake. But let us not on that account revise our message but let us be uncompromising in proclaiming it, to the unbelievers as "a savour of death unto death" and to the believers as "a savour of life unto life." I. P. F.

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taught that vows were equal to Baptism; they taught that by this kind of life they merited forgiveness of sins and justification before God. Yea, they added that the monastic life not only merited righteousness before God, but even greater things, because it kept not only the precepts, but also the so-called "evangelical counsels." Thus they made men believe that the profession of monasticism was far better than Baptism, and that the monastic life was more meritorious than that of magistrates, than the life of pastors, and such like, who serve their calling in accordance with God's commands, without any man-made services. None of these things can be denied; for they appear in their own books. Moreover, a person who has been ensnared and has entered a monastery learns little of Christ.

NOTES

If anyone takes a vow upon himself he should be fully informed beforehand of all implications. Yet many were persuaded to enter monasticism who were either too young to grasp its

full meaning or were in other respects unable to weigh the whole matter properly. It was a shameful abuse to hold them rigorously to their vow, and this in spite of the exceptions provided in the Canons. — Sometimes children were committed to monasteries merely because that relieved the family of the obligation to provide for them, regardless of whether they were competent to live up to their vows, particularly that of "chastity," or not.

It was the gravest abuse that the monastic life was placed on a level with, yes above Baptism. Baptism is a means of grace by which the forgiveness of sin is sealed to the recipient. People were taught that they could merit even greater blessings from monasticism.

Serving the country in a government position or serving the church as a pastor are among the most important positions created by God. Yet people were taught to regard the monastic life as superior. Yes, God in ordaining social life has arranged many callings, farmers, merchants, artisans, and the like, which all exist by His will and are pleasing to Him. It is an abuse to ascribe greater dignity to the man-made services of monasticism.

What, then, came to pass in the monasteries? Aforetime they were schools of theology and other branches, profitable to the Church; and thence pastors and bishops were obtained. Now it is another thing. It is needless to rehearse what is known to all. Aforetime they came together to learn; now they feign that it is a kind of life instituted to merit grace and righteousness; yea, they preach that it is a state of perfection, and they put it far above all other kinds of life ordained of God. These things we have rehearsed without odious exaggeration, to the end that the doctrine of our teachers on this point might be better understood.

NOTES

In the course of time monasteries were used for various purposes, *e. g.*, to bring wasteland under cultivation, to serve as hospices and hospitals, to provide for the publication of books, etc. One of their chief purposes is mentioned in the text, the training of future ministers of the church. Later these uses were neglected and monastic life was practiced to merit grace.

After this historical survey our fathers take up a discussion of the basic principles underlying monasticism in their day.

MISERICORDIAS DOMINI

THE date which this issue of the *Northwestern Lutheran* bears is the 15th of April, the second Sunday after Easter. The Sundays between Easter and Pentecost have Latin names, taken from the first words of the Latin introits. As a rule, also the English introits contain the name in the first word or phrase, only the second Sunday after Easter being an exception. Exceptional is also the name of the fifth Sunday, but in a different way. See below.

We shall briefly look at these names. The first Sunday is called *Quasimodo-geniti*, three Latin words which mean in English: As-new-born (babes). Everybody, whether he knows any Latin or not, can readily connect the name of the third Sunday after Easter with the opening words of the introit. *Jubilate* means: Make a joyful noise. Also the name of the fourth Sunday is comparatively simple. *Cantate* means: O sing. We have a word like "audition," together with related words, in English. That will help to associate the name of the sixth Sunday with the respective introit. *Exaudi* is a petition: Hear. — The name of the fifth Sunday is an exception. It has no connection with the introit, but is taken from the content of the Gospel for the Sunday, which speaks of prayer. *Rogate* means: Pray. The introit is taken from Is. 48, 20; and from its opening words the Sunday also bears the name *Vocem Jucunditatis*.

The Introit of the Second Sunday after Easter

We now turn to our present Sunday. The introit is taken from Ps. 33: "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord: by the word of the Lord were the heavens made" (v. 5 and 6). The goodness of the Lord, that is the *Misericordias Domini*. The introit continues: "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright." This is the first verse of the same Ps. 33. Thus the key note of the Sunday, as indicated by the introit, is to be praise and rejoicing for the goodness and mercy of the Lord.

