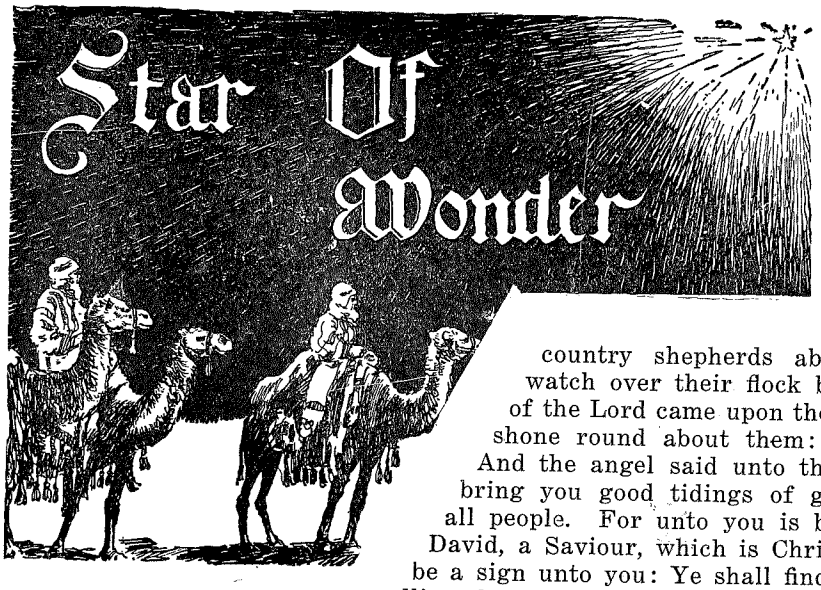
St. Paul Lutheran Gospel-Herald

Volume 2 *Caledonia, Mich., December, 1935* *Number 12*



AND so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.—St. Luke 2:6:20.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem. Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet: And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, Go and search diligently for the young child: and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king they departed: and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.—St. Matthew 2:1-12.

In Bethlehem of Judea

From the Editor's Pen

For thus it is written

The Gift of God's Great Love The Christmas season is on us again. How do we keep it? Christ was the gift of God's love. God so loved us he could not withhold Christ from us.

And it was because He could in this way best help us that He gave us Christ. God gave us Christ because we had need that could best be supplied in this way.

This was the glad tidings of great joy: "Unto you a Son is given. Comes the Son of God to lighten your dark world. He comes to every man.

Are we in this mind as approaches again the Christmastide? How do we celebrate the birth of this Christ of God?

It is well we bestow gifts upon those we love. It will be better that we bestow some where there is need that would not otherwise be supplied. And this we will do in the measure of our love for man and our ability to do for him.

Then there is the need of the world, running large every hour of every day. How regard we it? As a church, how are we approaching the need of the world we are sent to serve?

God would make us to the world the gift of his love. He can do it only as we will, and in the measure of our strength to serve. Shall we not become his sons and daughters indeed, that he may give us in much service to our fellows of this world?

It will take vision, and love, and intelligence, and training for the task, even as manifest in Christ. Shall we not make ready?

And when we are ready, then shall God out of His love for the world give us for many.

Can We Be Happy This Christmas? Yes, despite the conditions around us, happier than ever before, if we seek happiness at the right source. We must be happy to have Christmas at all. Happiness is the very essence of Christmas. It is not a day in the calendar, but a spirit, a state of mind and heart.

That first Christmas was a joyous one, in the midst of most simple, humble surroundings. Mary was happy, though she must wrap her babe in swaddling bands with her own hands, and lay Him in a crude trough in a stable which was nothing more than a hole in the side of a hill; the shepherds were happy, though they slept on the cold ground beneath the stars; all nature was happy, and hung a star above the lowly town of Bethlehem, to shine in unaccustomed glory; the angels of God were exceedingly happy, and left heaven to sing their paen of praise.

We shall find our happiness this year in life itself, not in the things of life; in what we are and not in what we have. Your happiness is your Father's will. Your joy, not your gloom, is His glory. "The fire's value is in the things it cannot consume." Much is passing, but nothing that is worth while will be lost. You have honor, self-respect, faith, hope, love, friends, dear ones, and heaven itself, left.

Would you be happy? Forget yourself, and look up the people who need you. Happiness is a by-product. Then there are the children: they have a right to joy. Let us just forget and all be children once more.

Christmas--a Day of Good Will It matters very little whether we translate the angels' words as "Peace on earth, good will to man," or "Peace on earth to men of good will." In either form peace is seen to be the fruit of good will.

The good will of God toward man is declared in the wondrous fact that He who made the world has come to be Emmanuel, God with us.

We may not presume to limit God's good will by the vain assumption that any portion of mankind has a monopoly of His loving kindness. Through the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, God has become man. He has entered into humanity, without distinction of race, class or station.

It follows that our spirit of good will should overleap those narrow bounds which have been erected by pride, prejudice, or any other hindrance to our love for others. For this reason Christmas Day calls us to the hardest of all tasks, namely, to break down the walls which separate us from our fellowmen, and to venture forth upon the quest of universal good will.

We have a right to our opinions and we ought to be loyal to our convictions. Differences of faith and practice are like fences which mark the boundary lines of our mental and spiritual properties, but we violate no principle and we abandon no worthy conviction when we look over into our neighbor's yard and wish him a Merry Christmas in the name and spirit of Him who loves us all.

May the Christmas spirit carry us out of ourselves and into the lives of all the children of God.

