

For the Lutheran Visitor. Dedication.

It was my good fortune to be present on the 9th inst., at the dedication of an Evangelical Lutheran church, recently erected to the glory of God, in the unpretending hamlet of Forresterville, Shenandoah county, Va. This little village is located about five miles from Mt. Jackson, six from New Market, and two and a half from "Forrest Station," on the line of the R. & O. R. R.

In reaching the point of our destination from the station, we rode by a winding way through an almost continuous stretch of magnificent trees, their luxuriant foliage and thick drooping branches affording a genial protection from the scorching rays of the sun, and occasionally presenting a picturesque and most beautiful archway of living green. In the profound solitude of these deep, dark woods, we think the meaning of the pensive sentimentality might be fully gratified.

I was courteously welcomed by our felicitous and portly brother, (Rev. J. A. Snyder, who was on the qui vive for somebody in particular. Comfortably domiciled with one of his veterans, we were at once in a condition to answer all questions, great and small, and prepared gracefully to submit to the very pleasant process of being bored, just when I wanted to be let alone in order to gather up a few ideas for the night services.

The sombre mantle of night having gently settled down upon hill and dale, we were summoned to the house of God by the silvery tones of the "church going bell" as they rang out clear and full, in the calm, parting hours of a day whose morning had been disturbed by showers of drenching rain and fearful discharges of electricity.

I. I think it would prove mutually beneficial to our ministers and members did they know more of each other personally. It would be the means of correcting misconceptions in regard to our church, her doctrines and usages; would establish new ties of friendship, and thus enlarge the circle of brotherhood; a clearer idea would be obtained of the various and varied circumstances that condition the status of our congregations, and this would probably lead to a spirit of forbearance and moderation in pressing our peculiar views upon others.

Before proceeding further I will give the reader a brief description of the edifice and its appointments as they appeared to me. The location, all things considered, in our judgment, is fortunate, neither presumptuously prominent nor unwisely modest, and is central and easy of approach in three directions. It is a frame building, weather-boarded, rests upon a fine stone foundation, and is enclosed with a substantial fence.

The house is 50x30, with an end gallery, and has two entrance doors with corresponding aisles. The windows are long and narrow, and the sections of sash are elevated and lowered by weights. The pulpit is one of the most elaborate and perfect that I have seen in the Valley. The floor of the chancel is raised several inches, and is surrounded by a heavy railing and pilasters. The pulpit and balustrade of the chancel correspond in style, and also in color, which is walnut. The whole building is well finished internally and externally—is good in style, and gives evidence of the cultivated taste and skill of those who projected and executed it. It is a finely proportioned room, and those who may either preach or read sermons there will find no difficulty in being heard. The building is surmounted

by an unpretending cupola, in which is suspended a bell of soft and sonorous tone, that may be heard at a distance of several miles. A very pretty chandelier affords light to the body of the church, whilst the pulpit is made luminous by elegant stands of light supported on either side by handsomely wrought columns. On the day of dedication the house had already cost about \$2,000, all of which had been paid. It was, however, only partially painted on the inside; and as the congregation contemplated having this thoroughly done externally and internally, and also to procure stoves, carpeting, matting, and altar furniture, an appeal was made in behalf of these objects, and between two and three hundred dollars realized. The little congregation of faithful and liberal Lutherans at F. may justly congratulate itself upon the complete success that has attended its efforts. The church, with the blessing of God, stands as a monument to their praise; and as a most forcible illustration of what a feeble congregation, having a mind to work, can accomplish for the glory of God and the good of man.

On Saturday afternoon the pastor had preached, and held services preparatory to the administration of the Lord's Supper on the following Monday. On Saturday night the writer preached. Also Sunday, 10 A. M., night and Monday morning. On Sunday, as already intimated, the attendance was very large; and it was estimated that at least 1,000 persons were in the church and immediately around it, listening to the speaker as he unfolded the exalted nature and glorious mission of the "kingdom of heaven." I may here observe that during the entire series of services, the singing conducted by the choir was appropriate, and rendered in excellent style. On Sunday night the attendance was very large, and on Monday morning, contrary to expectation, the house was well filled. A thanksgiving sermon was preached according to previous appointment, after which the Lord's Supper was dispensed to quite a goodly number of Christ's witnesses, who thus confessed Him before the world in the fond expectation of sharing in his favor when he shall come in the glory of the Father to judge the quick and dead.

In connection with this narrative I will submit a few reflections at the hazard of repeating what I may have more than once stated in the columns of the Visitor. Old ideas, like old wine, if good, may be brought out frequently for the entertainment of friends. I. I think it would prove mutually beneficial to our ministers and members did they know more of each other personally. It would be the means of correcting misconceptions in regard to our church, her doctrines and usages; would establish new ties of friendship, and thus enlarge the circle of brotherhood; a clearer idea would be obtained of the various and varied circumstances that condition the status of our congregations, and this would probably lead to a spirit of forbearance and moderation in pressing our peculiar views upon others.

