

The Pulpit:

For the American Lutheran.
A Sermon on Dancing.PREACHED BY REV. J. R. SIKES IN THE
ENG. RV. LUTH. CHURCH OF ASHLAND, PA.
JAN. 6TH 1867.
(Published by request.)

TEXT—"A Time to Dance." Eccl. 3: 4.

This passage of Scripture is often quoted by the advocates of modern balls as sanctioning their practice. But such persons either do not understand the general teachings of Scripture, and therefore should be careful how they quote it; for the Apostle speaks of the "undecent and unstable worshiping Scripture unto their own destruction." 2 Peter, 3: 16, or if they do understand it, they ought to be honest, and confess that it does not sanction the modern practice of dancing. It is no small offence thus to play with and pervert Scripture, for "Cursed is he that handleth the word of God deceitfully."

Dancing is referred to a number of times in Scripture. In most of these instances it is a religious dance that is spoken of. Thus Miriam and the Jewish women danced after crossing the Red Sea. Thus David danced before the ark of God as he removed it from the house of Obed. Writers who have studied this subject tell us that these dances scarcely bear any resemblance to the measured artificial step of modern times, but that it was a leaping for religious joy; that it was performed in the open air, and that the two sexes never danced together. A modern ball gotten up on this style might be a novelty, but it would not likely be very highly relished by most of the ball-goers of the present day.

There are, however, some instances in which dances of a different character are mentioned in Scripture. Let us examine a few of them and note the result.

1. The Israelites danced around the golden calf that they had made while Moses was in the Mount receiving the law, and what was the result? Listen, ye that dance not to the glory of God! 3,000 of them were slain on the ground.

2. The Moabites enticed the children of Israel to idolatry by the dancing of their maidens, and 14,000 were slain at the ball.

3. The daughter of Herodias danced before Herod, and pleased him, but her mother taking advantage of the occasion, caused Herod to commit one of the darkest crimes recorded in history—the beheading of John the Baptist.

Such are a few of many irreligious dances and their results.

The Ancient Pagans were very fond of dancing. Indeed the modern style of dancing is derived from them. And yet, Cicero, Rome's greatest orator, said, "no man will join the dance unless he is either drunk or crazy." Quintilian said, "Our children should by no means be formed after the art of the dancing master." And Scipio, the conqueror of Hannibal and the destroyer of the power of Carthage, said, "It was much, to be regretted, that in his day, the children of respectable parents were becoming fond of the dance, when their ancestors looked upon it as degrading." Now, these men were Pagans without a title of the light and knowledge that we have, respecting man's accountability to God, and yet their sense taught them that it was a disgrace and sin to dance as modern dancers do.

The fact is, abandoned women were generally the dancers, and our young ladies, fair and virtuous as many of them are, are nevertheless in the ball room forming after these models, and perpetuating a practice properly pertaining to those with whom they would blush to be associated in any respect.

But suppose for the sake of argument, we grant for a moment that Solomon had reference to Balls of the modern stamp. I do not see that any thing would be gained to the advocates of the practice. He simply says, "There is a time to dance," that is a time when dancing is done, but he does not say that it is right to dance. He also says, in the same connection that there is a "time to hate," "a time to lose," "a time to cast away," "yea that every thing under heaven there is a time." That is, there is a time in which these things are done. He no more says that it is right to dance, than he says it is right to steal, to murder, &c., and he sanctions the one just as much as the other, for, "to everything under heaven there is a time." The truth is it proves nothing either for or against dancing but simply states there is a time in which it is done. And now why is it that the advocates of dancing quote this passage so often, when it really can afford them no shelter nor strength. Is it because it is the only show they have? the only passage they can torture into any thing like a sanction of their sinful practice? To those who quote this passage so often, and so extolingly, I have a proposition to submit, or rather a challenge to throw out, and I sincerely hope it may be accepted. It is this. For every passage of Scripture that you will present, that sanctions the practice of dancing as performed in modern Balls, I will furnish two passages that sanction the taking of human life—or murder if you please. Now let us try this, and see how your system of interpreting, or rather of perverting Scripture will work.

I now take the ground that modern Balls, as they are conducted, are morally wrong. It is not the simple fact of dancing,—persons may dance without committing sin thereby, but it is the manner of dancing, the kind of music danced after,—the spirit in which you dance, and the object you have in view.

Before I enter further into this discussion, permit me to give you Bishop Soale's opinion of dancing. Several years ago this venerable man of God was stopping at the house of a wealthy gentleman, who was the father of two amiable and accomplished daughters. There was to be a ball in the house that night. The young ladies were not a little perplexed to know how they should act. They wished to join in the dance, and yet they did not wish to lower themselves in the esteem of the Bishop. At length they concluded to ascertain,

if possible, just what the Bishop thought of dancing. Accordingly they approached him with becoming respect, and introduced the subject, in the hope that they might draw something from him, that they could construe into a sanction of the practice. If they could succeed in this, then they could enter into it much more heartily. After some conversation on the subject, they asked the Bishop plainly, what he thought of dancing. "Well," said the Bishop, "my dear children, so far as I have seen it practiced, I must say that I have no objection to it. I never witnessed but one scene of the kind, and with that I was pleased. I thought it became the dancers admirably, for it was a number of monkeys that were dancing."

