

# Lutheran Tidings

Volume II

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Number 9

## A PERILOUS CHOICE

(Mark 2:13-22)

The call of Levi, or Matthew, furnish the only instances in which Jesus is ever questioned or censured in His choice of men. That Jesus called a publican, an ostracised man, to follow Him was only another convincing proof of His unconformity to the practices and teachings of the rabbinic schools. How much wiser would He not have been if He had chosen the scribe who came to Him and said, "Teacher, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest" (Mt. 8:19). But Jesus sent this man away with these words: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heavens have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Mt. 8:20).

The call of the Apostle to the Gentiles also seemed a perilous undertaking to those who knew something of his former life and activities. He is spoken of as one who was "breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," and even Ananias was unable to perform his commission from God without this reply: "Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name." (Acts 9:1, 13)

Recall the experiences of the apostle to the Santals, Lars Skrefsrud, whose application to the mission training school was rejected because of his prison term. It seemed a perilous thing to accept him on the staff of the missionary societies.

No doubt there are other names that could be mentioned to illustrate the marvelous way in which the Lord finds chosen vessels in those very individuals whom we look upon with disdain. Our text furnishes an explanation of how it is possible for the Lord Jesus Christ to call into His great service men who, after all, have many things in common with those who were looked upon as perilous choices, and, yet made chosen vessels in the service of the kingdom of God.

### I

We are simply perilous choices except for the power of Jesus Christ to impart new life. No one is fit for service in the kingdom of God unless his soul first has been touched by the life-giving word of Jesus Christ. Matthew was unfit for apostleship until he heard and saw Jesus at the Sea of Galilee; Paul was unfit for his task among the Greeks and Romans until he heard and saw the Lord on the road leading to Damascus; and Lars Skrefsrud was unfit for service in North India until he, through the study of the Scriptures, came face to face with the Word.

Jesus calls us, as the text clearly shows, to Himself and to His kingdom. And that call is especially meant for those that are conscious of their sins and of their inability to effect a change by their own power. There is every reason to believe that Matthew must have heard and seen Jesus on numerous occasions as He taught the multitudes by the shore of the Sea of Galilee. It must have dawned on the mind of Matthew that Jesus offered and gave

freely that for which this contemptible publican yearned, namely, healing words for a sin-sick soul. What balm must not these words have produced on a soul stricken with the stings of conscience. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." An His call to sinners is also the beginning of repentance; it is the beginning of a new life with new possibilities.

Sometimes one wonders whether we have lost sight of the possibilities that belong to us who do hear the Word. Are we as willing as Matthew to proclaim to others what it means to us to be Christians? Are we as willing as he to give Him an opportunity to reach others? It may truthfully be said that few Christians despise preaching even in this day. We know that there are untold numbers of Christians who gladly hear the Word every Sunday. Yes, there are pulpits that captivate the attention of thoughtful listeners every Sunday. We hear the Word, but are we equally intent upon learning it? Do we realize that worship is not sufficient in itself, but that it must lead to that knowledge of God through which we learn our responsibility in life? He who imparts new life makes it also possible for that life to plant a seed in its own environment. "I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings" (Hos. 6:6). And Jesus, referring to this message of Scripture, rebuked His critics by saying to them, "Go ye and learn what this means" (Math. 9:13). Have we learned the implications of a religious-ethical life?

### II

The power of Jesus to liberate us from the bondage of the law and to bring us into the freedom of the spirit makes it possible to make cleavage between the old and the new. Matthew was not to be burdened anew with the works of the law. His life could take whatever form the Spirit might direct. The life to which he was called was far more than a mere patch to cover the blemish of his former life; it was altogether too dynamic to be confined within the boundaries of the old. Hence, Jesus said, "No man seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment: . . . And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins."

How the world needs men who under the Spirit's guidance will be able to give us new forms for the old. The world is face to face with peril because we have been slaves of selfishness, avarice, and hatred. In our selfishness we have lost sense of others; in our love for Mammon we have practically made property more sacred than life; and in our hatred we have become more than once murderers in a literal sense.

The new forms that life needs to take, both individually and collectively, must be patterned after the life of Jesus Christ. Matthew was not asked to pattern his life after the directions of either the Pharisees or the disciples of John the Baptist. Rather it was to unfold itself as he lived in a living fellowship with Jesus. One of the char-

acteristics of an unbroken fellowship with Jesus is that there is "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). In other words where that fellowship is broken there the greatest qualifications for leadership is lacking. Where that fellowship does not exist there men are still "under the law of sin and death," and we dare not trust them for leadership. But where men are in union with Jesus they may become chosen vessels for God. Irrespective of what the world may think of leadership, it is the glorious truth that the message which Paul received from his Lord, and the experience he had, are not singular instances but ever recurrent in the life of the Christian and his church. "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness." No wonder that Paul could truthfully declare, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weakness, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:9).

### III

The call that Matthew received was very short but imperative. "Follow me." We are told that he "forsook all, and rose up and followed Him" (Lk. 5:28). Never again would he be able to return to the tables of the toll, and in that respect he probably gave up more than the other disciples of Jesus. Upon the death of Jesus we find seven of the disciples returning the boats (Jn. 21:2 ff.), and others perhaps entertained the thought of returning to their trade, but Matthew could never return to his former life. Happily, he did not have to wait long before he could do the work of an apostle (Acts 1:21). His call to apostleship was the greatest thing that ever happened in his life. He was the one man whom Jesus was criticized for taking into the circle of disciples; he was known to the people of his day as publican, and among the learned he was classified with assassins and robbers, and even the Gospels couple "publicans and sinners" and "heathens and publicans." To the Christians he is known as St. Matthew, the apostle and evangelist. He was looked upon as a perilous choice, and he might have been except for the power of Jesus to impart new life, which liberated him from the law and brought him into the freedom of the Spirit. And he himself was true to his call and followed Jesus without reluctance.