St. Paul Lutheran Gospel-Herald

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Arthur Ruehs .....Advertising Mgr.

Our only object is to save souls by preaching the Gospel of Christ Crucified.

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday School .....10:00 a. m.
Young People's Forum.....10:00 a. m.
Divine Worship .....11:00 a. m.
German Communion service, December 29 9:45 a. m.
(See page 7 for schedule of Holiday Services.)

CHURCH CALENDAR

Sunday school teachers, every Thursday .... 8:00 p. m.
(See page 7 for schedule of Holiday Services.)
Walther League, January 10 ..... 8:15 p. m.
Ladies' Aid, January 9.

Christmas Wishes

May Christmas bring to you its three-fold joy:
True Faith, to free you e'er from doubt's alloy;
Strong Hope, to sing your heart to sweet repose;
And Love, to help you soothe another's woes.

—*John Grant Newman*

The Pastor extends to all the most cordial wishes for a full measure of genuine happiness at Christmas time.

In wishing you a "Happy Christmas" we do not have in mind the uncertain, carnal happiness which forms the underlying sentiment in the customary greetings of the world, which says "Merry Christmas" and in the next moment has forgotten the words, but we mean that abiding happiness which comes to souls which are at peace with God, a happiness which is proof against all the vicissitudes of life. For this reason we can make our greetings general and include all those whose hearts are sore with grief and burdened with the weight of a heavy cross. The joy we wish you does not depend upon the flucuating experiences of life because it comes from Him who is the eternal Source of real joy, the Christ-Child, Whose birth in Bethlehem brought God's "good will toward men." May the angels' song of praise find a joyous response in your hearts. May the peace which the new-born Savior has wrought and which the world cannot give, fill your hearts anew during the happy Christmas season. May the blessings which the Christ-Child brought be yours in the fullest measure. May the peace which the new-born Savior has wrought and which the world cannot give, fill your hearts anew during the happy Christmas season. May the anniversary of the Savior's birth bring you the substantial, lasting blessings of a holy day, and not merely the fleeting joy and vanishing pleasure of only another holiday. Christmas merely as a holiday—a day in which eating and drinking and merrymaking take the place of work, and a few gifts are exchanged with friends—is a poor affair. The day has then lost its real significance.

May you observe Christmas, this year, as a holy day, as the festival of the Christ-Child, of the advent into the world of Him Who is the eternal Son of God and to Whom we owe our salvation from sin and death. May your Chirstmas observance find you in spirit in Bethlehem, kneeling at the manger-bed, where lies the Christ, Who is the Star of our life and the Hope of our eternity, and may you participate devoutly in all the happenings of the first Christmas day.

We cordially invite all our readers to join us in going thus to Bethlehem to see the thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us by the message of the angelic herald, who said: "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ, the Lord."

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NEW YEAR'S EVE

The transition from one year to another is a mental process. The heart goes on pumping; the lungs continue to breathe; all the organs of the body function as usual; no disturbance interrupts the business of living.

But custom has given to the last hours that link one year with another a special significance. We regard the last evening of the old year as the close of another chapter in life. We look back on the pages that record our past, and, from the experiences, the losses, and the gains, we learn lessons that may help to fill the blank pages of the future with an account that will not be so distressing, and with entries that may not be so apt to cause shame, regret and remorse. We note the debts we have accumulated, especially the debts of sin and transgression, for which we are liable to a holy God. We do not care to take them with us over into the New Year. We want them cancelled. The inspired Word of God tells us that they are cancelled by that sincere confession and repentance of heart before God which brings to us His gracious pardon through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Assured of that pardon and of the Heavenly Father's constant care and love, we are enabled to begin another of life's chapters with a clean balance-sheet.

It is good for us thus to face ourselves fairly and squarely. But we do that too rarely. Externals, mere things, so crowd in upon us that we seldom contemplate the real facts of our existence. We are so busy with surface-trifles that the deeper truths, which alone have abiding significance, fail to receive proper consideration. New Year's Eve urges and admonishes to such introspective activities.

Naturally, a "wild party" with booze and jazz and carousing does not serve this purpose. The House of God is the place for it; better still, the Altar of the Lord, which leads to the foot of Calvary's Cross. Divine love approaches us in the sacrament. It calls to our attention a tremendous contrast: on God's side, Love that died for us; on our side, love that so largely is nothing but a word without meaning. It strentghens us by the gift of our Lords' body and and blood. It fills us with a joy and a peace that must rob the unknown future of all terrors.

Spend New Year's Eve with God in church!

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RANDOM ITEMS

Raymond and Herbert Waldeck were received into voting membership of the congregation at the last voters' meeting. The young men of our congregation who have reached voting age are eligible to membership and should make use of this right in order to share the privileges as well as the responsibilities of those who are called to regulate the affairs of a Christian congregation.

St. Paul Lutheran recently purchased the district school property lying north of the Parish Hall. This property is to be used for congregational purposes.

Our special service on December 8, at which the members present personally dedicated their financial pledges at the altar, was most impressive. As one member expressed it, "It sorta 'got' a fellow." It is too early to tabulate the complete final results, since the absentee pledges have not yet been received. According to present indications, the appropriations made for 1936 by the congregation, amounting to $2650, will be covered by the pledges, if the outstanding cards average the amounts so far received. A little co-operation will assure the congregation of sufficient financial support.

The Ladies' Aid society and the Walther League sponsored Christmas parties for the benefit of the Childrens' Friend society, a home for foundlings and orphans in Bay City.