The introit indicates that this goodness is unlimited, all inclusive: the earth is full of it, and the heavens enjoy it, they owe their very existence to it. Yes, the Psalmist sings of the goodness of the Lord as it manifests itself in the creation and preservation of nature (v. 6-9) and in the government of the affairs of men (v. 10-17).

Mistaken Ideas About the Goodness of the Lord

The goodness of the Lord is a favorite topic for meditation and discussion among men. They like the idea that God is a kind-hearted, good old Father. All lodges prate about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. But they are thinking of a goodness which would exclude justice and severity. They say, Certainly the rules of conduct laid down in the Ten Commandments are basic. Everybody must do his best to live up to them. There may be many drawbacks. A man may have an unfortunate hereditary complex which inclines him to evil. He may live in an unwholesome surrounding which hampers him in the development of a good character, may weaken his will power to resist the lures of evil. Yet if he continues to discipline his mind and keeps up his struggle against what is evil, then God will overlook his failures and lapses. God is good. How can a good God rightly insist on what is impossible of achievement? If God is really good, He will make due allowance for the difficulties that confront us and for any weakness that may still cleave to us.

In this way men of the world speak about the goodness of God. They think that there is an irreconcilable difference between perfect holiness and righteousness, on the one hand, and goodness on the other. If God will insist on a flawless observance of the Ten Commandments and will punish the transgressor, this would annul His goodness.

What Is the Goodness of the Lord?

The goodness of God according to the ideas of the world is not the goodness which the Psalmist had in mind, for which he urges everyone to rejoice and sing. Already in verse 4 and 5 he mentions the *truth* of the Lord, His *righteousness* and *judgment*. The truth of the Lord, in one word, is the Gospel, and His righteousness and judgment, according to Rom. 1, 16, 17, is the righteousness which God Himself prepared for us in Christ our Savior and which He announces to us in the Gospel. Toward the end of the Psalm, verses 18-22, the holy writer enlarges on this fact, repeating the word *mercy*.

Connection Between the Introit and the Gospel for the Sunday

Some one may ask, how does this introit fit the second Sunday after

Easter, particularly, how does it prepare for the Gospel lesson of the day? The Gospel speaks of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Therein the *goodness* of the Lord reaches its greatest heights, and shines forth in its most brilliant lustre.

Two facts stand out in bold relief in the Gospel. The first is that Jesus laid down His life for the sheep. This fact is shown on the dark background of an hireling's conduct. For an hireling tending the sheep is merely a job, a means of making a living. When everything is well, he may be faithful in his work and may take excellent care of the sheep, that they have their proper pasture, their proper nurture and protection. The hireling may be meticulously exact in doing his work, but he lacks one thing: he has no real love for the sheep. Jesus says tersely, the hireling deserts the sheep when he sees the wolf coming.

Jesus is the *good* Shepherd. In Him we find the very goodness which the Psalm extols. He saw the sheep in the clutches, in the jaws of the wolf. He did not hesitate a moment. His love impelled Him to hurl Himself against the wolf, to be the victim of the wolf in place of the sheep. — All men were in the power of sin. Jesus took our sin upon Himself and died the death of the cross in our stead. That is the beginning of all goodness. Any declaration on the goodness of God that leaves the vicarious death of Jesus out of consideration is nothing but a dream, a deceptive error that leads to destruction. When we chant or say the introit of this Sunday, it leads us directly to the good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep.

A Further Connection

The second fact that stands out in our Gospel is the tender care which the good Shepherd bestows on His sheep. Jesus sums it up in one word: He *knows* His sheep. He tries to show us what that implies by comparing His knowledge of His sheep with the knowledge which the Father has of the Son and the Son of the Father. A deeper understanding, a clear union, a more fervent love than exists between Father and Son cannot be found anywhere, cannot even be conceived. Like this relation between Father and Son is the relation which Jesus maintains toward His sheep. When Saul persecuted the Christians, Jesus rebuked him: "Why persecutest thou *me*?" On Judgment Day Jesus will declare: "Inasmuch as ye have done it

unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

We Trust and Rejoice in the Goodness of the Lord

That is true goodness, of which the Psalmist sings: "Our soul waiteth for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name" (v. 20 and 21).

Again, any talk of God's goodness which omits or obscures the fact that we were by nature doomed, and that we live only — physically, morally, spiritually — because our good Shepherd knows us, is deceptive.

Misericordias Domini. "Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee."