What a change that call wrought in the life of Matthew. God calls us to service in His kingdom, and, yet, we sometimes sit back as if we have not realized that His call is, as Luther Weigle says, "the greatest thing that life can bring to anybody." Are we perilous choices? Yes, except for the power of God, as His power rests upon us we become effective leaders in His great kingdom.

"With might of ours we cannot win,  
Soon were our loss effected;  
But with us in the battle's din  
Is One whom God elected.  
Ask ye who may this be?  
The Lord of hosts is He;  
Christ Jesus is His name,  
True God from Heaven He came  
In every strife to conquer."

*Ernest D. Nielsen.*

## Pastoral Conference

A pastoral conference will be held at the Danish Lutheran Trinity Church, Francisco Avenue and Cortez Street, Chicago, Illinois, April 17, Friday afternoon, at 3 o'clock.

Professor Eduard Geismar from the University of Copenhagen will introduce the following subjects for discussion:

## Your Church Dollar

I am your church dollar. I leave you as your donation to the church you call *yours*. When I leave you I wander far and wide, as I have many different tasks to perform. Some people think that I make just one journey—from their pocket into the treasury of the church—but this is not so. My life really begins when I leave you. Then I begin to lead a very busy life.

When I enter the church treasury, first of all I am split up into many parts. And each part has its definite work to do.

One part, the biggest part, is keeping the church itself going from day to day. You know that costs money. There are salaries to be paid. The pastor devotes his time and abilities to the service of the church. Without a pastor as a leader, no church would be able to live very long. But he has to live, too, and I am helping and enabling him to do so.

And when we come to church, even though it may not be every Sunday, as it should be, we like to find the church clean in all corners. In the winter we all like to find it warm so we can enjoy our stay in comfort. A cold church does not invite anyone to come again. And even the best sermon loses its effect if the listeners are thinking only about the cold. It means someone must get up at four or five o'clock to tend to the fire. And after meetings and social gatherings there are a lot of things to do to get things in order again. All this service part of your church dollar pays for.

Another part of me is used to pay for things needed to keep the church. Every church uses coal, light, gas, water, just like any other household. It is my job to see that all these things are provided, so I find my way into many places of business.

Still another part helps to bring song and music into our church for our services and meetings. Much in this world is made more beautiful by song and music and many hard things are made easier and softened for us.

Then we have children coming to the church Sunday morning. They come to Sunday school. I know that some people think that the church is there anyway. Yes, but it does cost something if we want to keep it open. No church can take care of hundreds of children Sunday after Sunday without expense. The children's few pennies cannot take care of that. And they should not. They pay for the papers and partly for expenses at Christmas, Easter, and picnics, and one part is sent to the foreign mission field that the children hear about to make them feel that even they are a part of God's work in this world. The rest I must take care of. And I am glad to do it because the children of today make the church of tomorrow. What it means to the children we can not even begin to estimate.

And when the children grow older they continue to gather in the church. It is open for them. They have their meetings and gatherings and parents feel at ease when

The Condition of the Church in Germany Today.

The Oxford Movement in Denmark.

Supper will be served at 6:30, and at 8 p.-m. Prof. Geismar will give a lecture on Søren Kierkegaard.

The meetings will be conducted in Danish.

Pastors from the Wisconsin and Illinois Conference of the United Danish Church and pastors of the second and third districts of the Danish Church are cordially invited and will please announce their participation to the undersigned.

*Rev. A. W. Andersen,*  
2846 Cortez Street, Chicago, Illinois.



they know their child is there. They feel it is safe. The church is not infallible, but it must be said young people come under the influence of more good and are encouraged to follow in the footsteps of Christ in the church. And they come in contact with less evil there than in any other place. It means they are building up strength they need in times of temptations. Much evil calls these days and the strongest force opposing it is the church of God. Your church dollar helps in this fight by keeping the church door open.

To all this must be added. Little has been said about the one thing we consider the most important of all, the spiritual side of life. A community without a church would have no place where people could meet and worship in fellowship with one another. No services on Sunday. No place where our children could be baptized and be taught about God. The fellowship with Christ at His table would disappear. The sick and the old would call in vain for a visit by the pastor. Instead evil forces would be at work to destroy what God has created in man. Nobody would like or care to live in such a community. The burdens of this world are too heavy without the help of God.

But that is not all I am doing. I am split up in still more parts. They find their ways to foreign mission fields where other men and women are working in God's kingdom, striving to bring all races and nations into it. They labor hard and help not only to bring God to these people but also His love. By my support they minister to their physical needs as well. What is done to our fellowman is done to Him. I help to supply doctors and nurses. I help to build churches, hospitals, homes for orphans and the aged, the sick and crippled. And I help to build schools, Christian schools, where young people may be educated while under Christian influence. And all this I do not only out there but also in our own country. I come as a true messenger of devotion to God, in keeping with His commandment. I am trying to bring happiness, joy and eternal bliss to all upon my way. My field of work is a big one because it covers all mankind in all the world. Without the help of God it is impossible. With His help it is possible.

What I have mentioned is only a part of what I do. But it will give you some idea of what *your church dollar* does when I am sent out into the world. When you do send me out, will you do it with a joyful heart and with a prayer that I may help in the great work God calls His? He will reward you richly with His grace in return.

*Viggo M. Hansen,*

in Annual Report of Bethania Church,  
Racine, Wis.