Take special note of the Holiday services as announced on page 7 of this issue. We would like to emphasize the time set for Communion announcements. The announcements should be made in person. Not over the telephone. It is not necessary for all members of the family to announce personally each time, but each family ought so to arrange matters that, during the course of the year, each communicant member of the family announces for the other members of the family.

Be sure to use Wheatridge Christmas Seals on all your holiday mail. Your contributions for these little messengers of good cheer help to maintain the institution of mercy for tubercular patients.

The congregational treasurer, Mr. G. Waldeck, requests that all members make an honest effort to keep their pledges up to date. The treasurer's books for 1935 close on January 10, and our contributions are needed to keep the work of our church running along smoothly. Please!

The pastor wishes to express his delight at the splendid church attendance of late. This is as it should be, for "he that is of God heareth God's words"; and still there are far too many of our members who attend so irregularly. Read John 8, 47; Luke 10, 16; Hosea 4, 6, to learn what God has to say about this. One final word: Pray earnestly for grace that you will attend every divine service during the holiday season. It might be your last.

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On November 27, Otto Kunde and Norma Lightfoot entered the estate of holy matrimony. We wish them Gods' blessings for their married life. Herbert Kunde and Agatha Kunde were the attendants. The young couple will make their home in Freeport.

Christmas Stars

By Caroline D. Swan

THE silent Christmas stars shine cool and clear
Above a world of mingled joy and woe;
On peaceful cottage homes, with thanks aglow
For royal bounty of the grape-crowned year;
And on red fields of blood, where many a tear
More merciful than they who bade it flow.
Is wiped away by Death, a gentle foe,
Shine, silver stars, rain down your blessed cheer!

Comfort the mourner with your Angel song!
The Christ-Child reigns. Behold His tiny hand
Upraised in benediction warm and sweet!
O'er every joy and every bitter wrong
The Babe of Bethlehem hath supreme command;
Come, worship, kings and peoples, at His feet!

—*Columbia (New York)*

An aim in life is the only fortune worth the finding, and it is not to be found in foreign lands, but in the heart itself.—*Stevenson.*

STOCKHILL'S GROCERY

The Pastor's Message

AS WE celebrate the birthday of our Lord, I crave every Christmas blessing for you. Jesus is God's love-gift to the race. He "so loved that He gave" —gave the zest He had for our redemption. Since the first Christmas night, Christmas has ever been humanity's supreme gift day, when men everywhere are called to give to God the best they have—their love, their time, their talents, themselves—for only the best is good enough for Him.

Give to Him again your love and life; to the church your time and devotion; to those about you kindly words and deeds; and all in the name of Christ of Christmas.

May the gift of Christmas to you be a double portion of the spirit of Him whose name we bear.

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THERE is a new significance in Christmas this year. It lies not so much in the new message as in the new opportunity which this depressed world offers to the follower of Jesus Christ. For once the good will of the angels' song dwells in our hearts, once we experience this kindly feeling towards others and identify ourselves with their interests, we are never satisfied until we share their burdens and until we find a place in their needs. It is this emphasis which I discover everywhere I go. People who in normal times never get outside their own charmed circle of loved ones and friends, who never seem to feel the touch of brotherliness which binds them together with the other members of their race are this year revealing a more sensitive appreciation of the good will which was brought to the world in the Babe of Bethlehem and are finding refreshing joy and increasing satisfaction in those individual cases of need whose burdens they are lifting and whose smiles of gladness they are helping to restore. It is true that many have not as much as usual to give and some who once practiced generous living are almost crushed with poverty, but surely more are finding the heart of God as it is embodied in Jesus Christ. And in the bosom of such a Christmas experience there will be born a divine sympathy which is destined to enrich the Christ spirit in the world and build a truer life in the races of men.

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IT IS a hard way to Bethlehem. It was a hard way for the three wise men who had caught the heavenly vision and believed they were being led to the birthplace of the world's Saviour. Over burning sands and rocky heights they made their way. They thirsted and found the springs bitter. The cold nights of the desert disturbed their rest. And even Herod, to whom they looked for help, sought, rather, to trap them. But when they knelt at the manger and worshipped the Christ Child all these things were forgotten. It was a hard way, but a way of joy.

It is still a hard way to Bethlehem. For though we have our modern roads and fast transportation by land and air, the pathways to spiritual achievement are slow and difficult. We are still trying to find the way to make bitter waters sweet and rough places smooth. The heart still longs for the triumph of kindness, tolerance and love. The Christmas star shows the goal, but the way is hard. The wise who persevere to the end find the Christ Child and receive the full blessing of Christmas joy.

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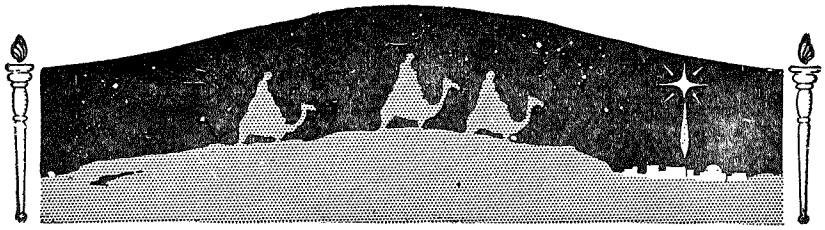
THE empty pew has an eloquent tongue. Though its message is unpleasant, it is one that all may hear. To the preacher the empty pew says, "Your sermon is not worth while." To the visitor he whispers, "You see, we are not quite holding our own." It asks the members who are present, "Why don't you go visiting next Sabbath, too?" The empty pew speaks against the service. It kills inspiration, smothers hope, and dulls the fine edge of zeal. The empty pew is a weight. The occupied pew is a wing.

