

# Religious....

**I**N AN ARTICLE by Rev. Sylvanus Stahl, D. D., for the *Ram's Horn*, which is publishing a series of articles on "The Great Churches of Christendom," he says: "Numerically, the Lutheran church demands respect. Her enrollment of 7,000,000 members makes her not only the strongest, but her membership is equal to all the other branches of Protestantism combined. She has 23,615 pastors and 49,818 churches. The United States census also gives us the fourth place in this country with a growth unapproached by any other. Lutherans preach the gospel in all the principal nations of the world, and in this country they proclaim Christ in fourteen different languages and dialects. The doctrinal standard—the Augsburg confession—is not only the oldest Protestant confession, but from the thirty-nine articles of the church of England were compiled, which were again incorporated in a modified form in the standards of the oldest, simplest and most satisfactory of any of the doctrinal confessions, and it is a noble declaration that the Augsburg confessions will forever remain one of the masterpieces of the human mind, enlightened by the Spirit of God."

"In active, aggressive Christianity, the Lutheran church in many respects has been the leader in Christendom during the centuries since the Reformation. The inner mission work of Germany is all and has been the study of Christians of all denominations. Wilhelm's Ratho Haus, near Hamburg (1852), Wilmer's deaconess work begun in 1855, and introduced in this country in 1849 by the late W. A. Passavant, D. D., with now about 16,000 deaconesses engaged in different lands, were the first of their kind and have become the models of their respective classes."

"In mission work among the heathen the Lutheran church does not occupy an inferior place. As early as 1559, Gustav Vasa, of Sweden, inaugurated mission work among the Lapps. Lutheran missions, like Peter Heiling (1624), Ernest von Wolz (1664), Leibnitz (1646), Dannhauser, and others, stand first on the pages of early modern mission history as workers and advocates. All who are students of mission history are familiar with the names of Zeisengrund and Schwartz (1714), Ernst von Hagen (1720), in Greenland (1722). The zeal, self-denial and self-consecration of the single rural congregations in the village of Hermannsburg in establishing, manning and maintaining an extensive foreign mission work has been the admiration of the entire Christian world. Five years ago Lutherans in various lands reported twenty-seven general missionary societies, 357 stations, 144 ordained native pastors, and with annual receipts amounting to \$85,000. Frankfort, with the mission house at Halle, and other historic names, are too well known to need mention. Lutheran piety is practical, and a living faith is manifest in good work."

"Special attention is given to the Christian nurture of the young, and the colleges and universities in Lutheran countries are acknowledged to be unequalled. In hymnology and devotional books the Lutheran church in Europe is the possessor of very rich treasures."

The Honorable district Epworth League will hold a convention at Forest City next Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 4 and 5, at which the following programme will be rendered:

**MONDAY EVENING.**  
7:30—Devotions. Rev. Joseph H. Boyce, Pleasant Mount. Five Minute Response. Mrs. John M. Brown, Forest City. Five Minute Response.

8:00—Address. "The Supremacy of the Church, the Sabbath and the Bible." Rev. Francis Goodell, Brockville. Reading, Miss Marie E. Van Cleft, Dunsmuir. Appointments and Benediction.

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Elm Park church—Prayer and praise service at 9:30; preaching at 10:30 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. by the pastor, C. G. Griffin, D. D. At 12 m. short Bible study in Sunday school room. Sunday school at 2 and Epworth league at 6:30 p. m. Topic at 7:30 p. m., "The New Commandment of the Lord's Prayer will be the motto on the dollar." At the Mission, 1310 Pine street, Sunday school at 9 a. m.; Epworth league at 6:30 p. m.

Simpson Methodist Episcopal church—Rev. J. R. Stevens, D. D., pastor. Morning prayer, 9:30; preaching service, sermon by the pastor, at 10:30, text, Isaiah 55: 4, subject, "God Our Strength"; Sunday school at 11; Junior Epworth league at 11:45; Epworth league, Mrs. Kraus and Miss Raudenbush, leaders, at 6:30; preaching service, sermon by the pastor, at 7:30, text, James 1: 25-25, subject, "Fruitless Hearing, or Hearing for Profit." All seats free. A welcome to all.

Hampden Street Methodist Episcopal church—Rev. James Benninger, pastor. Praise service at 10:30, subject, "The Good of the Bible"; class meeting at 11:30; Sunday school at 2 p. m.; Junior Epworth league at 3 p. m.; Senior League at 6:30. Leader, W. A. Sardon, secretary, H. R. D. At 12 m. Epworth league, Mrs. Kraus and Miss Raudenbush, leaders, at 6:30; preaching service, "The Miraculous Cure at Lystra."

Ash Street Methodist Episcopal church—Rev. E. B. Austin, pastor. Morning prayer, 9:30; preaching service, sermon by the pastor, at 10:30, subject, "Meeting the Master"; class meeting at 11:30 a. m.; J. E. Masters, leader; Sunday school at 2 p. m.; J. W. Stone, superintendent; Junior League at 3 p. m.; Miss

supra the ability of human speech to describe, a congregation protected against all intruders (Rev. III: 20).

THE APPROACH.—(Verses 1 and 15)—The foolish virgins, left behind by their fair companions, did not at once abandon the purpose which they set out. Turning away in some direction, until all sleep, they were ready when they found a man-porter whom to purchase what they should have taken with them at the beginning. But ere long they were successful. Hastening along the way they arrived at the closed door assumed that the company had been completed. They may have heard the mirth, and were thereby made more eager to gain admission. They cried, "Lord, Lord, open to us." But the answer of the door was, "I know you not," unable to distinguish them from the unwarily crowd that might gather at the door. All who hastened the virgins that must overtake those professors of religion who live on a low spiritual plane, unprepared for the call of God. (Proverbs 1, 20-28). There are many an occasion when we are late to have any part in the glorious work of this world, because they attempted to make ready when they should have been ready.

THE WARNING.—(Verse 13)—The parable ended, Jesus gave a word of counsel to His disciples who heard Him, which would appropriately follow to all in their course who follow Him. It will be observed that He makes no allusion directly to that which formed the chief feature of the parable. He does not take up the figure of oil and exclaim that who is called to assume the attitude of expectation, and to provide in such manner that whether the coming be early or late there shall be no surprise and no regret. He says, "Be ye always ready, for ye know not the day of the Lord's coming." This calls attention to one of the chief features of life, and marks in plainest terms the course of wisdom.

POSTSCRIPT.—It will not do to limit this passage to the apostle's not yet to refer it solely to those who may be living in the time of the final judgment. It is applicable to the church of our time, which consists of two classes—those who live for the present forms and pretensions, and those who also gather up that which will serve them in any emergency. They all have their seasons of ease and rest—the one part with flesh indifference, the other part with who content and assurance. The sacred oil may never fill the heart, and there is an abundant supply for those unusual occasions which must arise in every life. To be a virgin is the distinction of every Christian, who is called to purity and sanctification. But the negative virtues are not sufficient. Take care not to despise external Christianity, of which the lamp is to be lit at take care also not to be satisfied with it, not to rest upon it. How many sleep for the minister and fruitlessly desire spiritual good when it is too late.

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