## ALBERT SCHWEITZER

There are two names which stand out as the names of men who have made an indelible impression on Africa. They are David Livingstone and Cecil Rhodes. To these must now be added a third, for Albert Schweitzer, one of the world's great men, first a Doctor of Theology, then a Doctor of Philosophy and finally a Doctor of Medicine, has chosen French Equatorial Africa for the scene of his life work because the need in that part of the world seemed greatest and the call from the edge of the primeval forest the loudest.

Recognized as the greatest authority in Europe on both the playing and the construction of organs, and the world's foremost interpreter of Johann Sebastian Bach's difficult music, it might have seemed but natural that the world of music should hold his unceasing interest.

Yet several of his ancestors were ministers, his father

having been pastor of the Protestant church in the village of Gunsbach from the boy's early childhood to his middle years.

After graduating at the University of Strassburg he won a scholarship which gave him the opportunity for a year's study in other universities. One semester he spent at the Sorbonne, Paris, and the other in the University of Berlin.

At the end of the year he returned to Strassburg where he became assistant pastor of St. Nicholas Church, a position in which he served for ten years. It was during the early years of his ministry here that he became known as the author of two books on the life of Jesus. This led to his appointment on the faculty of the University. He continued, however, his work as assistant pastor.

When, a few years later, he published a huge work on the music of Bach's time, the book took a place as the standard authority upon the great musician. In recognition of this, the Bach Society of Paris promptly made him its honorary organist.

He was now thirty years of age. But not any of the many avenues open to him presented a big enough challenge to satisfy.

When he was twenty-one, and still a student, he made a resolution which he remembered. It was, that he would devote his life, to the age of thirty to the work of the preacher, to science and to music. Then, if he had accomplished his aim in these fields, from that time he would give his life and strength directly to service to his fellow men.

When a boy, Albert Schweitzer had listened with unflinching interest to the missionary sermons of his father from the pulpit of the little church at Gunsbach. One of his heroes had been a French Protestant missionary, Casalis, who was serving among the Basutoland people in Africa.

One of the finest pieces of work ever done by the famous Lutheran Bartholdi, designer of the Statue of Liberty which guards the portals of America in New York Harbor, was a stone figure of a Negro.

The thoughtful sadness on the face of the Negro gripped the lad. Almost constantly he thought of Africa. Her sufferings and her need weighed on his mind. And now, as he stood at what seemed to him, since he had reached his thirtieth year, the portal of a new life and a new world, not even the call of music or the appeal of university life, nor the thought of a life of congenial study and writing could deaden the sound of the call from the Dark Continent which kept growing louder and more insistent, "Come over and help us!"

Of his decision he tells in this fashion: "We are Dives, while out there in the colonies sits wretched Lazarus, the colored folk who suffer from illness and pain just as much as we do, much more, and have absolutely no means of fighting them. And just as Dives sinned against the poor man at his gate because for want of thought he never put himself in his place and let his heart and conscience tell him what he ought to do, so do we sin against the poor man at our gate. Moved by these thoughts, I resolved, when already thirty years old, to study medicine and to put my ideas to the test out there."

When his world heard of his decision, they stood aghast. "His intellectual ability, his marvelous talents—why, if he must serve his fellow men in this particular fashion, should he bury himself alive in this most neglected spot on the whole wide earth?" they cried. "Why this waste of talent that is appreciated wherever he is known and heard?"

(Continued on col. 137)

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## EDITORIAL

The convention of our synod is not far off—hardly two months. Is it going to be a meeting of old or elderly people, as most of our conventions have been of late years? I mean no disrespect to those people who have borne the burdens of our church for so many years. I am only wondering how long their energies will hold out—how long it will be before they are tired, and what will become of our synod when that time comes?

Several other questions seem not very remote: Are there no younger people in our synod? Or are they not willing to step into the active service of the church? Or are they not capable of shouldering the responsibility of shaping its policies? Or do we not trust them to direct the destinies of our church? Or are we afraid they will infuse new principles into the conduct of our church life? Or are we afraid of new thoughts and new energies in our old church body? Whatever the reason may be, it seems to me that it would be worth considering why it is that our conventions generally have so oldish an appearance. I am sure it is a symptom of a serious disease in our church body. Why must a person be 50 or more in order to be a delegate to our conventions?

Rev. E. Mortensen has shaped a bitter pill in the form of an article in the Chicago local bulletin, "Bud og Hilsen," in which he puts his finger on what I think is one of the sore spots of our church. We have become defeatists out of sheer solicitude for preserving our national and religious heritage, from fear that if we use what we have it may be lost. Our chinaware has been kept carefully guarded in a cupboard lest it be broken!

Suppose we begin soon to take the old articles out, dust them off so we can see how beautiful they really are, and put them to use. Unless we do that we will have to get some new dishes soon to use for everyday. We can not think of starving for lack of dishes.

C. A. Stub.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### FROM ST. STEFAN'S, CHICAGO

Tomorrow, March 15, we inaugurate English services every Sunday in our new parish hall.

And so we enter a new phase in the long history of our congregation. Three times we have been forced to move on account of the shiftlessness of the metropolitan population. Now we are venturing out again. We still have services in Danish in the old church, but only until we are able to dispose of the property. By that time we hope to be able to build a new church next to our parsonage.

The parsonage is an eight room bungalow with a large hall underneath which we now use for Sunday school, Y. P. meetings and English services. It will seat 150 people. It is very gratifying that so many people in the neighborhood have inquired about our work and have expressed a desire to partake in our activities.

National boundary lines seem to fade away; there is a tendency toward the community church, particularly in the large cities. I am not blind to the dangers involved in that movement; but certainly there are also grounds for complaint about the small group, the clique, which exists merely because of racial, national or theological characteristics.

We are not attempting to compete with other churches; we are not advertising or using high pressure salesmanship in order to attract people; we are simply opening up our doors and bidding those welcome who would worship with us.