Now I ask you, do you mean this when you stay away from church? To be sure, they tell us that our services are well attended. But for every member who comes to church with regularity there are two who stay away with equal regularity.



DURING THE HOLIDAYS

SUNDAY, December 22 — 11:00 a. m., morning worship.

TUESDAY, Christmas Eve—7:45 p. m., children's service.

WEDNESDAY, Christmas — 10:30 a. m., festival worship.

SUNDAY, December 29—9:45 a. m., German Communion; 11:00 a. m., morning worship (English).

TUESDAY, December 31—7:45 p. m., Communion service.

WEDNESDAY, January 1 — 10:30 a. m., festival worship.

(Registration for Communion: Friday, December 27, 3:30, 5:00, 7:30 and 9:00 p. m. at the parsonage).

PLANTS SEEM LIFE A LIVING GIFT

Remember Your Friends With Plants at Christmas Time

Potted Plants
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Ferns

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from
Edythe, Bob, Ed, Lowell, Ray
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Caledonia Motor Sales

The Christmas Message

"And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, are not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel."—Matt. 2:6

1—The Christmas Message Sweeps Fear Out of Our Life.

As angels drew near they cried out: "Be not afraid." Sin has so swathed the world in the shadows of fear that even heaven cannot draw near without assuring us of safety and peace. Sin has sowed our human world with a thousand fears and often made life itself a terror, but God would have us nestle in His arm and be not afraid. The universe is friendly and there is not a star that burns in all the heavens that casts any fateful beam on us. God is our Father and would hush all our fears and sorrows into peace.

2—The Christmas Message Brings Good Tidings of Great Joy.

Joy is a welcome note in our jarring, sad world. It has always been out of tune, for sin is infinite discord in the music of the spheres, and the great war turned the whole world into a confusion of noise and a wilderness of woe. But the clouds are lifting and once more men are beginning to work and women to cease weeping and children to laugh and play. The blue of heaven is breaking through the shadows and letting us see the smile of God. Christmas sounds out the note, Joy to all the people. Let the church bells ring it, let the pulpits proclaim it, let the children sing it, and let the old world forget its sorrow and be wreathed in gladness.

3—Christmas Puts Us in Right Relations with God.

Nothing is settled until it is settled right and nothing begins right that does not begin at the right point. "Glory to God" is a note that puts us in right relations with the universe. No point on the circumference of a circle is in the right place until it is in right relations with the center, and when every point is in the right place the whole circumference is a perfect and beautiful circle. It is no arbitrary and autocratic demand on the part of God to bid us to give glory to him, but this is just the necessary and right thing for us to do, the very center and sum of all blessings for us.

4—Christmas Transmutes the Glory of God into the Blessing of Men.

Glory to God instantly becomes peace among men. The two are related as root and fruit, the glory of the sun and the beauty of the blossoming earth. It is the glory of God that there should be peace and justice, truth and trust, love and brotherhood, righteousness and reverence among men. Tear down the sky, sweep away sun and stars, and the earth would instantly become a desert. The light of the sun by some subtle chemistry is transmuted into leaf and bud and blossom and the glory of the sun reappears in all the fruitage and beauty of the earth. The glory of God is no abstract doctrine or empty sentiment, but it is a living force that enters into all our human world and transmutes and transfigures it with the life and the love, the blessedness, the joy, the peace and the beauty of God.

5—Christmas Is Not All Getting, but Also Giving.

We must first receive before we can give, but receiving that stops with the self turns the soul into a stagnant dead sea, barren and bitter. It is more blessed to give these divine gifts than to receive them, for as we give them they multiply in our hands as did the loaves beside the sea. We do well to turn the joy of them, for as we give them they must flow both ways, out of our hands and hearts as well as into them. Our own joy burns more brightly in our souls as we shed its light out over other lives and even cast its beams around the world.

Let us now go even unto Bethlehem while the angels' song is in the air and hear the Christmas message that we may both receive it and give it and thereby glorify God and bring peace and joy to men everywhere.

"I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day a Savior which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2:10-11.

A STARLIGHT REVERIE

THIS is a part of the story of the birth of Jesus. It is a narrative of circumstances connected with the greatest birth of the ages, yet it consists of so few words that it requires but a moment to read them. Jerusalem never dreamed, as she lay rapt in slumber, that He of whom the prophets of Israel had spoken, was at hand. His welcome was a meagre one. But it has been left to the ages to see, in the glowing light of earthly history and in the triumphs of the religion he came to establish, the grandeur of His nature and the importance of His advent among men.

The earth needed a Savior. The efforts that men put forth to save themselves or their fellows were abortive. Science, philosophy, law, sought at times the same end, but in vain. Song could not save men, nor art, nor sculpture, nor learning, nor law; a Divine Savior must come. Jesus is the Savior the earth needs. He has proven Himself to be such.

Jesus was the fulfillment of prophecy. Where Jesus was to be born was foretold seven hundred years before His birth. The event was not to occur in Jerusalem, the greatest city of the Jews, nor was it to take place in Rome, the metropolis of the world; but in little Bethlehem of Judea. And because Jesus was born in Bethlehem, that town shall hold a unique place in the esteem of men until the end of time.