There is something to be learned in going about with eyes and ears open; and there is something that may be done, if wise as to time and mode. Our people are always pleased to see and entertain us with the very best of their house affords. They appreciate our ministrations. The bonds of christian sympathy and fellowship are drawn closer by intercourse, and as the hour of separation draws near we regret to part, and are sorry and somewhat surprised that so much of hidden worth should have so long been concealed from our knowledge. In conclusion upon this topic, my advice is, brethren, go where you are called upon, unless good reasons indeed exist for refusing to comply. II. I should feel derelict in duty to the congregation at F. were I to close my communication at this point. I wish to add a few considerations for the encouragement of those who, being poor, yet having a zeal for the glory of God's house, continue to worship with fear and trembling in "free churches" with all their attendant inconveniences and annoyances. Here we have the noble example of a congregation (none of whom are wealthy, and numbering about sixty, the male portion of which does not exceed one-third) erecting a church, and paying for it when completed at a cost of some \$2,500. They had a "free church" in which they could worship, but they got sick of it, sick unto death, and looking about for a remedy, nothing promised relief but a new Evangelical Lutheran church, and so they went to work with a will to put one up, and certainly they have succeeded most admirably.

The congregation at F. did not think that it quadrupled with the principles of honesty to practice parsimony, yclepted home economy, and send out its agents over the length

and breadth of the land, beseeching a generous public to commiserate their deplorable condition, and aid them in their terrible struggle to erect a church. This kind of sharp practice is no new thing under the sun; but is an artful and abominable device of unchristianized covetousness. No, our people at F. were not guilty of this mean strategy; but self reliant, they went to work in the fear of the Lord; and men in ordinary circumstances, who gave their fifties and hundreds of dollars, are not yet in the poor house nor likely to be.

We congratulate our esteemed brother and his excellent people on the completion and addition of "St. Mark's" to the number of church edifices within the bounds of the Virginia Synod that are pleasant to look upon and comfortable to worship in. I confess to a degree of mortification when compelled to worship the High and the Holy One, and the giver of "every good and perfect gift," in a dingy, dirty, and dilapidated building called a church. I accept it, at least, as an evidence of improved culture among us, that new, commodious and tasteful churches are being erected; and that the folly of attempting to hide parsimony under the garb of a pretended hatred to pride is being manifest to all sensible people. Why should not the "dwelling place" of the Great King be commensurate to the ability and social position of his subjects, and the advanced requirements of the age? Let others who prefer to worship God in uncomfortable and unsightly structures do so; we have no quarrel with them; but as Lutherans may we ever, like David, feel a spirit of self-condemnation so long as we "dwell in houses of cedar, whilst the ark of God remains within curtains."

What difference does it make? Head and find out. For several years past there has been a disposition on the part of many of our students, who are preparing for the ministry, to regard our Seminary at Gettysburg with disfavor, and look longingly towards the so-called "First class Seminary," by which are meant Union, Andover, Yale, Princeton, etc. A great deal is said about their large corps of professors, their learned and distinguished specialists, their superior advantages, etc., and the embryo theologians, after carefully weighing the matter in their minds, conclude that in order to be hatched under the most favorable conditions, and turned out fully fledged, they must place themselves under the light and heat of one of these great luminaries of the theological world. So firmly are they convinced of this, that some who have voluntarily obligated themselves to complete their course at Gettysburg consider themselves absolved from these promises, and go away in spite of them.

When reasoned with in reference to the unreasonableness of going to non-Lutheran Seminaries to prepare for the Lutheran ministry, these young wisdom-seekers laugh at the prejudices of older men, but in their opinion not wiser, and say that it makes no difference where you get your training since all preach from the same Bible, and the main facts of theology must be the same everywhere. When cautioned against the danger of being drawn away from the Lutheran Church and enticed into some other field, they gravely remind us that they have been trained from infancy in the Lutheran Church, and have learned and thoroughly digested her catechism, and loudly assert that no influence can ever shake their confidence in the Lutheran Church, or lessen their devotion to her interests. They desire to go to these great seminaries only that they may become great men, and be the better able to champion the Lutheran Church, on whose altar they will loyally place all the wealth of learning and power of oratory which they expect to acquire in the superior schools of the prophets.