J. P. M.

THE DOOR

(Continued from page 81)

in green pastures: He leadeth me besides the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

The Open Door

What unspeakable mercy it is that over the door to pardon, peace, and everlasting glory, there is the inscription, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you!" We may be poor, sorrowful, and unworthy. We may feel — yea, we must feel — as if we are beggars at the throne of grace, but Christ has said, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." John 6, 37. None are excluded but those who exclude themselves. The Lord is ever more ready to hear than we are to ask. Christ is the open door to all penitent believers.

The Door Was Shut

But, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. 6, 2. Now the door of mercy may be entered; now the Lord is waiting to be gracious. "When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are." Luke 13, 25. In the parable of the Ten Virgins our Lord says, "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut."

Solemn words! — "The door was shut." They that were ready — they that had repented and believed — were safe and happy; but those who were not ready, were shut out. Let us use all diligence to make our calling and election sure, let us make use of the means of grace — let us enter the Door while it is open to us.

A. P. V.

CLOSING DAY IN THE SEMINARY

Closing Day was filled with activity. During the morning regular classes were conducted. In the afternoon the Assignment Committee met in the Tower Room of the Seminary to consider the calls that had come for candidates and to assign the young men to their fields. The truth of our Savior's saying was again experienced: "The harvest truly is great." There were more calls than candidates, some very urgent calls. The work in several fields must, for the time being, be taken care of in other ways.



The list of graduates and the places to which they were assigned will be appended.

In the evening the closing service was held, in which the graduates were given their diplomas, and were dismissed from the school with a prayer of blessing for their work.

The closing service had to be shortened considerably in order to make room for the closing sacred concert. In other years the concert was given on an evening before the closing service, but this year no suitable evening could be found. Our accelerated program brought the closing services into the Lenten season, where the available time is naturally limited; and the gas shortage made it desirable to avoid duplication of trips for visitors.

A great number of people came to attend the closing exercises, by far more than our chapel could hold. Also one of the class rooms was filled completely, and many people were standing in the hall ways.

We thank God for having blessed our work in the past year and we call on Him for His continued grace in the

new school year. By the time that these lines reach our readers the new year will already be more than a week old. Opening service has been set for Wednesday after Easter, April 4.

Here follow the names of the candidates and the fields to which they have been called.

- George Baer — African Mission.
 - Franklin Dobratz — Powers, Mich.
 - Waldemar Geiger — Milroy-Seaforth, Minn.
 - Roland Gurgel — La Crosse, Wis.
 - Elwood Habermann — Essig-Ridgely, Minn.
 - Sigmund Hillmer — Manistique, Mich.
 - Elton Huebner — Hampton Road, Milwaukee, Wis.
 - Paul Knickelbein — Mancos-Cortez, Colo.
 - Leonard Koeninger — Tutor at Saginaw.
 - Markus Koepsel — Bay City-Maiden Rock, Wis.
 - Carl Leyrer — Milwaukee, Wis. (General Mission.)
 - Norman Maas — Durand, Wis.
 - Henry Paustian — Tutor at Moberg.
 - Joseph Petersen — Norwegian Synod Candidate (Eau Claire, Wis.).
 - Jackson Petrie — Tutor at Watertown.
 - Erwin Ploetz — Mission-White River-Wood, So. Dak.
 - Walter Sauer — Winnebago Lutheran Academy.
 - Robert Steffenhagen — Argo-Hide-wood, So. Dak.
 - Arthur Wadzinski — Platteville-Greeley, Colo.
 - Robert Waldschmidt — Zillah, Wash.
 - Alfred Walther — Terry-Circle, Mont.
 - Edward Zell — Redford, Mich.
 - Richard Ziesemer — Ripon, Wis.
- Besides these there were three members of last year's class, who had served the church in various capacities since their graduation. They were now assigned as follows. Armin Keibel, who had served as missionary and teacher for the Norwegian Synod at Lawler, Iowa, was called to Snoqualmie, Wash. Winfred Koelpin, employed in the Negro Mission at Toledo, Ohio, was called to Mosinee, Wis.

May the Lord of the Church bless the work of these men in the fields into which He placed them.

JOH. P. MEYER.

NOW CONCERNING THE COLLECTION

We are more than pleased to announce that the illustrated booklet which is to present the cause of our Wisconsin Synod Building Fund is now going to press and should be ready for distribution soon after this issue of the *Northwestern Lutheran* will be reaching its readers. All materials for the collection are being assembled at the Publishing House, from where they will be sent out as soon as possible to those who have already placed their order. Our printing of these booklets, envelopes, and mimeograph folders (for Sunday Bulletins) are large enough to supply all our members. We sincerely hope that all congregations will avail themselves of these aids.

