

# The Assistant Pastor

December, 1935

## The Scriptural Doctrine of Conversion\*

### I

God's Word tells us that man by nature is spiritually BLIND. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2, 14. The Bible tells us also that man is spiritually DEAD. "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sin." Eph. 2, 1. Scripture tells us further that natural man is an ENEMY of God. "... the carnal mind is enmity against God." Rom. 8, 7.

The change from this blindness, death, and enmity to seeing, living, and to loving God is called CONVERSION. That no one is able to convert himself, every Lutheran child has learned to confess in the words of the Catechism: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him."

Conversion, the change from blindness, death, and enmity to God is entirely the work of the Holy Ghost, as we also have learned to confess: "But the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts." This is plainly taught in Holy Writ, 1 Cor. 12, 3: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Eph. 2, 8 says: "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Acts 16, 14 tells us of Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul."

If all Norwegians had been and had remained true to these very plain and simple Scripture statements, there would have been no Election Controversy — Naadevalgsstrid — in the eighties which resulted in two Lutheran churches at Saude and at Jerico.

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\* This is the first of a series of articles. Read them thoughtfully and more than once, always remembering that the Word of God, not reason, is your "lamp and light," Ps. 119, 105, and the only sure and perfect rule of faith and life.



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## The Assistant Pastor

Published and edited by the pastor of the Jerico and Saude Lutheran churches, affiliated with the Norwegian Synod of the Synodical Conference.

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## Church Directory

**H. M. Tjernagel, Pastor**

### SAUDE CONGREGATION

Trustees: Chris Treider, John Borlaug, E. Firkingstad.  
Treasurer: Oscar Natvig.  
Secretary: Ole N. Anderson.  
Cemetery Committee: Martin Borlaug, Chris Treider, Mrs. Andrina Munson, Mrs. C. O. Natvig, Miss J. Ellingson.  
Ladies' Aid: Mrs. Nels Ellingson, president; Mrs. N. Hereid, secretary; Mrs. John Natvig, treasurer.

### JERICO CONGREGATION

Trustees: Geo. N. Anderson, Ole J. Johnson, J. A. Knutson.  
Secretary: A. N. Anderson.  
Treasurer: J. A. Robinson.  
Ladies' Aid: Mrs. C. O. Vigdal, president; Mrs. Tollef Knutson, secretary; Mrs. Carl G. Johnson, treasurer.

## Standing Services

### JERICO

First Sunday, Norwegian, October-April, 10:30 a. m.  
Third Sunday, English, October-April, 10:30 a. m.  
Saturday School every Saturday, 10 a. m.  
Confirmation class, Fridays, 2 p. m.

### SAUDE

Second Sunday, bilingual service, Oct.-April, 10:45 a. m.  
Fourth Sunday, English, October-April, 10:45 a. m.  
Saturday School, 2 p. m.  
Confirmation class, Fridays, 9:30 a. m.  
Fifth Sunday by special announcement.

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Christmas services at Saude on Christmas Day. The second day of Christmas, at Jerico.

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The Thanksgiving Day services were very poorly attended.

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A baby girl was born to Mr. and Mrs. Theo. Vaala November 4. It lived long enough to be baptized and then died. It was named Theressa Lavonne. We sympathize with the parents in their keen disappointment.

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The Jerico Aid was entertained by Mrs. Ole J. Anderson November 13 and by Mrs. John N. Anderson on the 20th.

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The Saude Aid filled Mrs. Carl Miller's home to overflowing on Thursday, November 14th.

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Mrs. Arthur Swenson and Mrs. Albert Håugen served lunch to the Jerico Y. P. Society November 3rd. Mrs. Theo. Knutson and Mrs. Alvie Iverson showed a like kind service to the society December 1st. Even when we are big it's pretty nice to have our mothers around. Let's not forget to be good and kind to them.