The Bishop's opinion then, is simply this. Dancing will do very well for monkeys, but does not become refined and accomplished young ladies. But to the point. I argue that the modern practice of dancing, as carried on in the ball rooms of the present day is wrong.

1. From the associations. What are they? who visits the Ball Room? You seem astonished at the question, and answer, why sir, the wealthy, the intelligent, and the refined.

—The "Bon ton" of society visit there. Very well, I concede the fact that many that are wealthy, many that are intelligent, and many that are in a mere worldly sense refined do visit the ball room, and seek and seem to find enjoyment there. But, they are none the better in a moral point of view, because they are rich, refined and intelligent. These things procure them no license in the sight of God, to do that which he has forbidden others to do, and I must beg leave to say, that whatever may be their social standing they are not morally good. I have never known a devoted pious man or woman to seek enjoyment in the ball room. The truth is piety cannot flourish there. They are wicked men and wicked women that seek their pleasure there. Their thoughts, so far as we can judge from their words and actions themselves are ungodly. They are not moral, and therefore are immoral, and to be shunned by all who fear the wrath to come. Yet, I must say that I respect these open ball goers more than the hypocritical professor of religion who will wrap himself up in the garb of a profession of Christ and then secretly countenance, or openly connive at such sins. But,

2. I argue that it is wrong from the results of the ball room.

(A) The physical results. Injury of health. I know that many argue that it is good for their health. I shall content myself at present with showing that the contrary is true. The mode of dressing for balls, the unnatural excitement, and the excessive exercise all tend to irritate and develop disease. Cold is contracted, fever, rheumatism or consumption follows, and death often ensues as the result.

I have a case in point. Some years ago a young lady of amiable disposition, and the daughter of wealthy parents received an invitation to a ball. It was her first invitation. It came from a highly respectable young man whom she highly esteemed, and very much desired to please. Her classmate said to her, "You are not going, are you?" "Why not?" was the rejoinder. "It is a dancing party," was the reply. "So much the better, I have long wanted to attend a ball, and now I mean to go just this once, and see what it is." She did go. But she was not satisfied with this once. Charmed with its fascinations she went again and again. Scarcely a ball came off in the town without Ellen being present. After some months had passed thus, her friend and classmate one day surprised her in tears. Finding she was discovered, she said, "I have been reviewing my life for the past few months." "And are you resolving to do better?" asked her classmate. "Not just yet, I have an engagement for Christmas eve, I must fill that, and that shall be my last." She did fill that, and it was her last. She took cold, went home and took her bed, grew worse from day to day, and after an illness of several weeks she died. In her last hours as her classmate stood beside her bed, she looked up and exclaimed, "I am lost, forever lost!" When they spoke to her of Christ and his willingness to save she would only repeat, "I am lost, forever lost!" "That Ball, that first Ball, has been my ruin!" and thus she died.

Now, reviewing the direct moral results in this case, we argue, that it is a sin thus wantonly to destroy the health of our bodies, which God has given us. And as the Ball room does in many instances—for we have given only one of a thousand that might be given—lead to such results, therefore it is wrong.

(B) The moral results.

I must in advance, beg your pardon for any seeming indecency in discussing this subject, for it is of too great importance to be passed over lightly.

I shall confine myself to one particular result,—the demoralizing effects of the Ball room on females. Of all the inventions devised by the arch enemy of souls for robbing virtuous females of that which to them is more valuable than life itself—I mean their virtue, the Ball room is the best adapted to, and most successful in the accomplishment of this fiendish design. The associations, the unnatural excitement, the frequent passing of the wine glass, and the dance itself all combine to pave the way for the disrobing of woman of her chief ornament, and that without which life itself is not desirable. And many are the unhappy creatures, that lament and weep bitter tears of regret, over the sad results of the Ball room. Take the city of Paris as an illustration. Paris is not only the great metropolis of fashion, but it is also noted for its frequent and costly balls, and where under the heavens will you find more wretched females, wretched in body and ruined in soul, than you find in Paris. This at least shows that brothels and Ball rooms are akin to each other. And were it not for shocking your modesty I might relate facts that would astonish and startle every virtuous female visitor of these sinks of sin. A short time since I had a conversation with an intelligent gentleman on this subject. He frankly confessed that he was an advocate of balls, and had taken great pleasure in the dance, and after advancing the usual arguments in favor of dancing, said he, "after all, it must be conceded, that ball rooms are among the worst places in

the world for virtuous females." This is enough, I will add no more on this point. The moral results prove, to the regret of thousands, that modern balls are not favorable to virtue or piety.