It was a providentially ordered event. She who was to give birth to the world's Savior resided in Nazareth. How shall prophecy be fulfilled that Jesus be born in Bethlehem of Judea? God used a king to bring about the event in that place. Caesar Augustus, Rome's great ruler, for reasons of state, was moved to order that an enrollment be made throughout his entire domain. Herod, the king of the Jews, directed that each Jew should enroll in his paternal city. This created the necessity of Joseph and Mary journeying to Bethlehem. While there Jesus was born and thus the prophecy was fulfilled.

Think of the mighty Augustus whose empire extended from the Rhine and the Don to the deserts of Africa, and from the shores of the Atlantic to the Euphrates, by whose throne stood for its defense four hundred thousand warriors. Think of him serving the babe born that night at Bethlehem.

Every man's life is a little Bethlehem Inn. Many, though they know Him, find no room for Him. They shut him out of their homes, their legislation, their business, their writings, their science, their art. But the poor and despised may have him in their hearts.

The reason Jesus became the center of much criticism was because He was always found among the poor. Humble fishermen became His disciples and followed Him. Jesus is continually knocking at the door of our hearts and seeking admission. And He seeks admission of the poor as well as the rich.

What a scene there must have been among the angels as Jesus laid aside His glory to take upon Him our nature. They saw more of God's heart in the incarnation of His Son than they had ever witnessed in the making of worlds or the administration of His empire.

Jesus came to save the world. Through Him, God is revealed to man. There is a hope for sinners in Jesus Christ our Lord.

"The dying thief rejoiced to see
The fountain in his day.
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away."

Jesus stands at the door and knocks. And will you keep him waiting there?

"For unto you a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."—Isaiah 9:6.

AWAKE!

Thou That Sleepest!

The Lutheran Church has, by the grace of God, remained comparatively free from the pernicious poison of modernistic religion.

THIS is not a very propitious time to sleep. The world is raging in the crazy tantrums of its sinful delirium. Human institutions are crashing about our feet. The bubbles of human hopes and ideals are bursting around us. The wails and lamentations of disillusioned men are filling the air. The peace of the world is resting on insecure foundations. The peoples of the earth are torn with international distrust and disturbed by the insincere jockeyings of their diplomats. Munition makers are plotting and scheming for new profits to stuff their coffers at the expense of mutilated bodies and broken homes. The peace and disarmament movements are dying of inanition in the face of the mutual distrust of nations. Ruthless dictators are ruling with cruel and bloody hands. The social and economic conditions of the world are in a turmoil, and the nations of the earth are apparently retracing their steps in the paths of progress through the development of intense nationalism. In our own blessed land God's bounty is being mechanically curtailed, although millions are in want.

The disturbing physical conditions in the world have been accomplished, or rather superinduced, by a great spiritual collapse. There is today a very noticeable breakdown of the protective institutions which human society had thrown around its life and an unashamed parade of viciousness. The common rules of decency and order seem to have been abrogated. The law of God is repudiated, and the law of man is flouted. The printed pages of books and magazines and the screens of the moving picture theaters pander to the lowest tastes of the people and are managing to turn the lief of the majority into a carnival of lust. The breakdown of our social institutions, the disappearance of family influences, the general disregard of law and order, are alarming symptoms of a falsely-termed progress.

The field of religion has not escaped from the downward trend. Modernism has ravaged the church of God and there is today little hope for the rectification of our social weaknesses from a goodly portion of so-called Protestantism. In some of the churches of the land small groups of adherents to Biblical principles are waging a losing battle. Many of our modern religious organizations are shot through with human philosophy and the vagaries of evolutionism. They have given up the Word of God as the one regulative factor in their religious life, and thus the Spirit of God has departed and these church bodies no longer have any curative contribution to make to human society.

There is danger, however, that the Lutheran church become hampered and hindered in its God-given work by a certain dogmatic sterility, by a defensive attitude which finds itself chiefly concerned with the preservation of its doctrinal standards and in the meantime forgets its God-given mission to the world. There are evidences that sometimes we fail to realize the fact that the true children of God are the salt of the earth, and that if the salt once loses its savor there is nothing left wherewith the affairs of the world can be salted. Here and there a tendency is noticeable to regard present-day conditions with sighing resignation, looking upon them as an unavoidable concomitant of the times, which must be endured patiently while the children of God sit in spiritual seclusion, carefully guarding their treasure until the Lord calls them home. There is much bemoaning and bewailing of the viciousness and godlessness of the age. Sometimes groups pass resolutions of regret concerning certain evils, "regarding with alarm" certain modern tendencies. But the Savior is not satisfied with passivity. He wants action. He does not want the light hidden away under the bushel, but placed on a candlestick so that it may illumine the surrounding darkness. The church is not a retreat tucked away in the secluded spots of the earth, but is a city set on a hill to be visible to all. We are to let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven. Jesus did not send His disciples into monasteries and hermits' haunts, but He sent them out into the world in a continuous evangelizing expedition. He wanted them to be in touch with men, testifying, witnessing, proclaiming in word and deed the great message of salvation.

The gospel-preaching church must be ready to adapt itself to the changing conditions of the day. It must be "all things to all men." This is indeed the time to arouse ourselves and to make a thorough examination of our whole ecclesiastical system. We are not meeting the challenge of the day when we sit back prayerfully waiting for the return of times that according to all indications are gone beyond recall. If our church body is sick, we are wasting time in applying palliatives and in doctoring the surface-symptoms. It is incumbent upon us to get at the root of our ills. It might not be well to attempt a diagnosis of our case by popular vote, but it might be advisable to appoint a carefully-chosen group to study our case and to arrive at a proper diagnosis with an accompanying proposal of a cure. There is no doubt that some of our ills are of an organizational character and can by drastic measures be rectified.