In the meantime the work of collecting has begun. Our Financial Secretary, Pastor G. Fischer, reports that

the distinction of having made the first contribution falls to Christ Church of Pewaukee, Wisconsin. This mission congregation of about 100 communicants has already made a remittance of \$200.00. The first larger remittance is from St. Peter's Church of Milwaukee. This congregation has combined our Synodical collection with another major undertaking, the collection for the Milwaukee Lutheran High School Building Fund, and has sent in \$5,000 of the \$12,000 which they collected on a single Sunday afternoon for these two purposes. May we soon be able to say to these early contributors what Paul said to his Christians at Corinth (II, 9, 2), "Your zeal hath provoked (stirred up, stimulated) many."

The following Memorial Wreaths were received by our committee, and are herewith reported by Pastor Fischer:

**MEMORIAL WREATHS
Wisconsin Synod Building Fund**

In Memory of	Sent in by Pastor	Amount
Rev. F. Schumann	F. Thierfelder	\$ 5.00
Fred Kronke	A. E. Schneider	77.00
S. 2/C Raymond Lengling	E. Lengling	25.00
Rev. Gustav Schlegel	C. E. Found	20.75
Mrs. Ferdinand Maas	J. C. Dahlke	41.00
Mrs. Ferdinand Maas	Alfred Maas	45.00
Pfc. Gerhard Reede	H. Russow	17.00
Henry Honebein	John Brenner, Jr.	2.00
Herman Bruss	W. J. Schmidt	52.00
Total — March 26, 1945		\$ 284.75

The total receipts up to March 26 are \$7,461.56, of which \$5,416.00 are from the Southeast Wisconsin District. This amount also includes \$155.00 in

personal contributions as well as the firstfruits of our Children's Offering, \$5.00.

THE BUILDING FUND COMMITTEE.

ANNIVERSARIES

**GOLDEN WEDDING
ANNIVERSARIES**

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Wiesner

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Wiesner, members of Zion Congregation at Hide-wood Township, South Dakota, celebrated their golden wedding on March 9, 1945. The undersigned held a short service in their home.

WILLIAM LANGE.

* * * *

Mr. and Mrs. August Fredrick

Mr. and Mrs. August Fredrick, members of St. John's Congregation at Pardeeville, Wisconsin, celebrated their golden wedding on March 18, 1945. The undersigned spoke on Psalm 23. May the Lord continue to bless and protect them. A. J. ENGEL.

CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES

**NEBRASKA DISTRICT
PASTORAL CONFERENCE**

The Nebraska District Pastoral Conference will meet, D. v., June 19 to 21, in Lincoln, Nebraska (Pastor L. Gruendemann). Details will be published later. R. F. Bittorf, Sec'y.

**MIXED PASTORAL CONFERENCE OF
MILWAUKEE AND VICINITY**

The Mixed Pastoral Conference of Milwaukee and Vicinity will meet at Trinity Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Dr. Henry Grueber, pastor, on April 17 and 18, 1945. First session begins at 9 A. M. Tuesday, April 17.

Essays: The Office of a Bishop According to the First Part of the Table of Duties in our Catechism, Prof. C. A. Hardt; The Bloody Sacrifices of the Old and New Testament, Points of Agreement and Points of Disagreement, Prof. E. Reim; The Significance of the Lutheran Burial Service, Pastor G. Fischer. Alternate essay: The Message of Maggai to the Postwar Church, Dr. J. F. Boerger Sr. A. Maaske, Sec'y.

**NORTHERN MICHIGAN PASTORS'
AND TEACHERS' CONFERENCE**

The pastors and teachers of the Northern Conference of the Michigan District will convene on Friday, April 27, at Mt. Olive Congregation, Leng and Transit Sts., Bay City, J. Vogt, pastor, be-

ginning at 9 A. M. E. W. T. (fast time). Announcements for meals should be in the hands of the local pastor no later than April 21.

Papers: Fundamental and Non-fundamental Doctrines, etc. (continued), O. J. Eckert; Exegesis of Is. 61, R. Hoenecke; The Ascension of Christ, Wm. Steh; What do our Confessional Writings say as to the Scope of what the Law Reveals, etc., A. Schulz; Preparing an adult for Communicant Membership, W. Voss; Roundtable Discussion on Practical Issues (Teachers).