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Besides enjoying an unusually good program, the December meeting transacted a lot of business. It even made a little start towards the handling of the Y. P. Convention of the Albert Lea Circuit, which has accepted our society's invitation to come to Jerico next summer. If you are wise you will not miss the New Year's eve meeting of the society.

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On Wednesday evening, November 20, at 7 o'clock, Tom Roberson, under the watchful care of his nephew, Kenneth Roberson, marched to the altar

of the Jerico church. A few moments later came Edith Munson, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Munson, escorted by her sister Ada. The twain were pronounced husband and wife by their pastor. Many of their relatives and friends witnessed the ceremony and sang their prayer to God for His blessing upon them as they approached and as they left the altar.

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Sure enough, it's contagious. The evening of Thanksgiving Day the Jerico church, beautifully decorated, was again the scene of a wedding. It was filled with friends and relatives to witness the marriage of Thomas Attleson and Marjorie Firkenstad. After the ceremony about one hundred relatives of the bridal couple enjoyed a bountiful wedding supper in the church parlors. May God, indeed, as we sing in our wedding song, "make a rainbow 'round them for every falling tear."

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The Orval Landsverk family, the Olaf Knutson family, and the Otto Tjernagel family have been added to the membership of the Jerico church. The first two by transfer from our Albert Lea congregation, and the last named by transfer from the Lime Creek congregation of Rev. Ingebritson's charge. We welcome them all heartily.

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The annual business meetings of the congregations were held on the days specified in the constitutions. Saude the third Wednesday and Jerico the third Friday in November. Only the routine business was transacted. The financial reports will, by request of the meetings, be published in the January issue of the Assistant Pastor, if possible.

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At Saude Chris Treider was elected to membership on the board of trustees. Oscar Natvig and Ole N. Anderson were reelected to their respective offices. The cemetery committee was also reelected. At Jerico Geo. N. Anderson became the new member on the board of trustees. There, too, the treasurer, J. A. Robinson, and the secretary, Alfred N. Anderson, were reelected. Both congregations requested their boards of trustees to hold an annual joint meeting of the boards of trustees on the afternoon of the second Sunday in May in order to more regularly look after the joint property of the congregations. The attendance at the meetings was poor.

### Christmas.

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We have lived to reach another Christmas month. The diligent study of catalogs has already begun. Whispered consultations are held here and there throughout the house among the children, and, maybe, father and mother are not above such strategy either. To be sure, secret maneuvers are necessary, for every member of the family is planning a Christmas gift for every other member and no one must even suspect that there are such plans, much less what the particular gift is to be. When cents and not dollars are available for the purpose, it is easily understood how catalogs are worn down to rags if dime stores are not accessible.

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And the butchering must be done, the house must be spik and span, because big brother or sister is coming home, uncles and aunts are coming for a visit. Cakes and cookies of many sizes and varieties must be made. The very best things mother can possibly make must be on hand for Christmas.

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And how delightful and blessed is not all this if



the "red thread" through it all and in the joyful consciousness of all is the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ, my Savior! But what is it all if the Redeemer of the world is not the warp of all our preparations and Christmas festivities? We might as well have kept up the winter solstice celebration of our heathen ancestors. Parents, do you tell your children the Christmas story? As the doctor sometimes warns his patient and says: "This may hurt a little" so we now warn that what we are about to say may hurt: Judged by what we discover in Saturday school, some parents neglect to tell their children the most true, the most beautiful, and the most blessed story in all heaven and earth.

#### Weddings, Not Divorces, Are Popular.

Thank God, divorces are unknown in our communities, but silver weddings and golden weddings are not unusual. On November 10 the twenty-fifth anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ellingson's marriage was celebrated at their home by a large gathering of jolly relatives and friends.

