

The Lutheran Visitor

GOD'S WORD, OUR RULE; CHRIST, OUR PATTERN; A PURE FAITH, OUR WATCHWORD.

VOL. XXXVI—No. 5

NEWBERRY, S. C., THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 1902.

WHOLE No. 1704

Editorial.

The fact has been recently brought out without that a new and startling error has crept into certain churches and is said to be gaining ground. The wise ones, who would correct the teaching of the Holy Book itself, now tell us that all reference to a blood sacrifice should be expunged from our devotional writings, and that such sacrifice is not consistent with the doctrine that God is love—overlooking the fact that justice is an attribute of God as well as love. They even go so far as to declare that the notion of a vicarious atonement is "a relic of a barbarous and superstitious age" and revolting to their intelligence and refined sense of feeling.

How any man can study the Old and New Testaments and hold views so diametrically opposed to God's plan of redemption we cannot divine. The vicarious idea runs through all life as the blood courses the channels of the human structure, and this is the dominant thought in the Holy Scriptures. The rites and ceremonies of the Jewish church—all of God's appointing—looked to the shedding of blood as the effectual sacrifice for sin, and Jesus himself told His disciples that He would be delivered unto the Gentiles and be put to death, and that all things that were written by the prophets concerning Him should be accomplished. In His institution of the Lord's Supper He distinctly said, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins"; and St. Paul under the power of the Holy Ghost responds, "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

Hence the denial of the vicarious principle in the atoning work of Christ is a strike at the foundation of our Christian faith and tends to undermine the whole fabric of divine truth. It is, in fact, a contradiction of our Lord's own words and an absolute denial of the faith,

or it is not said that our redemption was purchased by anything apart from "the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," and verily "with His stripes we are healed."

And this brings prominently into view one of the distinguishing glories of the Church of the Reformation and emphasizes her great mission in the world. As the needle to the pole so she ever points to God's pure word as the only rule of faith and practice, nor ever questions a single utterance of that Holy Book. That to her settles all controversies and explains all mysteries. God in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, is enough for her; she rests on the blood, grasps salvation through faith and on that eternal Rock she will stand forever.

As announced in our last issue Rev. E. L. Folk will go back to Mt. Jackson, Va., and begin his work there on the first of March. This is not only a deserved compliment to one who had served that charge most faithfully for quite awhile, but it is also suggestive of a wrong practice in many churches. When a vacancy occurs the tendency on the part of some congregations is to enter at once upon a search for successful and desirable men in other fields and to extend calls without seriously considering the possible effect upon the congregation whose pastor they seek to take from his people. It seems never to have occurred to them that such procedure is a violation of the golden rule itself, and, to say the least, savors of gross selfishness. Where there is no special desire for a change of pastors, and no necessity for such removal, there is no scriptural ground on which this practice can be justified. The ministry is not a thing of merchandise, not a question of talent to be handed over to the highest bidder,

nor is the plea of a wider sphere of usefulness sufficient of itself to justify pastoral changes. If God really calls a man to a given pulpit he should remain there in the faithful discharge of his duty until he has clear evidence that God would have him go elsewhere. Non is it necessary or even right for him to pack up and leave simply because some insignificant person has found fault with him or his style of ministry. Should he go because of such opposition his successor would very soon be confounded by a similar state of affairs, and there certainly would be no wisdom or gain in this eternal change of pastors. One thing is certain and that is that long continued pastoral relations can never be brought about except by a reversal of this hurtful practice. The man who aspires after settled pastoral relations must grow up with his people from his early ministry and thus become one with them. This ideal is seldom attained in any other way, and we do well to profit by this suggestion.

YOUNG MEN AND THE CHURCH.

In a study about young men and the churches undertaken under the direction of Mr. W. H. Hunt, chief statistician of the United States Census Bureau, some decidedly interesting facts were brought out. The term young men is used so as to include such as are between 16 and 35. The figures are said to be accurate and serve to correct some misconceptions on the subject.

Sixty-six per cent of the young men of the United States are unmarried. The average age at which a young man marries is twenty-five years. Fifty-five per cent of the young men live at home. Eighty-five per cent are employed by others twenty-two per cent belong to fraternal orders, of the young men belonging to fraternal orders, sixty-seven per cent are church members.

"In the country, one in two young men go to church regularly; one in three occasionally and one in fourteen not at all. In the city

one in four regularly; one in two occasionally, and one in seven not at all."

The percentage of young men brought up in Christian families who go to church is large; this shows the power of Christian home influences. In families where both father and mother belong to the church, seventy-eight per cent of young men are church members.

Among the reasons avowed why young men are not church members are the following: "No reason. Indifference, can be as good a Christian out of church as in. Don't see the need. No time because of work." These questions brought out the fact that there is no deep seated prejudice against any church, or unbelief with which to contend.

There is here a more open field for effective work than was supposed.

A GREAT CITY WITHOUT SLUMS.

"Stainless Berlin," to quote from a Chicago daily, "is the title given the kaiser's capital in the new report issued by the Salvation Army, dealing with the social condition of the German metropolis. Alone among the great cities of the world it declares that Berlin is immune from municipal cesspools. The Salvation Army asserts that despite its immense population there is practically no scope in Berlin for those sociological endeavors that tax the Salvationists' energies in places like London, Paris, New York and Chicago. One of the chiefs of General Booth's forces pays Berlin a high compliment when he says:

"You seek in vain in Berlin for a single tenement district wherein dwell the poorest people wholesale, as in certain localities occupied in the United States and Great Britain by well-employed workingmen. The German character, combined with inexorable police surveillance, stands out today as the nearest solution of the social problem the world has seen."

No life is greater than the things with which it busies itself.