Sermon: A. Kehrberg (W. Kehrberg).

Confessional: G. Cares (V. Winter).

Willard Kehrberg, Sec'y.

MANITOWOC PASTORAL CONFERENCE

The Manitowoc Pastoral Conference will meet on April 17, 1945, 9 A. M., at Shirley, Wisconsin, Carl Thurow, pastor.

Sermon: E. Kionka, H. H. Eckert.

Schedule: Isa. 40, 19ff, Wm. Schink; Visitation, H. Greenwald; Doctrinal Affirmation, H. Koch; Continuation of Synopsis of Luther's Commentary on Galatians, H. Pussehl; Doctrine of Election, L. H. Koeninger.

Additional Papers: H. H. Eckert; C. Thurow, E. Kionka, W. Haase, E. Froehlich, H. Kuether, R. Ehlke. H. H. Eckert, Sec'y.

LAKE SUPERIOR PASTORAL CONFERENCE

The Lake Superior Pastoral Conference of the North Wisconsin District will meet at Daggett, Michigan (Pastor B. Kushel), April 17 and 18, 1945. The first session will begin at 9:30. Wm. Lutz, chairman.

Old Essays: The Ministry of the Keys the Peculiar Authority of the Church, P. Eggert; Exegesis of 1 Cor. 14, Wm. Roepke; Isagogical Survey on the Books of Zephania, G. Tiefel.

New Essays: Exegesis of 1 Cor. 15, 1-26, F. Zaring; Exegesis of Genesis 2, K. Lederer; Exegesis of Genesis 3, R. Pope; Isagogical Survey on the Book of Habakuk, Wm. Lutz; How I Deal with a Lodge Member in my Congregation; Every Pastor of the Conference according to the Alphabet. Conference Pastor: A. A. Schabow. Alternate: T. Thurow.

A. A. Schabow, Sec'y.

**WISCONSIN RIVER VALLEY-
CHIPPEWA VALLEY PASTORAL CONFERENCE**

The Wisconsin River Valley-Chippewa Valley Pastoral Conference will meet at St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, Tomahawk, Wisconsin (E. J. Otterstatter, pastor). The sessions will begin at 10 A. M., May 1, and will close May 2. Essayists are as follows: Pastors C. Toppe, H. Pankow, T. Zaremba, G. Fischer, R. Giesmann, R. Mueller and L. Lambert.

Please announce to Pastor E. J. Otterstatter as soon as possible. L. J. Koenig, Sec'y.

**JOINT MISSISSIPPI VALLEY-
SOUTHWESTERN CONFERENCE**

The Joint Mississippi Valley-Southwestern Conference will meet in the First Lutheran Church of La Crosse, Wisconsin (W. Schumann, pastor) on Wednesday, April 18, 1945, at 9:30 A. M.

Program: Exegesis on Mark 9, 33-50, with special emphasis on verses 38-41, A. Dobberstein; Study of the New Agenda, A. L. Mennicke; "Doctrinal Affirmation," R. P. Korn; "Descent into Hell," G. H. Geiger.

H. W. Neubauer, Sec'y.

**SOUTHWESTERN PASTORAL CONFERENCE
OF THE MICHIGAN DISTRICT**

The Southwestern Pastoral Conference of the Michigan District will meet at Grace Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Michigan, N. Engel, pastor, on April 17 and 18, 9 A. M.

Papers: Exegesis on Titus 2, H. Zink; Exegesis on Titus 3, W. Westendorf; Exegesis on Romans 1, H. Hoenecke; Catechetical Instruction, H. Haase; Homiletical Study, Matthew 18, 23-35, L. Meyer. Sermon: A. Hoenecke, E. Lochner.

C. J. Kionka, Sec'y.

WEST WISCONSIN TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

The West Wisconsin Teachers' Conference will meet at St. Paul's Lutheran School, Tomah, Wisconsin (Pastor H. Schaller), on Friday, April 27, 1945.

Essays: An Interpretation of the Boy Scout Code, F. Becker; First Aid in School, Mrs. Caroline Brogan; The Parent-Teachers' Association, T. W. Zuberhler; The Problem of Discipline, G. H. Heckmann; Doctrinal Differences between the Synodical Conference and the American Lutheran Church, E. Sievert. R. E. Swantz, Sec'y.

REED ORGAN FOR SALE

Size of spinet piano. Looks like new. Write A. Lorenz, R. 3, S. 7, Burlington, Wisconsin.