3. Your conscience condemns it. Let me prove this. (a) You would not respect any minister of the gospel as such, if he frequented the Ball-room. Why? You answer, his position as a minister of the gospel forbids him to indulge in such things. I reply, that the minister is under no moral law, that you are not. If it is innocent amusement, he may indulge in it as well as you, and it is no more wrong for him than for you. And the very fact that you consider it not a fit place for a minister of Christ, proves that in your conscience you feel that it is inconsistent with the gospel, and therefore wrong.

(b) Your conscience again condemns it, because you have never known any moral good to result from it. Have you ever known any person to become more pious, more devoted to God in the Ball room? Have you ever known the influences of the Ball-room to bring any one to Christ? I have heard one single instance in which souls were converted at a dance, and that was an extraordinary circumstance. The celebrated Peter Cartwright was once travelling through the west. He put up at a tavern in a small town where the people were given to dancing and other sins. A Ball came off that night in the Hotel at which he was stopping. He was invited to attend. His eccentricity of character led him to accept the invitation, for he was always ready for any emergency. He accordingly took his seat in the Ball-room. After frequently declining invitations to dance, he at length yielded to the solicitations of a young lady, on condition that he should have his own way in the matter. To this she readily consented, and was willing to yield almost anything, only so she might have the pleasure of dancing with the eccentric stranger. Taking her hand, he led her out on the floor. All eyes were turned to the stranger and the belle. The musicians tuned up, ready to compliment the stranger with their best efforts. When all was ready, Peter, looking over his audience said, "My friends, I have long made it a rule of my life, to do nothing without first asking the blessing of God upon it, let us all pray." Some of the company ran off, some screamed out with fear and Peter, holding fast the hands of the belle, who screamed as though she was in the claws of a tiger, prayed with all the fervor of his soul. The result was, the ball was changed into a religious meeting, several souls were converted and a church was organized. But it was Peter's prayer, not the dancing that led to this result.

And now, let me ask, if the Ball-room is so innocent, and dancing so consistent with religion as some of its advocates contend, why did the young lady held by the hand scream as though she was in a tiger's grasp, when God's servant only wanted to ask his blessing on the party? Why?

(c) Another evidence that your conscience condemns it is found in the fact that you are not willing to die in the Ball-room. I have asked a number of persons this question, "would you be willing to die in the Ball-room, and go to judgment from it?" and I have not yet found the person that was willing to go from this place of "innocent" amusement to the bar of God. There seems to be something in this not exactly consistent with their constant protestations of its harmlessness. Let me relate a fact that illustrates this: In the year 1829, a young dancing master in the state of M—, formed the acquaintance of a very pious minister of the gospel, whom he always treated with the highest respect. Some months after this, the young man took sick, but no danger was apprehended for some ten days, when all at once he began to sink very rapidly. He sent for this minister, and requested him to pray for him. After he had prayed with him and for him, and began to speak to him of Jesus, the young man turned himself in his bed, and pointing to his violin, which was near by, said to the minister, "burn my violin; it has been the cause of my ruin!" and died, exclaiming, "Is there no mercy for me?"

(d) Again, another evidence that your conscience does not approve of it, may be drawn from the fact, that when you are sick and likely to die, you never send for the dancing master to comfort you, but for the minister of the gospel, at whom you sometimes become very angry because he preaches against the Ball-room, and warns you of your danger. Now, pray, why is this? Now you get angry at the minister because he does not sanction dancing, and praise the dancing Master, then, when you think you are likely to die, you discard the dancing master, and send for the minister. Why not send then for the dancing master, if dancing is so harmless, and the minister contributes so much to your happiness.

If in this you find your chief enjoyment, and really believe there is no harm in it, why do you change so suddenly when death appears? Are you not inconsistent? Does not your conscience condemn you?

(e) One thought more and we are done with this head. To parents who send or permit their children to attend the ball. Suppose the Saviour were yet on earth, and were to call on you for a night's lodging, while your children were in the Ball-room. Suppose he were to say to you, "Brother," "Sister," or "Friend," as the case might be, "I thought you had two or three fine sons or amiable daughters, but I do not see them. Where are they?" would you like to come out and tell the truth, or would you blush and smother your words, and murmur, they have gone to the B—-l? Now, if you think it a place not fit for a minister of the gospel—if your conscience testifies that you have known no good to result from it—if you are not willing to die in the Ball-room, and go to judgment from it, if you are not willing to have the leader of the dance to comfort you in your dying hour, and if you would not, as parents, be willing to tell the Saviour, were he in body your guest, that your children were gone to the Ball, I think you ought to reflect seriously before you go yourselves, or permit your children to go again. And, after all the sophistical arguments the world can produce in favor of dancing, these moral tests are the

only true ones at last. If the practice will not bear these tests, it is not safe to indulge in, for by moral tests it must stand or fall at last.

I now propose a brief examination of some of the reasons assigned for attending Balls:

1. For the sake of Amusement. I do not doubt that it is a source of amusement to those who enjoy it. But it will be no great pleasure when you have gone to perdition through its influence, to remember that you were amused by it on earth.