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Thoughts were suggested" by seeing the following in a late number of the Advance, a Congregational paper published in Chicago: "Rev. S. E. Busser was installed pastor of the church at Saranac, Mich., June 18th. Rev. Geo. Michael was installed pastor of the church at Stanton, Mich., on the 8th of July. Messrs. Busser and Michael are graduates of Yale Seminary, both of German descent, and brought up in the Old School (7) Lutheran Church, Pennsylvania. Educated in a New England seminary, they naturally turn to Congregationalism, and begin their work among the Michigan churches."

It seems from this that the patrons of these seminaries do not think that it makes no difference where young men are prepared for the ministry. They recognize the fact that a young man naturally imbibes the views of his instructors, and will be inclined to teach what he has been taught. Indeed, he is likely to come to think that only these views are correct. If a man were to look through green glasses all the time, he would naturally come to think, by and by, that not only the fields and groves were green, but all things else. And so the theological student who has everything presented to him from the Presbyterian or Congregational standpoint will almost necessarily come to believe that to be the only true standpoint, or at least to accept things as seen from that standpoint. When this result has been reached, how can he comfortably, or conscientiously, enter the ministry of the Lutheran Church, where he would be expected to present the truth from the Lutheran standpoint?

Besides this, there is all the force of association with the ministers of another denomination, and especially the acquaintances and friendships with fellow-students, and the offer of positions, all of which unite with great power to draw the young men away from the church of their fathers to that under whose vine and fig-tree they have been sitting. Hence it is not strange that a large majority of the young men who go to other than Lutheran seminaries either leave the church entirely, or if they remain, are of but little value to her. A few there are who have remained to exert a wide influence, and wield great power for the advancement of Lutheranism and the promotion of the interests of our church. But the larger part of those who have been self-swarmed have lost the family likeness, and manifested but little interest in the family welfare, and contributed but little to the family progress and honor.

It is true that some of the professors in these seminaries have gained wider reputations, and may have attained greater eminence in special departments, than our professors at Gettysburg. These self-denying men are too hard worked to accomplish very much outside of their regular professional labors. But I question whether the greater eminence, or even greater attainments, if these are admitted, of the professors in other seminaries qualifies them any better for the work of the class-room. The object here is not so much learned disquisition, as to lay the foundation for future study and development. The seminary student, as a rule, is nothing more than a theological babe who must be fed on milk, and not on strong meat. And whatever may be true in reference to the strong meat, I venture the assertion that the theological milk of Gettysburg is as nourishing as that of any other seminary in the land. For proof of this, compare the results, and it will be found, I think, that where the talents and previous training have been equal, the students who have remained at Gettysburg have come forth better equipped for their work, and have been more successful in the ministry than those who have left Gettysburg to be made great elsewhere. Men are not made great in that way. The most skillful gardener in the world can not make a scrub-oak grow into a great tree, while a genuine oak will become great almost anywhere.

What Difference Does it Make?

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Marriages

Married, July 5th, 1874, in the Presbyterian church, Wallhalla, S. C., by Rev. J. G. Law, Prof. E. J. DENNIS, of Newberry College, to Miss JAMIE E. GEORGE.

Married, by Rev. A. R. Rude, D.D., at the residence of the bride's mother, Williamson county, Texas, August 9th, Miss CYNTHIA J., daughter of G. W. Brooks, Esq., deceased, and Mr. AMBROSE C. BRAVER, formerly of New Market, Shenandoah county, Va.

Church Notices. Synod of South Carolina. The Fifth Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of South Carolina will be held at Mt. Lebanon, Orangeburg county, S. C., beginning on Thursday morning, October 12th, 1874, at 10 o'clock.

Advertisements. BRINLY PLOWS. \$2500 A YEAR COMBINATION PROSPECTUS. \$25 A DAY GUARANTEED DRILL AND AUGER AND BORE.

Newberry College. THE Exercises of this Institution will be resumed on THURSDAY, the 31st of September next.

Marion Female College. ESTABLISHED by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of S. W. Virginia, at Marion, Smyth County, Va.

Roanoke College. Located in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley, near the base of Mt. Shenandoah, in the midst of the most beautiful scenery in the world.

Book of Worship. Published by authority of the Ev. Luth. Synod of North America.

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Rev. T. W. DOSE, Charleston, S. C.

Advertisement for Seltzer Springs of Germany. What is this Great Remedy and what are its effects? These are questions which the great American public has a right to ask, and it has also a right to expect candid and satisfactory reply.

Advertisement for Stieff Pianos. Grand, Square, and Upright PIANOS. HAVE received upwards of FIFTY First Premiums, and are among the best now made.

Advertisement for Spring Goods. NOTWITHSTANDING the panic, we are now opening the finest stock of READY-MADE CLOTHING.

Advertisement for Blymyer Manufacturing Co's Bells. THE next Session of the Seminary will open on Thursday, September 24, 1874.

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