E. M.

\* \* \* \*

Memorable in the annals of St. Stefan's Sunday School will be Sunday, March 1, 1936, for on that day we held our Sunday school for the first time in the new parish hall.

The day was bright and sunny, a welcome change from the preceding extremely cold ones; the room was well filled with children, a number of new pupils among them, all of which helped to make the day festive. Our pastor's opening prayer contained a petition that we might have thankfulness in our hearts for the privilege of worshiping in the beautiful new building, erected not without sacrifice, and I think most of us felt that even as the spring was in the air, with its promise of the summer time sure to follow, so were we on the threshold of a new era in the history of St. Stefan's Sunday School.

Many have been the boys and girls who have attended St. Stefan's Sunday School in the church on Eberhart Avenue, throughout the years, and while we in no wise wish to forget or discount the Sunday morning hours we have spent there, the programs we have presented, the Christmas tree festivities, etc., nevertheless, it is with renewed courage and unfaltering faith that we begin the work in the new parish hall, hoping that our Sunday school may be instrumental in building in our children a faith so concrete, a love for our church so enduring, that when they attain manhood and womanhood they will remain in the church, and in all sincerity concur in the words of the hymn with which we closed our last Sunday school service in the church on Eberhart Avenue: "My Church, My Church, My Dear Old Church; My Father's and My Own."

L. J.

(Continued on col. 144)



## BOOKS

### "Meditations on the Cross"

By Toyohiko Kagawa. Willet, Clark and Co. \$1.50.

Many will read this book because it is written by a man from the Orient who is not only traveling at present in America, but a man who knows humanity, its needs, and its weaknesses. It was not only Augustine who thought that the world order would be victorious under the sign of the cross; the same is being said in a fresh and unique manner by one of the world's most vigorous Christians in this new vision of Good Friday's tragedy. At best our various conceptions of what happened on Calvary Hill are visions; I came near saying that if our concepts are anything else but visions we had better not preach about the cross; theories of atonement cannot satisfy us all. Kagawa, however, is not free from Atonement theories, and had this book merely been a restatement of old theories we should have been disappointed; but there is much more than that in the book. The many scripture passages in some chapters may be burdensome to some, to others they will be much appreciated.

It is, after all, a book that will and should be read by the laity and ministers of our congregations during the Lenten and Easter season. It is not strange that one of our most real interpretations of the cross should come from an oriental Christian; it could hardly have come from the luxurious non-sacrificing minds of western Christianity. Whether this book could have come from Japan after a hundred years of organized Christianity is an interesting question.

Though there is much doctrine in this book, there are many sentences that reveal real experiences similar to those in the lives of Jesus and Paul. The following sentence could be written only by a man who has a many-sided experience of the cross: "It is because the fire of our love for Christ is not yet hot enough that we do not understand."

Some of the things that seem quite elementary to us must be excused when we know that the book was first written to the Japanese people; but there are so many new roads to Calvary that we shall forget the elementary parts. Some illustrations will be obnoxious to those who merely want old ways of thinking verified; for instance: "The blood circulation has the power to heal wounds. My child once got a bad bruise on his nose at a friend's house. I was anxious as to whether it would ever heal, but while I was worrying about it, the blood cured it and made the nose as it was before. I thought it marvelous. Crabs are like that. If one of the claws of a crab is torn off, the next year a new claw is sure to grow. If a pig's hind part is cut off, it will grow again fat and round. Love creates the same pattern anew. It redeems the place that was lost. To the measure of its depth, the love of God can perfectly heal the holes of the past and all its sins." Not even a gleam of light would be seen in an American crowd after such a realistic exposition of a mystical truth!

The 18 chapters of this book deal each one with a specific phase of the cross.

Take it now and read some of the chapters this Lenten season and Easter!

L. C. Bundgaard.

### ALBERT SCHWEITZER

(Continued from col. 134)

But the story of it has gone out over the earth even like the story of her who broke the box of precious ointment on the Saviour's feet, and has constrained numberless others to cast aside every hindrance and give their lives in full service to their Lord.

So the organist, famed throughout Europe, the lecturer in theology at Strassburg, the scientist and philosopher entered the halls of learning again. This time it was to qualify in medicine. After completing the course in his old university, he took an additional course in Tropical Medicine in Paris.

Schweitzer selected Lambarene on the Ogowe River in French Equatorial Africa for his particular field.

In the first place, he was told by missionaries in the service of the Paris Missionary Society of the great need of a doctor at that point. There was no doctor in all the country and the Society could find none to send since there was no money available to build and equip a hospital.

Lambarene was chosen, secondly, because, while it was not the center of a system of railroads or even highways, it was the center of a network of waterways formed by the Ogowe and its numerous tributaries. To this point the sick could come from the great surrounding country in their dug-out canoes.

There was even another deciding factor. The Paris Mission Society had placed at his disposal a corrugated iron hut and a bungalow in their station at Lambarene, and had granted a tract of land for the erection of a hospital.

The money for the hospital was secured by Schweitzer himself from the sale of his books and his organ recitals in Europe. Help came also in contributions from friends, particularly in England. It was on Good Friday of 1913 that, his preparations being completed, this stalwart six-foot man, with his wife, a graduate nurse, set sail for the west coast of Africa which was to be the scene of his future labors.

Medical work in that part of the world is bound to meet with serious handicaps. First, climatic conditions and numerous insects make the protection of all drugs imperative. The woefully small supply of tins and bottles was greatly lessened by the patients themselves who were likely to have a greater respect and admiration for the container than the contents. Then the precious ointments too frequently were eaten when they were intended for external application, or vice versa.