2. It is good for the health, say some. We have shown the contrary to be true. But suppose it were, can you not find some other exercise, less pernicious, that will have just as good an effect on your physical system? And if you cannot find any other exercise that will have the same effect on your health which you claim for this, still it is a question you should seriously consider, whether any amount of physical benefit you can be supposed to receive from it, will compensate you, for the loss of your virtue and your soul.

3. Parents say, "I would not let my children go, but for the sake of getting them into good society." What! there is no good society outside of the ballroom! Hear O Heavens! and be astonished O Earth! Has it come to this? Is our world so bad that the best society is to be sought in the ante-room to Hell! What do you call good society? The rich, the learned, the refined? I answer, No! emphatically, No! not if they exert an immoral influence. These things are good in their place, but only the more to be dreaded when they are perverted to the use of Satan. Yet, really some persons seem to think if they can only get their children in such society that is the goal of life, without ever pausing to ask, how will it affect their morals?

It is bad enough for men and women of the world thus to send their children on the way to ruin. But it is infinitely worse when professors of the religion of Christ act thus. A circumstance, strikingly illustrating the folly of this course, occurred in the State of Kentucky, some years ago. A young lady whose parents were devoted to the world, made a profession of religion and joined the church. She had been accustomed to attend balls and dances, but of course ceased to do so after her conversion. Her father was much grieved at this, and made repeated efforts to induce her to resume her former position. But she would say, "No, father, I do not wish to go, I have no pleasure in such things now." A large and fashionable ball to come off in the neighborhood. Her father feeling very anxious that she should go into good society as he termed it renewed his entreaties. At first she refused, at length he said to her, "my daughter, I am very anxious that you should go just this once, it will not hurt you, and now if you will go, I will buy you the finest silk dress in the market and have it made up in the latest style." She reluctantly consented. The dress was bought and made. The ball came off and the daughter was there; and while there lost the love of God in her heart, the former fascinations of the dance renewed their hold upon her. She continued to go to balls for a few months, when she sickened and died. Calling her father to her bedside, a short time before she departed, and pointing to the fine silk dress as it hung on the wall of the room, she said, "There, father, there is the price of my soul; you hired me with that to go to the ball; I went; I lost the love of God from my heart, and now I am dying, and must be lost. Remember, when I am dead, that dress was the price of my soul." And thus she died.

Parents, beware, there is danger, great danger in such a course as this. Do not let the fascinations of what the world is pleased to term genteel society, lead you to the betrayal of your children's eternal interests. Parents that do these things, either persuade or permit their children to go to the ballroom and dance, are greatly to blame, more so than the children. Remember you must answer at the bar of God for all these things. If you would not have your children point to you and reproach you in that day, with the ruin of their bodies and souls, be careful how you advise them to join in those things which result in their ruin. I do not say, that it is absolutely certain that every one who goes to the ball will be ruined in soul and body, but I do say if they are not, it is not the fault of the ballroom, for it is certainly well adapted to work such results.

"There is a time to dance." When you convert your modern balls into religious rejoicings, have none but pious people at them, or have for their object the glory of God, and the good of souls. When you do this and dance after sacred music, I shall be happy to join you and bid you God speed. Until then, let me warn you be careful how you pervert scripture, in order to make it sanction a practice, which your own heart, and God who is greater than your heart, condemns.

IS THE MATTER SETTLED?—Is the matter settled between you and God? I asked solemnly of one whose declining health warned us to expect his early removal from this world. "O yes, sir" was the calm reply. "How did you get it settled?" "The Lord Jesus Christ settled it for me." "And when did he do it for you?" I inquired. "When he died on the cross for my sins." "How long is it since you knew this blessed and consoling fact?" The answer was readily given, "About twelve months ago." Being anxious, however, to ascertain the grounds of this confidence, I asked, "How did you know that the work which Christ accomplished on the cross was done for you?" She at once replied, "I read in the Bible, and believe what I read." And now dear reader, have you read the Bible, and believed what you have read? It is written, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Does this bring comfort to your soul? Do you believe this faithful saying?

He who is sore pressed with temptation need not flatter himself that by and by the temptation will cease, and he is to be delivered from sin; for temptation will not cease; and help must come, not from change in outward circumstances, but from strength given to the inner man, lifting the soul above all temptation. Thus may help come, if it comes at all.

EUROPE FILLING UP THE SOUTH.—A letter from London mentions the gratifying fact that a very large and constantly increasing exodus of farmers is going on, from England and Scotland, to the Southern States of this country. Within a short time more than six thousand emigrants, many of them well-to-do Scottish farmers, have embarked at Liverpool for Texas alone, that being the favorite State with emigrants of the better class, who have an idea that Texas is less liable to disturbance than other States of the South. But we learn, also, many Germans have purchased land in South Carolina, where they intend settling.