But after all, our ills are fundamentally spiritual. We are in danger of playing at living while the world is rocking to its fate. Many of our people are inclined to give their best efforts to the things of this world. The church throughout needs an awakening by the Spirit of God, and that holds good both in regard to clergy and to laity. In many cases our churches are playing with the jack-stones of congregational trivialities while an avalanche of destruction is descending upon the world. The devil always encourages the singing of lullabies while the peril is the greatest. We need a spiritual revival all through the church. We need a bringing out of the salt qualities which are inherent in the children of God and which must by them be individually applied in their respective human contacts. We need a development of the prayer life and of what some have termed the Christ life. We need a deeper and more general study of the Scriptures, a more widespread devotion of our time and talents to the cause of the Lord. The latent spiritual forces in our midst must be let loose. We must no longer condone the frightful dissipation of time and the investing of energies in non-essentials.

Our people must be aroused to the great responsibility of living in these times. Our task is not merely to fortify within the fold, but to adopt aggressive measures to win those on the outside. If once the church is aroused, it will prove itself, in spite of apparently hopeless conditions, a truly irresistible force.

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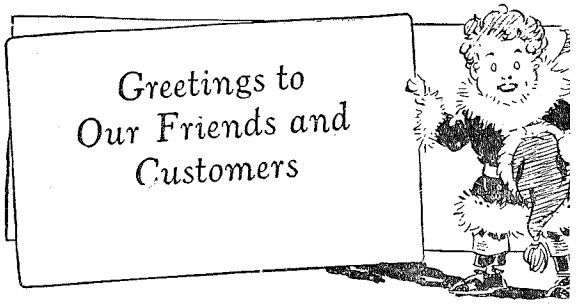

WIERENGA'S RED & WHITE STORE - Dutton

When I Grow Old

When I grow old
God grant that every child
Will feel the youthful texture of my soul,
And will not turn away from me
As from a shade or shrunken vine,
When I grow old.

When I grow old
God grant that I may have some task
Which must be done or some one fare the worse,
That in some corner of the earth
Some one will need my hand,
When I grow old.

BREAKING A BOTTLE

A FATHER and his two sons were strolling along the shore of Georgian Bay, when one of the boys found an empty bottle, which he promptly smashed upon a nearby rock.

It happened that the shore was thickly populated with cottagers, there being many small children, who constantly ran along the beach with bare feet. Consequently, the father severely reprimanded the culprit, pointing out how dangerous the broken glass was. However, the reproof fell upon deaf ears, for the boy carelessly replied, "I should worry —we won't cut our feet on it."

Within a short time after, a little child sustained a severe gash in his foot, inflicted by a piece of the broken bottle.

This incident is typical of the anti-social spirit which prevails in some quarters, and which is the very essence of selfishness.

There are those who measure their actions solely from the standpoint of the probable effect of their conduct upon themselves. Any and every whim must be gratified, without any regard to the rights or the welfare of others. Others may be made to suffer, but it is regarded as no concern of theirs. To the question, "Am I my brother's keeper," they would answer emphatically, "No!"

This attitude is anti-social. It sets the desires of the few against the welfare of the many. Persisted in, it would nullify all the laws that protect society, and anarchy would reign.

The four great, world-wide evils which curse humanity today, namely: alcohol, drugs, gambling and social vice, could not exist were it not for this anti-social attitude towards the welfare of others. Even Christian people excuse their indifference in words which sound very much like, "I should worry—we won't cut our feet on it."

———o———

It is the cheery worker that succeeds. No one can do his best, or even do well, in the midst of worry or nagging. Wherefore, when you work, work as cheerfully as you can. And do not put even a straw in the way of others.

———o———

A smile and a friendly word for the stranger in your pew is a good advertisement for your church.

I Will Cling to the OLD FAITH

By SIDNEY DARK

The author of this article is a well known journalist and editor of London, England, He is a layman, not a clergyman, and his words come with redoubled force on that account, as showing the effect that Modernism has on the average man's faith. Mr. Dark's article is well worth. studying, and passing on to your friends.

I AM one of those people who are totally unaffected, so far as thought and faith and general outlook on life are concerned, by the discoveries of science and the deductions of materialistic philosophy.

For to me, progress means the increase of happiness among the meanest of the citizens of a country, and judged by this standard, it must be admitted that these often amazing mechanical inventions have been of the smallest use to mankind. On the other hand, the development of medical science, in so far as it has tended to protect from disease and to alleviate pain, is apparently of vast benefit to humanity. Even here I have my doubts. We live longer than our forefathers. But is long life of itself a benefit? We are cleaner. Our lives are far more complex. But we are certainly neither happier nor better. We must, however, accept the fact that we are living in a world controlled and affected by influences and powers of which our fathers were ignorant and make the best possible use of them for the common good.

It is when the scientists seek to apply their discoveries and deductions to the vital facts and problems of human life that they generally irritate or bore me. The theory of evolution tells us that our ancestors were monkeys who lived in trees and swung from their branches by their tails. Your typical scientist is the most dogmatic gentleman whom the world has ever known.

I do not deny the physical relation between man and the brute creation, but there is an infinitely greater difference between man and the next highest species of mammal than there is between a monkey and jellyfish or between an elephant and a geranium. It is unnecessary to recapitulate the possessions of mind and soul and even body that are man's alone. Man stands pre-eminent among the creatures of the earth. Moreover, we now know that for at least five thousand years the character and the nature of man have not altered at all. The records of the Chaldeans reveal to us a race who thought as we think, dreamed as we dream, feared as we fear.