When the news of the arrival of this wonderful doctor spread through the forest, patients, speaking a dozen different tongues, literally streamed into the hospital. An intelligent native was secured as interpreter.

After a time a hospital, constructed of corrugated iron and roofed with thatch, was ready. Two other buildings, like large native huts, were added for waiting room and ward. In the construction the doctor not only advised and directed but was obliged to do actual manual labor.

The principal diseases he had to treat were sleeping-sickness, dysentery, leprosy, heart disease, and diseases of the skin. Indeed almost every disease known to the European doctor was met here. Cancer and appendicitis, however, were never seen.

Schweitzer believes in work as a curative agency in many cases. "Though I sometimes feel," he said, with a smile, "very much like Pharaoh in driving them to their work." Of the Gospel of Christ, he says that the lines of Paul Gerhardt's Advent hymn express what Christianity means to the primitive man who lives constantly in fear of spirits.

"I lay in cruel bondage,  
Thou cam'st and set'st me free."

Albert Schweitzer, student and artist, heard the call of Christ and suffering humanity in Africa, and, like those of old, left all and followed Him.

—"The Augsburg Teacher."

## PERTAINING TO LIFE AND GODLINESS

In his second Epistle the Apostle Peter says that God's divine power has granted unto us all that pertains to life and godliness; but some people say they cannot believe this.

It does not seem that there is a God. If there be a God, then He cannot be almighty. For if He were almighty, he could hinder floods, droughts, sand storms, epidemics, with all the misery and suffering these bring with them. And if God could hinder all this and does not, then He can be neither loving nor just. Granted that God has given man the right of self-determination, and for this reason He cannot or will not hinder the evil that man himself determines—as, for instance, war; but here is a flood, something over which man has no control whatsoever; why does God not hinder a flood with its suffering and misery?

This is an offense to me when I think of God. But it becomes still more offensive when I think of the death of Jesus Christ. You Christians say that it was foreordained in the councils of God that Christ should die, so that life and immortality might come to light. And we read about Judas Iscariot that he betrayed Jesus unto death and died a horrible death. He hanged himself, and he fell down and burst asunder in the midst and his bowels gushed forth. But if it was foretold that Jesus must die for mankind, then Judas had to betray Him; and if Judas had not betrayed him, it seems that someone else would have had to do it so that prophecy might be fulfilled and God's plans carried out.

Is it God that brings evil upon man, or is it God's enemy that does this? Does God cause floods and droughts, famines, epidemics, and sand storms? The waters have lately gone over the lowlands of many river valleys and caused untold damage. Some persons have lost their lives; many thousands are homeless, and when the waters recede, these will come back to their homes and find their household goods destroyed.

Indeed, but when man moved into these lowlands, did he not know that the waters of the river might go as far as the hills on either side? Man has built dikes along the river's edge. The very existence of these dikes is an admission that man knew that the river might go over the lowlands. Man understood "the lay of the land," understood the warnings of nature or nature's God.

The case, then, is not that God or nature, what you will, came upon man unawares. The case is that man said, I will take from the river the lowlands on either side, for it is too good and too precious to leave lying idle; look what money I can make on it, by using it for factory sites and building lots.

If you say that by so doing man has only obeyed the command of God to be fruitful and multiply and fill up the earth and subdue it, then let man beware that he builds his dikes high enough and strong enough, and not say, when the dikes are too low or give way, "There is no just or loving God."

How can the Father who has given man self-determination and has by the warnings of nature plainly said to man: There is danger in living in the river valley, how can he shield man from suffering and misery when man disregards these warnings?

He can; but a wise Father does not do this. For the Father in heaven speaks to

his creatures, speaks through nature and nature's warnings, through intuition in man's heart and mind, through man's word to fellowmen, through revelation, through his own Covenant-Word to man; and God's word, in whatever form, is salvation for man; and it is better that man should take the consequences of his disregard for God's Word than that man should get into the habit of disregarding God's Word and warning. For he is our life, and he is here, and it is well that we be always aware of his presence.

### II

Or the epidemics? Does God cause the epidemic to come upon man?

God has from of old had one people that belonged to Him more intimately than any other people, because they had chosen through their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, through Moses and the Prophets, to belong to him. The reason that this people, more than any other, belonged to him was that they, more than any other people, had men and women who opened their hearts and their ears to God, and for this reason could hear His voice. History is the proof of this.

And God has made man out of love for fellowship with man. He wanted a creature that He could love, and that could and would love Him out of its own free will. For this reason God is very anxious to speak to man. More anxious than a loving father on earth is to communicate with his children—and in these days of the flood such fathers have been sending telegrams, inquiring about their children—more anxious than these, is the Father in heaven to communicate with His creatures upon earth and tell us what will serve us in our lives here, as well as in the life that is to come.

God found in Moses an eye and an ear turned toward God. Therefore, God could speak to Moses and He did speak to him. He gave Moses the laws for that people which had answered and said, All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do (Ex. 19:8), the laws of fasting, so that their organs at stated times might have the needed rest, the laws of clean and right living, and to this day the children of Israel are less subject to disease and epidemics than other peoples. They have been kept within the hedge of the Law, and history now says that the Law was good and is good.

What if man and woman eat too much and drink to excess and by such eating and drinking weaken their constitutions so that they are unable to fight off the germs of disease and therefore fall prey to disease and epidemics; is it God that visits epidemics upon them? Or is it God that follows behind and gathers up the wreck and ruin which man has brought upon himself and salvages for man what can be salvaged? What if a man drink to excess and then catches pneumonia? Shall God say, I will perform a miracle and help this man among the living to show all men that they can disregard all laws of health and decency with impunity? Or shall God permit this man to pass into the kingdom of the dead where, perhaps, he may hear the preaching which God in His mercy extends even to those who were rebellious in the days of Noah (1 Peter 3:19)? Which is best for this man and for the rest of us?