When Christ commissioned his disciples, he commanded them to preach the gospel, assuring them that whosoever believeth and is baptized, shall be saved. It was evidently his design that the gospel should be the medium of communicating that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation. By means of the gospel we are made acquainted with the character and will of God, with our own depraved and fallen state, and with the solemn truth that in this condition we cannot be saved. It also communicates to us the comforting truth, that though by nature we are the children of wrath, yet by God's gracious interference in our behalf, we may now be made righteous. In short, it points out our danger, and at the same time the way to escape it.

Practical.

For the American Lutheran.
DID IT EVER SAVE A SOUL.

The solemnity and interest of the Week of Prayer were sustained from day to day. The attendance was large, and each day appeared to be better than the last. Several brethren remarked that they had seldom, if ever, witnessed more satisfactory evidences of the Divine presence in a worshiping assembly. "They prayed," said one, "as though they believed in God, and that He was, in fact, the Hearer and Answerer of prayer."

While the specific objects of the Week of Prayer were duly noticed, the general objects of the meeting were not neglected. The requests from abroad were more than commonly numerous, and presented cases of churches in distress,—of Christians in darkness, of sinners unconverted, for whom prayers were desired; and the presence of those who were under conviction of the Spirit contributed to elevate the tone of supplication, and to encourage the faith of all that the Spirit of grace was abroad among the churches.

Although the meetings were mostly devoted to prayer, the remarks of several who spoke of their own religious experience was interesting and instructive.

One said, he had been religiously educated, and in his childhood and youth had, under parental influence, observed the forms of religion. When he arrived at manhood he was thrown among influences which were devoid of all religious sympathy, and, by degrees, he had thrown off all restraint and had wandered very far from God. While in this condition he was once wonderfully preserved from death. His mind was impressed with the thought of what his state would have been had he not been rescued from death, which, at the time appeared to him inevitable. Said he:—"I knelt down to offer a prayer of thanks to God for deliverance. I felt, in a moment that I had no right to approach God either with thanks or supplication. I had sinned against Him. The indescribable agony of a soul convicted of sin was mine for many days; but at length God had mercy upon me, and, though He humbled me in the dust before Him, He has caused me to rejoice in the hopes of His salvation."

The letters received continue to evince the gracious work of the Spirit in many parts of the country, and many churches and pastors appear to be united in prayer and to request prayers in their behalf for greater blessings from the Lord.

A number of young men acknowledged, with thankfulness, the pardoning mercy of God. One said, about five weeks ago he came in here, without any particular motive; was deeply impressed; came the next day, and the next. The Missionary spoke to him, gave him some tracts, prayed with him, and instructed him; and he believed in the love of Christ, and His power and willingness to save even such a sinner as he was. He requested prayer for the Holy Spirit, that he might be kept faithful to the end.

Very sad is the condition of the women in the East. She is there a servant of servants. She has no position in society, and is, in all things, entirely at the mercy of her husband. The birth of a daughter is regarded by a Hindoo family as a great calamity. When she is only twelve or thirteen years of age, she is sent away by her parents to become the wife of a man whom she, perhaps, has never seen, and in the selection of a husband her wishes are not regarded. Once a wife, her bondage is completed; for the Shastars, or sacred writings, thus define her duties:

"When in the presence of her husband, a woman must keep her eyes upon her master, and be ready to receive his commands. When he speaks she must keep quiet, and listen to nothing besides. When he calls she must leave everything else, and attend upon him alone. A woman has no other god on earth than her husband. The most excellent of all good works that she can perform is to gratify him with the strictest obedience. This should be her only devotion. Though he be infirm, aged, dissipated, a drunkard, or a debauchee, she must still regard him as her god. She must serve him with all her might, obeying him in all things, spying no defects in his character, and giving no cause for discontent. If he laughs, she must also laugh; if he weeps, she must also weep; if he sings, she must be in an ecstasy. She must never eat until her husband is satisfied. If he abstains she must also fast; and she must abstain from whatever food her husband dislikes."

ACCEPTANCE OF ONE'S LOT.—Persevere in earnestly striving to conquer in yourself the annoyance little daily vexations cause you; turn all your attention to this point for the present; feel that at this moment God only requires this of you; do not sow the seeds of good desires in the gardens of others, but cultivate your own. Do not desire to be what you are not, but rather desire to be what you are; turn your thoughts to perfecting yourself thus, and to bearing the crosses, be they great or small, which you may therein encounter.

To be always intending to live a new life, but never to find time to set about it, is as if a man should put off eating and drinking from one day to another, till he is starved or destroyed.

The world is crazy for show. There is no one person in a thousand who dares fall back on his real, simple self for power to get through the world, and exact enjoyment as he goes along. There is too much living in the eyes of other people. There is no end to the appearing, the mimicry, the false airs and the superficial arts. It requires rare courage, we admit to live to one's enlightened convictions in these days. Unless you consent to join in general cheat, you are jostled out of reach, there is no room for you among the great mob of pretenders. If a man dares to live within his means, and is regulate not to appear more than he really is, let him be applauded. There is something fresh in such an example.

THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN.

REV. P. ANSTADT & C. LEPLLEY, EDITORS.
Sellingrove, Pa., January 31, 1867.

We send this number of our paper to a number of friends who are not yet subscribers, but who we hope, will become such when they see the American Lutheran. Those who positively do not wish to have the paper, will please notify us immediately. Those who do not thus notify us, will be regarded as subscribers.

A Sermon on Dancing.

The readers will find in this number of the American Lutheran, an interesting and instructive sermon on dancing, by Rev. J. R. Sikes, of Ashland, Pa. We expect to receive frequent communications from the pen of bro. S. His articles will be welcomed by all who know him.

THE STORY OF MARTIN LUTHER.—We hope that all our young readers, and the older ones too, will read the story of Martin Luther, on the first page of this paper. It will appear in consecutive numbers of the American Lutheran, and thus our readers will get a whole biography of the great Reformer, which alone is worth the subscription price of the paper. Every member of the Lutheran church should make himself acquainted with the life and character of Martin Luther.

COMMUNICATIONS.—The length of some of the original communications in this number has crowded out some of our editorial matter. An interesting article from Dr. Ziegler also came too late for insertion this week. We would like to give a gentle hint to some of our friends who promised to write for the American Lutheran, and have not yet fulfilled those promises. Brethren, let us hear from you.

REVIVALS.

From all parts of the church, we hear of most precious revivals of religion. We will give a few instances that have come to our notice.

In the charge of Rev. W. Diven there has been an extensive revival of religion in progress during the whole winter. A large proportion of the converts were heads of families. We were informed that in his congregation at Liverpool the work of grace is now progressing most gloriously and wonderfully.

The congregation of Rev. J. Evans at Lewisburg, Pa., is now enjoying a most precious season of grace. There have been between twenty-five and thirty conversions, and the work is still going on.

At Millen, Pa., a series of most interesting meetings has been in progress for four weeks from which much good has resulted with the prospect of still greater blessing to the church. At Sellingrove a meeting is now in progress conducted by the professors of the Missionary Institute and the Female College. The meeting has been continued for two weeks with increasing interest from day to day.

From Springfield, Ohio, Dr. Sprecher writes as follows:

"We are enjoying a great revival of religion. It began in the College, and thus far our meetings have all been held in the building. It is one of the most precious seasons of grace we have ever had. I have never seen a revival in which there was such a melting down of Christians into love and zeal—such a spontaneous movement for the conversion of sinners. It looks as if God were about to give us all the souls in this institution. Some of the young converts are young men of brilliant talents. The Christian young men labor with a fervor, a joy, and a perseverance, that is truly, like the spirit of the apostolic days of the Church."

Thus we could multiply examples from the east and the west, from the north and the south, how through the churches of the Gen. Synod God is most graciously pouring out his Spirit upon the congregations. Sinners are converted by thousands, and saints are built up in their most holy faith. This is the Lord's doing, and it is most wonderful in our eyes. As we write these lines the following reflections crowd upon our mind:

1. Is it not singular that just at this time, when symbolism and church secession is rampant in the land, and the most desperate efforts are being made to destroy the General Synod, God is most graciously pouring out his Spirit upon our churches and building them up! Let us take courage, brethren, we have nothing to fear from symbolism so long as God grants us revivals of pure and undiluted religion in our churches.

2. The cry has for some time been sounded in our ears: Platformism is dead, Radicalism is put down, the anxious bench is thrown away, Conservatism is now the order of the day. How do these revivals of religion contradict these assertions! The principles laid down in the "Definite Synodical Platform" we believe, are now more extensively held in the Gen. Synod than at the time this document was first published, and what some are pleased to style radicalism, prevails more extensively now than ever before. These extensive revivals are all radical. Not indeed in the sense that unnecessary noise and confusion is tolerated or encouraged, but that sin is aimed to be rooted out, and Christians labor that sinners may be radically converted to God.

And the anxious bench, that so much despised and abused anxious bench, has been resorted to in all these revivals, so far as we know. That is, those who are anxiously concerned for the salvation of their souls have been invited to come forward publicly and occupy a front seat in the church in order that they might designate themselves as those who desired the prayers and instructions of the church.

As for a milk and water conservatism in religion, which is neither cold nor hot, we do most heartily despise it.

He who sets up a carriage at the suggestion of his vanity, generally sets it down at the suggestion of his creditors.

Children's Department.

BY MISS JENNIE BURNS, THIRTEEN YEARS OLD.

Tiny little snow-flakes
In the air so high,
Are you little angels
Floating in the sky?
Robed so white and spotless,
Chaste and pure as love,
Are you little preachers
From the world above?

Whirling in the pavement,
Dancing in the street,
Melting in the faces
Of every one you meet;
Leaving all the house-tops,
Painting all the trees,
Cunning little snow-flakes,
Little busy bees.