The scientist is, therefore, faced with the extremely difficult problem of explaining why evolution suddenly stopped. Homer's Iliad was written 2,500 years ago. The Greek Tragedies were written 2,000 years ago. Plato was teaching his philosophy about the same time. There has been no epic equal to the Iliad written during later ages. There has been no drama greater than that of Euripides. There has been no more profound philosopher than Plato. Aristotle remains the greatest of critics. It is therefore clear that, so far as reason and imagination are concerned, there has been no progress whatever in three thousand years.

A number of curious people who call themselves Modernists say that it is not necessary to believe in the Virgin Birth of our Lord or in His resurrection from the grave. They talk of "re-stating the faith in modern terms," puerile nonsense to be compared with the teetotaler offering his guests ginger beer and assuring them that it is champaigne.

The mediaeval man believed, and I believe, that nearly two thousand years ago in the country of Judea a Man was born of a Virgin and that thirty-three years later He rose from the dead. These amazing happenings were the logical result of what had occurred before. They were unusual, unprecedented, miraculous.

The men and women who find in the old faith not only the solution of the problems of life but the strength to face its difficulties and the promise that there will eventually be splendid compensation for its disappointments cannot be brushed aside as the victims of superstitution in an age when famous scientists converse with ghosts by the eccentric method of table gyration and middle-aged novelists photograph fairies in woods.

In more recent times almost all the most appealing, the most wonderful, the most selfless figures in human history have been men to whom the Faith has been the inspirer of action and the incentive to good works. Fr. Damien spent his life among the lepers because he was a Christian. I have never heard of a man leaving comfort and living on a lepers' island just because he believed in evolution, was convinced that men were descended from apes, and disbelieved in the Virgin Birth.

Saints alas! are rare figures in any age, but no age has been without its Christian saints, men and women who have made infinite sacrifices, who have spent themselves in the service of their fellows, asking for no reward and seeking for no recognition. Many such men and women are living in the world today.

Where are the saints of unbelief? How many sisters has evolution sent to the slums? Here, once more, common sense justifies belief. The faith that can create saints is of infinitely greater human importance than a machine that can separate an atom into a million particles.

A belief in the Christian faith has revolutionized the conduct of millions of human beings. It has made cruel men kind, it has made the selfish unselfish, it has inspired generations of service. I cling to the faith, therefore, because I am a sane, hard-headed person, not to be bamboozled by test tubes and not willing to accept guesses as facts because the guesses come from professors of European reputation.

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Acknowledging a Gift From the Public

Christmas is a time for men to forget what is coming to them and to remember what is coming to others, and it is in that spirit that we publish this acknowledgment of what is coming to you.

The truth is, that whatever was coming to us in the shape of prosperity this year has come, and the purpose of this announcement is not to solicit favors, but to register thanks.

The people of this community have been very good to us. They responded to our advertisements in the Gospel Herald. They endorsed our policy and methods. And they have examined and approved and bought our merchandise.

They have given us volume in return for values, sales in return for service, business in return for benefits received.

And thus they have done more than wish a Merry Christmas — they have assured it with the priceless gift of public confidence!

Thank You—We Wish You a

ADVERTISERS IN THE ST. PAUL LUTHERAN GOSPEL HERALD

DR. G. P. GRAYBIEL

CALEDONIA, MICHIGAN

The Lutheran Church Is My Spiritual Mother

My Church! My Church! My dear old Church
My fathers' and my own!
On prophets and apostles built,
And Christ the cornerstone!
All else beside, by storm or tide,
May yet be overthrown;
But not my Church, my dear old Church,
My fathers' and my own!

By VIOLA OLIN

YES, I love my church, my dear old church, and for her I wish to labor, until He who gave me to her arms shall call me to His own. While we should have love for the whole Christendom and should acknowledge whatever good there is in other churches, our own Lutheran Church should be especially dear to us. She is the mother of Protestantism and other Protestant churches are largely indebted to her for the truth which they possess. We are proud of her history and thankful to God for the purity and Scripturalness of her teaching. We should never permit ourselves to be drawn away from her, we should never forsake or deny the truth which she teaches. If we love her as we should, we will gladly deny ourselves and make sacrifices in order to give liberally to her cause and aid in spreading the Word of Life to others less fortunate than ourselves.

I can best serve my Master in the institution founded by Him, the church. The Lutheran Church is my spiritual mother. Through her I was brought to God in baptism and received into communion with Christ and His church. The Holy Spirit then began His gracious work of regeneration in my heart. It is true I was, in a sense, innocent and irresponsible, but, nevertheless, I was born of flesh, and that which is born of flesh is flesh. We are all by nature sinful and unclean. Jesus says, "Except one be born of water and spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." It is true that as an infant I lacked faith, but just as surely as a child is nourished by physical food during infancy and not conscious of the fact that he is being fed, so the child is fed and nourished by the spiritual food bestowed upon him when he is baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This new life must be nurtured. The Holy Spirit is ever active in the child's heart. As the child becomes older and begins to understand he must be taught to love God, love the Word and love the church. He must be taught to come to the throne of grace in daily repentance and there seek forgiveness of his sins and thus renew his baptismal covenant, if he is to continue in grace. It is possible for a child to lose the spiritual life which was bestowed upon him through the Holy Spirit in baptism. If a child or adult falls from grace, it is also possible for such a person to be restored into fellowship with God and his church and to renew his baptismal covenant as soon as he repents and comes to God with a believing heart. It is not necessary to be rebaptized, for God is ever faithful and what He has promised in the baptismal covenant still holds good and remains unbroken. God never goes back on His Word or breaks a promise, but we do.