Are we to say, when we see a mother taken away by death from six small children: There is no God, and if there be, He is not almighty, and if he is almighty,

he is neither loving nor just? Or are we to admit: It is we human beings who from generation to generation have disregarded the laws of hygiene and normal living; we have weakened our constitutions and the constitution of the race by riotous living, therefore we die before our day is done?

### III

And the droughts and sand storms, where do they occur? They occur when man, before he broke up the prairie, knew and said, This is "the dry belt," where man knew, before he moved in, that there were not enough trees to throw moisture into the air to form clouds from which the earth might be watered. But instead of saying, Therefore we must first plant trees—we must be content to conquer the dry belt little by little from the side where we already have trees, so that we may be sure of rain and crops—instead of saying this, man took a chance. He said, It does occasionally rain in the so-called dry belt. And now I can get the land for little or nothing. I will move in and plow up the land in the hope that I may raise a crop every other or every third year. I will spend my time in farming immense areas instead of wasting any time in planting trees. Then I may become rich, for in a good year I can raise thousands and thousands of bushels.

And he did move in, and he did break up the prairie and plow under the prairie grass which up til then had held fast the sand and the dust. And some years, now, chance favors him, and some years he has sand and dust storms. What kind of a creature, now, is this, who first flies in the face of laws that he knows are as old as the hills, and then turns round and says, There is no God, and if there be, he is not just, for He did not let me succeed against His known laws of nature?

In Old Testament times, before man had the knowledge of God, which Jesus has brought, man said: He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh: the Lord will have them in derision (Ps. 2). Even they understood better than some among us, that when man breaks the bonds of God asunder and casts away His chords, he does not thereby gain for himself the right to sit in judgment upon God. He only, to his hurt turns his face against. We now know that God does not laugh at the folly of man, by which he causes his own destruction; for we have seen that God comes after and binds up the wounds of men and of nations.

It is not true that God brings catastrophe upon man; the truth is that He causes His rain to fall upon the just and unjust; for He seeketh our health and life and strength, and not our destruction.

### IV

And now the question: Did Judas have to betray Jesus so that prophecy and the plans of God for the salvation of man might be fulfilled? Let us go back in the history of the people that brought forth Jesus—let us go back to Joseph.

It is evident that Joseph's life-work is in Egypt. That is where God wants Joseph, for Egypt, for some hundred years after the time of Jacob will be the scene of God's special operations upon earth. After Joseph has come of age, he must be brought down into Egypt, so that he may become trained for his life work.

Are we therefore to say that Joseph's brothers had to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites so that he might be brought to Egypt? Would it be necessary that Joseph's brothers or somebody else did this evil deed so that God's plan might be fulfilled



and Joseph be brought into Egypt?

Joseph's brothers did not intend Joseph to be brought to Egypt—did not even ask whether the Ishmalites would bring Joseph to Egypt or to any other place. They did not know about God's plan with Joseph, for they had not cared to know. If they had cared, they might have known, for God had given Joseph dreams that were a prophecy of his future, and Joseph, in his innocence, had told them his dreams. But they disregarded the dreams and were enraged by them, for they had neither ear nor heart for God's revelations. On the contrary, they would have killed Joseph and have wrested this willing tool of God out of his hands.

God did not permit them to do this. Through the love of Reuben for his father God stepped in and hindered Joseph's brothers from preventing him in getting Joseph into Egypt.

But how, then, could Joseph have been brought into Egypt, if not by this act of his brothers?

Oh, man, created of God! Will the God who made you be able to find means to send you on your course?

If God has made Joseph, and has made him for this one purpose that he should go before Israel into Egypt and become the means of keeping much people alive, will not God, then, be able to find some other means of getting Joseph into Egypt than the hardness of heart of his brothers? And because God in His might and wisdom is able to turn the evil thoughts of men to good results in His council, are we to say that God has and can find no other means?

It is not necessary that man do evil in order that good may come of it. Joseph saw through this problem when he said to his brothers as they stood there in Egypt and recognized him as their brother and temporal savior: Ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive (Gen. 50:20).

Judas was not as fortunate as Joseph's brothers. He did not recognize his brother and eternal Savior. He had been too near to God in God's Son, Jesus Christ. He had heard too plainly out of the mouth of Jesus, the Word of God, to disregard it with impunity. He betrayed Jesus, not that God's will might be done, but that he himself might acquire thirty pieces of silver. It was not necessary to God's plan that Judas should do this; but since Judas did do it, God used this determination of Judas in His own plan. And Judas went to his own place, but Jesus became our eternal Savior, doing what has been done on the cross, in the kingdom of the dead and out of it. In him God is our Father in a special way. We need not be swallowed up by floods or die by famine or epidemics. If we recognize the life work for which God made us and pray to Him that from day to day we may be found faithful therein, then shall we not die before our hour has come.

And then, when we do die, we die to live eternally.

V. S. Jensen.

## Our Church

**County Fair.** The Young People's Society of St. Stephan's Church, Chicago, Ill., is making arrangements to hold a "County Fair" April 17-18. The main purpose of this affair is to help the congregation financially.

**Rev. Enok Mortensen**, Chicago, Ill., reports in "Bud og Hilsen," which is published jointly by Trinity and St. Stephan Churches, that this paper has been published for ten years and is now available bound, thanks to the Ladies' Aid.

**Solvang, Calif.** Mr. and Mrs. Richard Poulsen, who for a long time have been in the service of Atterdag College, have resigned. Their work will be taken over by Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Ibsen, who for several years have had the management of the Old People's Home of our synod at Des Moines. Mrs. Poulsen intends to make a visit to Denmark this summer.