Henry Ellingson was born in a sod hut in Nebraska, and from that day to this he has faithfully pegged away attending to his own business. Mrs. Ellingson was born in a pioneer home at Saude, a certain number of years ago. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ole Vaala, named her Anne. When she grew up she attended the Breckenridge School at Decorah until she was able to pass the examinations necessary in order to get a teacher's certificate. Then she taught school for a number of years. Twenty-five years ago Henry persuaded her to quit that. Since that he and she have built a most pretty and cozy home, and they own it. God has not blessed them with children, but they have loved and cared for the children of others and are loved in return by them.

Though the silver-bride has a half dozen or more sisters in the immediate community, her eldest sister, Caroline, had to come one hundred and fifty miles to cook the coffee for the silver wedding. And we are glad she came for the coffee was good, and it had to be good to harmonize with the perfectly lovely dinner. Withal, though the weather was not pleasant, it was one of those delightful occasions that linger long in the memory.

"What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." May the Word keep the demon divorce out of our communities for another 80 years.

Mrs. Susan Ellefson was 93 years, 5 months, and 24 days old when she closed her sightless eyes in death November 24 at the home of her daughter Hannah, Mrs. Phillips, in Oelwein. She was interred in the Saude cemetery on the 26th.

Mrs. Ellefson was one of four sisters that came together from Aardal, Sogn, to Saude, Iowa, in the year 1867. One of the sisters was married; her husband was Ole Natvig. Another sister was Anna who, during her first years in the new world, was a working girl in the Koren parsonage on Washington Prairie. Later she became Mrs. Jens Natvig. The third sister was Miss Carrie Hoffland.

The first three years of her life in this country, the deceased spent as a working girl. For some time she was employed in the Rev. Nils Brandt

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parsonage in Decorah. In 1870 she married Swennum Ellefson. They settled on a farm south of Saude a few miles. She became the mother of nine children. Her path was not strewn with roses. Her first baby was taken from her in his infancy. In 1889 her husband was killed before her eyes in a run-away accident; in 1893 a nineteen-year-old son died; in 1921 two grown-up sons died within three months of each other, one of them was accidentally electrocuted. In 1932 her daughter Trena, Mrs. Anderson, with whom she then made her home, died. About a year before the aged cross-bearer died, she lost her eyesight.

One might think so much grief was enough to break the back and the spirit of a giant, not to speak of a frail little woman. But no, temporal trials and griefs cannot break one who lives in communion with Jesus Christ through a living faith. Did anyone ever see a frown against fate on "Aunt Susan's" brow? Did anyone ever hear a complaint from her lips? Instead of going about dejected and complaining, discouraging others, she was a benediction and a joy to all who came in contact with her. Her memory is blessed, indeed!

#### Questions Answered.

The president of a Lutheran synod wrote your pastor some time ago as follows: "The Commission on Lutheran Cooperative Endeavor has requested me to obtain information from the different Lutheran synods in regard to the present status of cooperation. I would therefore ask you kindly to answer the following questions:

1. "Have any actual official and unofficial steps been taken by your synod to bring together the various synods and groups? If so, would you please state what has been done?"
2. "If no such steps have been taken, because of special objections against it, would you please state the objections?"

Your pastor answered the above questions as follows:

1. "We regard our one God given duty as Christians, jointly and severally, to be: To apply all the ability, faithfulness, and zeal God in His grace gives us to proclaim His message of salvation through Jesus Christ, in word and deed to all we can reach, at all times, in the home, the school, and church. We try to do this from our pulpits, through our church organs, our convention reports, our Christian day-schools, and through individual daily contacts with our fellow men.

"As individual pastors and informed laymen, as a church body in convention assembled—not by synodical committees—, and through our official organs, we stand ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us.

2. "We have no desire whatsoever for a union that is not a natural and free by-product of unity in faith and practice, but would, on the contrary, in obedience to the Word of God, oppose such union.

"American Lutheran Church History teaches us that zeal for union, such as seems quite popular today, is, at best, seldom coupled with zeal for unity of faith. We rest this statement on an intelligent and unbiased study of recent successful union movements."

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