It is the church that instructs us in the way of salvation, teaches and nurtures us in the Word, where the home often fails. At confirmation we are again permitted to renew our baptismal covenant, this time publicly, after being instructed in God's Word. This time we publicly confess Jesus not only with our mouth but—it should be—with our heart. In order to truly renew our baptismal covenant with Jesus, we must be the possessors of a living faith. This faith has been nourished from childhood or infancy through the working of the Holy Spirit, together with instructions received in the home and church. The church can help me to remain faithful to Jesus, to the Word and the sacraments. Manifold temptations and trials are sure to come, and Jesus alone can help me to overcome them.

Through the church I have been drawn very close to my precious Saviour. Through her I have met my Saviour face to face, felt and experienced His nearness and presence. Through the church and through the study of God's Word Jesus has become my all in all. We do not have to go outside the Lutheran Church to find Jesus. The Holy Spirit reveals Him to all.

It is true that the church militant has many faults and many of its members are unfaithful. They do not deserve the name of Christian. A right life on the part of those who belong to the church is the strongest kind of testimony to the truth and power of the gospel. As members of one body of Christ, they should dwell together in peace and work in harmony for the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom. Members should care for each other spiritually and temporarily and help bear each other's burdens. We as members should recognize the pastor as an ambassador of Christ, commissioned to proclaim Christ's will. When a true pastor preaches the gospel or in private speaks words of admonition, guidance or comfort, the Saviour speaks through him. We should listen to his preaching not for the sake of finding fault, but in order to profit by it. We should receive it, not as the word of man, but the Word of God. We should also remember that he is human and has his limitations as well as other people. We must bear each other's shortcomings, for none of us are perfect. Through criticism and fault-finding a Christian loses power and prevents the Holy Spirit from having His way in the individual life and also in the life of the church. The visible church is not "without spot or wrinkle." There is only one ideal church, the church triumphant.

Thoughts For a New Year

How to Face the New Year

O year that is going, take with you
Some evil that dwells in my heart:
Let selfishness, doubt,
With the old year go out—
With joy I would see them depart.

Face it with faith in Jesus Christ.

Face it with an open Bible and expectant prayer.

Face it ready to work with your pastor, teachers and officers, to serve your church and achieve for God.

Face it with definite purpose to grow in knowing God through the Bible and good books; to grow in personal witnessing, and in our work to win souls; to grow in love, joy, and hilarious giving and serving.

What to Take What to Leave

O year that is coming, bring with you
Some virtues of which I have need,
More patience to bear,
And more kindness to share,
And more love that is true love indeed.

Peter, in his first epistle, gives a hint as to what can be left out or "laid aside." His list includes "malice," "guile," "hypocrisy," "envy," and "evil speaking." Over against this group we have Paul's catalogue of positive qualities and his injunction to think on these things: the "true," the "honest," the "just," the "pure," the "lovely," the "good report," the "virtuous," and the "praiseworthy."

"As a man thinketh in his heart so is he"

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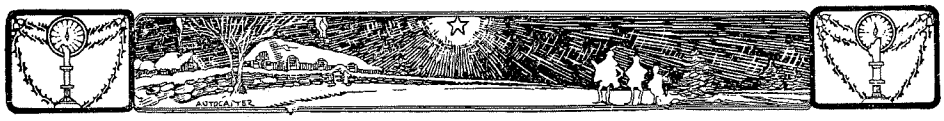

The Christmas Message

THE Christmas message is that a Babe was born in Bethlehem about nineteen hundred years ago. The announcement may seem commonplace and cause wonder that such an event should send waves of gladness surging around the world. The birth of a babe is such an ordinary event, millions of them are born every month and few of them ever attract any notice.

But babes differ as much as men. They are bundles of possibilities and one of them may have wrapped up in it enough power to change the world. Small things are not small when they contain the promise and potency of great things. The first acorn held in its bosom all the oaks on the earth, and the first blade of grass wove a green carpet around the globe.

When Caesar was born the Roman Empire flung its mighty circumference around the known world and turned the Mediterranean into a Roman lake, and when Napoleon first set his infant foot on his little island the continent of Europe trembled.

When Christ was born he was only a Babe, but never did such a Babe appear in this world before nor since. The patter of his infant feet was the prophecy and forerunner of the footsteps by which he strode through the centuries and mounted to his mastery today. When Christ was born the Christ child was born in the heart of the world, and Christianity started out on its worldwide march. Christendom lay in his cradle and all the angels of joy that now sing his birth throughout all lands played around it. The waves of gladness that will soon spread to the rim of the planet started from that cave in Bethlehem; from its rocky ridge gushed the stream that is now flooding the world.

There is a reason why Christendom dates its calendar from this birth, history made no mistake in seizing on this event as the epochal pivot of the world, and all men acknowledge this every time they date a letter or look at the calendar. The most astonishing fact and greatest and gladdest piece of news in the morning paper are just the four figures that tell its date.

Joy was the initial note of the gospel, the keynote of all its music, and this is the song we now sing. Never did the world need it more than it does today. Men have wrought ruin and caused tragedies and shed blood and tears enough to make the world infinitely sad: now let Christ come and sing us a song of joy, even of glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will among men.