**The Organ Fund** of our Solvang, Calif., church has received a welcome gift even from far off China. Mr. U. V. Harkson, Shanghai, China, recently sent \$25 to this fund, which is now \$119.

**Give them a ring!** Rev. M. Krog reports that Atterdag College, Solvang, Calif., now has its own telephone. Up to now messages have had to be carried to the college by personal messenger or by mail.

**Church Concert.** The choir of St. Peter's Church, Detroit, Mich., Rev. Svend Jorgensen, pastor, has for some time been working on a cantata, which will be sung at a concert in the church to be held Sunday, April 19.

**A National Festival** is planned for May 8 to be held for the benefit of St. Peter's Church, Detroit, Mich. The festival will take place in the D. B. S. hall of that city.

**Ringsted, Iowa.** A group of young people from Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa, will be in Ringsted, Iowa, May 1, to present the play, "The Valiant," which was presented also at "Studentfest" this year. They will also show a 1,000-foot reel of pictures representing college activities. Other Iowa churches as well as the church at Omaha, Nebr., will also be visited by the group during the spring season.

**Dr. Eduard Geismar**, Copenhagen, Denmark, preached the Palm Sunday sermon at our Seattle, Wash., church on April 5. Dr. Geismar also spoke in the afternoon at this church.

**Good Friday.** Rev. A. E. Sorensen reports that his church was open for worship at 12 noon on Good Friday. Seven pastors of the Lutheran churches of that city spoke on the seven words of Christ on the cross. They are: Rev. C. R. Swanson, Rev. O. A. Bremer, Rev. P. Skartvedt, Rev. K. Simundsson, Rev. M. L. Nesvig, Rev. E. R. Pflueger, and Rev. C. A. Bengtson. This service is held in cooperation with the other Lutheran churches of Seattle.

**Rev. Ernest D. Nielsen**, Muskegon, Mich., business manager of "Lutheran Tidings," is making a tour of the Eastern District of our synod in the interest of "Lutheran Tidings." April 15 he will speak at Bridgeport, Conn., and on April 20 at Perth Amboy, N. J.

**Rev. Hakon Jorgensen**, Newell, Iowa, will visit the Eastern District of our synod during the latter part of April. Rev. Baden reports that he will preach in both Danish and English at the Bridgeport church on April 26.

**District I Convention** will be held at our church at Bronx, N. Y., Rev. F. O. Lund, pastor, May 1-3.

**Confirmation Party.** Rev. S. Baden, Bridgeport, Conn., announces in his local bulletin that the Ladies Aid of the church is inviting the confirmation class to a party on April 16. This is quite a common practice in our synod, a very commendable effort to keep the young people interested in the church. It would be still better to see that the young people became active contributing members of our congregations.

**"The Lord is Risen,"** an Easter cantata, will be sung by the choir of the Bridgeport, Conn., church on April 19. This kind of activity appeals to live young people of the church. More churches should make an effort in this direction.

**Mr. Viggo Nielsen**, Bridgeport, Conn., has donated a hand carved "number tablet," or record bulletin to the local Sunday school. Such willingness to contribute is to be commended.

**The California District** of our synod is holding its annual convention at the Emanuel Church, Los Angeles, Calif., Rev. C. C. Rasmussen, pastor, in the first part of May. Dr. Erling Ostergaard will take part in this meeting.

**A Birthday Party** was celebrated for "everybody's birthday" by our Los Angeles, Calif., church, April 16.

**Alden, Minn.** Niels Nielsen, who served as a pastor in our synod a few years ago for a short time, has now accepted a call extended to him by the congregation at Alden, Minn., where Rev. H. Wulff until recently served.

**Rev. P. Kjolhede**, Grant, Mich., who is the oldest Lutheran pastor in the United States, observed his 92nd birthday March 16.

**Rev. P. Rasmussen**, Wayne, Alta., Canada, will visit a number of our congregations soon after the synodical convention at Kimballton, Iowa. He will tell people about the work of our church in Canada and inform us of the work which needs to be done up there. No plan for his tour has been made public as yet. But if any churches wish to hear Rev. Rasmussen, they will do well to write him, or Mr. P. L. Lund, Hampton, Iowa.

**Kagawa at G. V. C.** During his stay at Des Moines, Iowa, where he spoke to thousands of people for two days, the justly famous little Japanese leader, Kagawa, found time to accept an invitation to lunch at Grand View College, which President Olsen had extended to him. He did not have time for a long talk, but he spoke shortly and informally to the students and guests about how much Denmark has meant to him and to the Japanese people. Over 100 schools have been established in Japan, modeled after the Danish folk high school.

**Askov, Minn.** The Young People's Society at Askov, Minn., are at present making an effort to get subscribers for "Lutheran Tidings." This is a joyful sign that our young people are taking an interest in the affairs of our church. Give the young people something which they can under-

stand and which appeals to their sense of responsibility and they will respond with energy. Who will follow this good example.

**Board Meeting.** According to report in "Dannevirke," the board of our synod held a meeting at Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa, Feb. 18-20. They met again on March 10. The last meeting was held especially for the purpose of discussing plans for Grand View College.

**Mr. Andrew Andersen's Bequest.** The estate of Mr. Andrew Andersen, Viborg, S. Dak., has now yielded over \$8,000, which has been divided among the different beneficiary institutions. The money was divided as follows: The Old People's Home, Des Moines, Iowa, \$2,162.00; Grand View College Endowment Fund, \$864.00; the Pension Fund, \$864.00; the four high schools, each \$432.00; the three orphanages, each \$432.00; the Santal Mission, \$432.00; Eben-Ezer Sanatorium, \$648.00.