Gentle little snow-flakes,
Playing here and there,
Working too at midnight
On the cellar stair,
Watching Nellie as she sleeps,
And weaving her a shroud;
Kinder than the rich man,
Better than the proud.

Softly, little snow-flakes,
On her tender years,
Let your weeping crystals
Melt and fall in tears;
For little homeless Nellie
Has to her mother gone,
And father's left to curse and swear,
And drink and die alone!

Kitty Whitefoot.

It was the morning after Thanksgiving. Four little girls from New York were playing in their grandfather's wide hall in the country, and having a real nice time. Their dear, kind grandfather loved to have all his children and grandchildren at home at the Thanksgiving time.

The extension table in the dining-room had to be drawn out to its full length, and every place was occupied. Some of the little ones could not get to it, so they had a cunning little table all to themselves just by the side of the big one.

Well, it had been a very happy time—everybody said so. But Thanksgiving was over now and they were soon to go home. The children were having a splendid frolic in the hall just before leaving, when in walked among them a dear little pussy cat. It was a beautiful gray one, with black marks on the back, and one white foot. It was just like grandpapa's great gray cat that every body called the doctor, because it was so grave and so wise, only it was not nearly so big.

It was both frolicsome and friendly, and soon won the hearts of all the children. They asked grandpa if they might take it home with them, as they had no cat at their house, and he gave his consent. So they got a nice little basket, in to which pussy was put and the lid fastened down, to prevent her getting out by the way.

They carried the basket with the greatest care, peeping into it now and then to see that pussy was all safe.

When they got home she seemed very happy. She could play with a spool, run after a string, and do a great many interesting things. She was very fond of the children, and the children were very fond of her.

Well, while things were going on so pleasantly and all were so happy, one morning while the family were at breakfast, and to say the cat went into a fit. She ran round and round, and backward and forward, dashing herself against every thing about her, till she was almost dead.

By and by, when the fit went off, she was very weak, and looked sick and tired. It was a long time before she was herself again. Very soon after she got well she had another fit, and so she kept on till she had five. Now you can imagine how sad the little girls felt when they saw how much the dear little pussy suffered. But they felt still worse when one morning the cat disappeared, and they never saw her any more.

Whether she had run off in one of her fits and had died in it, or had been killed by some one or not, they will most likely never know.

Now, what do you suppose gave the cat these fits and caused all her sufferings? I'll tell you! For I am sure you will never guess.

After the cat disappeared the little girl's mamma found out that a cruel man had taken the cat to his room and given her whiskey! She always had fits after that, though she never had one before. Most likely she is now dead, and if so, it was the whiskey that killed her.

Now, while whiskey and all the stuff that makes people drunk is so bad for cats, it is much worse for men and women and children. It makes a great many poor; it sends a great many to prison and to the lunatic asylum; it makes a great many sick, often giving them fits more awful than even Kitty Whitefoot's were, and kills many thousands every year.

Whenever any one wants you to drink any kind of liquor, whether it be whiskey, beer, wine, or cider, my little reader tell them NO! and relate to them the story of Kitty Whitefoot.

—Youth's Banner.

Keep at It.

"HOLLO, Fred! what are you doing?"
"Chopping wood," replied Fred. "I want to get this log out of the way."

"Why, do you think you will ever get that great log out of there?"
"Yes—if I keep at it."

Thus Fred Goodwin replied to the question put by his schoolmate, Harry Caronot.

Fred Goodwin was a bright, cheerful, active boy, who loved his mother and little brother and sister; and as district school was closed for two or three days, owing to the teacher having gone home to spend Christmas, Fred's mother had asked him that morning, as his father had gone to the village, if he would not take the hatchet, and go down and try to remove the log that lay in the way from the house down to the pond, so that his brother and sister might easily get down there. With a happy heart Fred put on the smock-frock, and hatchet in hand, sallied forth.

Harry, who loved play and idleness, was on his way down to the pond to spend the day in sliding. His mother had asked him that day to do some chores about the house; but no, this was holiday, and he was not going to work.

I have not time, dear children, to tell you all the particulars of the history of Fred and Harry. Fred grew up—as almost every boy will who loves his mother and brothers, and is obedient and cheerful—to be a useful and prosperous man, and a sober man, because he signed the pledge, as his father had done, so that he might never learn to drink and become a drunkard.

Poor Harry's history was a sad one. Not willing to work, after school-hours he would go into the village and hang round the tavern, where he soon learned to drink, and finally became a wretched, miserable drunkard.

Now, dear children, just as you behave when boys, so will you be likely to act when you be-

come men and women. Love your mother and brothers and sisters, and always be ready to do what mother tells you.

Never taste a drop of intoxicating drinks; and whatever you do that is right, remember to keep at it. You may be discouraged at times. People may say, "Why, do you expect by signing the pledge, getting others to sign, and attending the temperance meetings, that you will close up the rum stores, and make every body sober?" Tell them, "Yes—if we keep at it!"

"Keep at it!" then, dear readers of THE BANNER; keep at it, and let every boy and girl use the hatchet of temperance, and very soon that great, ugly log of intemperance will be chopped up and removed out of the way, and there be a free way on the ocean of temperance, happiness, and heaven, for every little brother and sister, and for every father and mother. Keep at it, keep at it!

Anecdote of a Little Boy.

The siege of Nagdeburg is distinguished in history for its inhuman barbarity. At that time there dwelt in the city a lawyer named Friese, who had a Lutheran tutor for his children, for which he was much blamed by his bigoted fellow-citizens. This tutor loved the Word of God himself, and sought to impress its holy words on the tender memories of the young children committed to his care, by rewarding them every Sabbath, for the careful recitation of a verse of the Bible learnt in the course of the week. When Nagdeburg was taken by storm by the Imperialists, and its inhabitants put to the sword, or taken prisoners, Lawyer Friese disguised himself and his family in humble garments, hid about his person a few articles of value, left his house, and all the doors in it, open, and then secreted himself and his children in the loft of an out house. Here, however an imperialist soldier discovered them, and rushed towards the father with a huge hammer to kill him. His wife and children ran out, and begged for mercy. The youngest boy, little more than able to speak plainly, in the anguish of his heart, seeing his father in danger, cried out to the soldier:

"Oh! to let our father live, and I will give you my farming, which I earned last Sunday."

These simple words of the little boy touched the heart of the soldier, who was a Nuremberger; and his hand was stayed.

"These are fine boys," said he to the trembling father. "Make haste, and escape with them; for the Croats will be here in less than an hour, and then there will be no mercy."

He then conducted the family out of town; and when any one would have fallen upon them, he stopped them saying, "These are my prisoners! let no man lay hands on them." Taking them out with him to his own tent, he gave them food for several days, till he found an opportunity for them to escape to Volmerstedt. Thence they fled in a suttler's wagon, to Halberstadt; and after experiencing many dangers by the way, safely reached the city of Leipzig.

Thus, as often both before and since, the words were proved true: "When our distress is greatest, God's help is nearest."

HOUSEHOLD, FARM & GARDEN.

THE YEAR'S TWELVE CHILDREN.

January, worn and gray,
Like an old pilgrim by the way,
Watches the snow, and shivering sighs,
As the wild crows 'round him flit;
Or, huddled underneath a thorn,
Sits playing for the lingering morn.

February, bluff and bold,
O'er furrows striding, scours the cold;
And with his horses two abreast,
Makes the keen plow do his best.

Rough March comes blustering down the road,
In his wrath-hand the oxen's goad;
Or, with a rough and angry haste,
Scatters the seed o'er the dark waste.

April, a child, half tears, half smiles,
Trips full of little playful wiles;
And, laughing 'neath her rainbow hood,
Seeks the little violets in the wood.

May, the bright maiden, singing glee,
To where the snowy hawthorn blows,
Watching the lambs leap in the dell,
Listening to the simple willow's tale.

June, with the mower's scythe face,
Moves to the clover field space,
And fast his crescent scythe sweeps on,
O'er spots from whence the fawn has flown.

July—the farmer, happy fellow,
Laughs to see the corn grow yellow;
The heavy grain he tosses up,
From his right hand as from a cup.

August—the reaper, cleaves her way
Through golden waves at break of day;
Or, on his wagon piled with corn,
At sunset, home is proudly borne.

September, with his braying bound,
Leaps pale and fence at every bound;
And casts into the wind the scorn
All cares and dangers from his horn.

October comes, a woodland old,
Fenced with tough leather from the cold;
Round swings his sturdy axe, and lo!
A fir branch falls at every blow.

November covers before the flame,
Bleared crone, forgetting her own name!
Watching the blue smoke curling rise,
And broods upon old memories.

December, fat and rosy, strides,
His old heart warm, well clothed his sides,
With kindly word, for young and old,
The cheerier for the bracing cold.

Laughing a welcome, open flings
His doors, and as does it, sings.

SELECTING POULTRY.—A young turkey has a smooth leg, and a soft bill, and if fresh, the eyes will be bright and the feet moist. Old turkeys have stiff scaly feet.

Young fowls have a tender skin, and the breast bone yields readily to the pressure of the finger. The best have yellow legs. The feet and legs of old fowls look as if they had seen hard service in the world.

Young ducks feel tender under the wings and the web of the feet is transparent. The best are thick and hard on the breast.

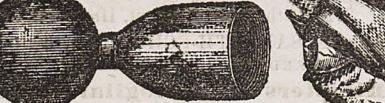
Young geese have yellow bills, and the feet are yellow and supple. The skin may be easily broken by the head of a pin, the breast is plump and the fat white. An old goose is unfit for the human stomach.

Fowls are most easily pickled if scalded, but this renders the skin liable to be torn, and consequently they will not look so nice.

A provincial newspaper noticing the death of a young lady, remarked that "she had an amiable temper, and was uncommonly fond of ice cream."

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