**Mr. P. L. Lund, Hampton, Iowa,** has been appointed to manage two farms of 160 acres each which our synod received from the estate of Mr. Andrew Andersen, Viborg, S. D. They are being held for the present in the interest of the various beneficiaries and are evaluated at \$14,200 and have no encumbrances.

**The Seminary at Grand View College,** Des Moines, Iowa, which has been closed the past year for lack of students, will open again next school year. This is a joyful thing. And it is to be hoped our synod shall never reach so low a depth again.

**Normal Training Course.** Plans are under consideration for adding a normal training course to the curriculum at Grand View College. That would help bring the College nearer to the people. Anything the College can do to serve the churches will bear rich fruit for the college and for the churches.

**Invitations to the Convention** to be held at Kimballton, Iowa, June 3-7, are being sent out. "Lutheran Tidings" and its readers have not yet received their invitation, however.

**Prof. Alfred C. Nielsen,** who for the past two years has been Dean of the Fort Dodge Junior College, Fort Dodge, Iowa, has resigned his position there in order to accept a position at Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa.

## Proposal to the Convention

The following proposal to the convention to be held at Kimballton, Iowa, June 3-7, is hereby announced:

"We the undersigned make the following motion for consideration at the convention at Kimballton, Iowa:

"That the constitution of the synod be thoroughly revised before it is printed in the English language, and that this revision include a different arrangement for the engagement and change of pastors by the congregations. We propose the following changes:

"1. When a congregation seeks the services of a pastor, it shall announce the fact in the official publications of the synod.

## LUTHERAN TIDINGS

"2. Pastors who seek engagement or a change of position shall apply directly to those congregations who seek a pastor.

"3. When agreement has been reached between a congregation and a pastor, announcement of this shall be made to the president of the synod, and he shall announce the arrangement to "Kirkelig Samler" and to "Lutheran Tidings."

"L. C. Bundgaard,  
Brush, Colo.,  
Johannes Pedersen,  
Junction City, Ore."  
Hakon Jorgensen.

## CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from col. 136)

### DR. GEISMAR IN IOWA CITY

Arriving one day, March 23, and leaving the next, Dr. Geismar did not have a great deal of time in Iowa City for sightseeing and visiting. Within this short time, nevertheless, he met four different groups of people—one at a reception in the Memorial Union, another at a round-table conference in the Administration Building, a third in McBride's Auditorium, and a fourth at the home of Dr. Charles A. Hawley, of the School of Religion at the University of Iowa. It was mainly through the efforts of Dr. Hawley, who is learning Danish the better to appreciate Søren Kierkegaard, that Dr. Geismar came to Iowa City.

At the reception, Dr. Geismar complimented the faculty members of the University of Iowa upon having the opportunities for close relationships with the students because of the prevailing class room method in American universities, unlike in this respect to their sister institutions in Europe with their greater reliance on the formal lecture. At the round-table conference he pointed out that Germany did not fully appreciate Kierkegaard because of too little attention to his devotional addresses. These show that Kierkegaard throughout his career had been a religious thinker and they contain some of his best and deepest thought. Above all, Dr. Geismar stressed at this conference the fundamental Kierkegaardian thought, the qualitative leap by which the soul in its existential experience, always conscious of guilt, is constantly reassured of abundant grace by accepting Christ, the paradox. A number of questions from the audience gave Dr. Geismar opportunities to clarify this and other points. The lecture in the evening contained Kierkegaardian biographical data and a further elucidation of the points from the afternoon's conference. At the gathering in the evening at Dr. Hawley's home, he gave evidence of Kierkegaard's genius as a prose writer and in answer to questions brought more biographical data.

Dr. Geismar is an accomplished linguist. We were surprised to hear him speak English so fluently and with such mastery of vocabulary. He conversed with one of the German professors in German, and one of the professors in the audience referred to his lectures in Paris. From this we concluded that he also speaks French with dispatch. The readers must not infer from this that no Danish was spoken. Dr. Geismar also had the opportunity to meet students from some of the Danish settlements in Iowa as well as some of the Danish people and their pastor from West Branch, the Danish settlement nearest to Iowa City.

As indicated above, the ground had been somewhat prepared for the message that Dr. Geismar brought. We believe it will

take root, grow, and bring forth fruit in God's good time.

T. P. C.

### TROY, N. Y.

A familiar glimpse of the homeland, now a memory in the minds of so many Danish residents of this vicinity, was presented on the night of March 16 in the hall of the Danish Immanuel Lutheran Church by Miss Helen M. McKinstry, director of the department of hygiene and physical education at Russell Sage College, and by Miss Emily Andrews, a member of the faculty of that department.

The hall was filled to capacity by members and friends eager to visit vicariously the land many of them will never see again.

Miss McKinstry and Miss Andrews, who have visited Denmark for eight successive years with a group of physical education students from the college, showed motion pictures of Denmark and of the Niels Bukh School of Physical Education, where students from throughout the world gather for training.

The speakers were presented bouquets of red and white carnations tied with red and white ribbon. Mrs. Agnes G. M. Larsen introduced them, and was general chairman of the program. The audience sang the Danish and American national anthems at the opening of the program.

A patriotic note was struck by the table decorations of Danish and American flags and floral decorations of red and white carnations. Refreshments were served by the Misses Esther Jensen, Helen Skinnerup, Ruth Anderson, Marion Hansen and Anna Madsen. Miss Anna Moore presided at the piano.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Peter Jensen, members of the church, who the day before observed their 48th wedding anniversary, were presented three roses, symbolic of love, friendship and high esteem. The presentation was a surprise planned by P. C. Rasmussen, president of the church. Rev. Holger P. Jorgensen, pastor of the church, gave a brief address during the program.

"The TimesRecord," Troy, N. Y.

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