

# THE LUTHERAN VISITOR.

"ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM."—EPHESIANS IV: 6.

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## Original Communications.

Greater Church Love—How to Awaken It.  
NUMBER THREE.

### HOW TO TEACH THE DOCTRINES.

We have seen that the first great means is the purity of the doctrines. On account of its importance, we will be excused for stepping aside to consider the best method of teaching these doctrines and showing their superiority.

1st. We must preach them plainly. They are the most important subjects. There are many others not introduced into our confessions that are very important, and not only may be appropriately discussed, but should receive due attention from the pulpit. But our fathers incorporated into our symbols the most important only, and those things essential to salvation having the most prominent place in them, we should dwell chiefly upon them. The minister may preach only scriptural themes, yet starve spiritually his flock because he constantly avoids the weightier matters of the Law and Gospel, the fundamental truths of religion. As members of the Lutheran Church we can not consistently believe otherwise than if we make one a true and ardent Lutheran we make him the best Christian. With this conviction, as men faithful to our charge, we must preach more and oftener these foundations of a Lutheran's hope than anything, yea, than all else. We should let no opportunity pass of holding them up to their view. We must take special pains to establish, by the word of God, every truth, show the perfect consistency of the system with itself, and its harmony with reason, and present in that simplicity and power that are peculiarly their own.

In accomplishing this, that style of preaching denominated controversial is not necessary. We may preach Lutheranism plainly without denouncing others. Hold up our opinions without causing offence to others who honestly differ with us. Proclaim our own in the most forcible manner; others will preach theirs, and the people will judge. Often in the defence of truth we must contrast it with error, answer objections as well as bring positive arguments to its support. Love of the truth, a perfect charity for all, and an earnest desire to save souls, should then most especially breathe themselves into all we say, mark every gesture and characterize every word. Those who maintain the opposite should never be mentioned by name, and every uncharitable allusion most scrupulously avoided. Controversial preaching dwells its own end. The day was when it was tolerated, but the good it accomplished is questionable. Thank God, that day has passed when each minister felt himself specially called to fight in the most unsparring manner all Christians who could not pronounce his shallow. All liberal minded, intelligent Christians now disapprove it in our own communion as well as that of the most of our sister denominations. While this is true, a plain, earnest exposition of our own creed is not only not condemned, but almost invariably commended. If in the true spirit we discharge our duty, though we fail to convince, we will not offend.

We heartily disapprove of frequent public contrasts. We exhort our brethren to avoid them as much as possible. We believe, however, that comparisons are very important. We are "set to watch for souls." It is our business to become cognizant, not only with our own theology, but that of others, and to show to those who have been committed to our keeping, "all truth," and "the danger that lurketh in the way." How can we prove the superiority of our faith to that held by others without a contrast? How can we warn them against error without pointing it out to them? In making them we should seek such occasions as will wound the feelings of the fewest, and yet at the same time, most effectually accomplish the desired end. We have a most fitting opportunity in our visits. Then

2d. We must teach them by the fire-side. This should be one of our chief aims in all our visits, both pastoral and social. There is no subject more becoming to a minister, nay, a Christian, than a religious one. Politics is not only unsuited to the lips of the man of God, but often very prejudicial to his influence. Generally he is not sufficiently acquainted with agricultural or commercial pursuits to make himself instructive or even entertaining upon them. Surely he can not so far lose sight of his dignity as to engage in light, frivolous conversation in the small talk and chit-chat of his community. He ought never to manifest too deep an interest in anything pertaining to the body, but to impress upon his people, by his intercourse with them, that they are living for eternity. And we are left with our own most appropriate one. Here a field is opened wide for us to impress Lutheranism upon the minds and hearts of our parishioners. Without offence to any, we may show the difference between our religious views and those of others, display the beauty of ours and the inconsistencies of others, and with a heart full of charity, preventing us from falling into abusive or contemptuous expressions, unravel the great harmony with itself and with the Scriptures of that faith we hold. Nowhere should our zeal betray us into harshness of language, or forget that "we are members one of another."

Around the fireside we may accommodate ourselves to the capacity of each member of the family in a manner impossible in the pulpit. We may answer objections, remove doubts, and fortify their weakness. We can ascertain their wants and meet them. There is no manner better adapted to the attainment of the end after which we are inquiring than the conversational, and no place so well suited as the home.

There was a greater church love among our fathers in many sections of the church than among us. It was because they were more firmly convinced of the truth of the doctrines of the church. It was due in great measure to this fireside teaching pursued by their pastors.

3d. We must teach them to the young by catechisation. We need not remind you of the susceptible character of those who attend these lectures—that earliest impressions are strongest—that the opinions formed at this age are so lasting as to seem to be woven into the very texture of the mind. We have not time to tell you how you can gather around you those accustomed from childhood's earliest years to love, reverence and implicitly confide in you; how you can state so clearly what you believe, why you believe it, and point them to the very passages in their own Bibles that establish it; how you can reason with them until you produce conviction; how you can remove every vestige of doubt; how you can enforce it upon their minds, bring it home to their hearts, and by the very effects upon their souls, bind it firmly to their affections.

Devoted Filial Love.  
Mr. Editor: At your request, we send you a simple statement of the facts in connection with the narrow and providential escape from drowning of a whole family, and the remarkable self-possession and noble devotion of a little boy just eight years of age, Jefferson Richardson by name, and a member of St. John's Lutheran Sabbath school, Charleston.

In our city by the sea, every fair afternoon Charleston harbor presents a gay and attractive appearance, with its vessels at anchor, frequently an arrival or departure of a steamer, and always numerous fishing smacks and other light crafts upon its waters. And many are the gay pleasure parties in their trim little boats that come in sight, as they sail up and down from the Ashley to the Cooper River. In the distance we take a bird's eye view of the surrounding islands and Mount Pleasant village; and there stands the crumbling remains of "Fort Sumter," so dear to every patriotic Southern heart. While the carriages drive around the Battery, and the little children, with their gay costumes, dance and skip in "White Point Garden," many pedestrians seek the cool, inviting promenade, with its beautiful view, or rest upon the seats provided, and watch the moving panorama on land and sea.

Not long since a family, consisting of about ten persons, launched their boat from the shore; parents and children are all bright with the anticipation of a charming sail; an exhilarating sea breeze is wafted from "Old Atlantic," all nature smiles; and the clouds that float in the blue horizon, and are reflected in the placid waters, but heighten the beauty of the scene. Suddenly the clouds overhead darken—the wind hulls—distant thunder rumbles—vivid flashes of lightning dart across the sky—heavy peals of thunder follow—darker and darker grows the heavens—the hoarse voice of the wind howls—the rippling waters form themselves into great billows that lash the sides of the little craft, and threaten each moment to engulf it, with its precious cargo, beneath the dark waves. Fear suddenly smites the breast of each soul of that little crew, a few moments ago so joyous and light-hearted. The waves dash furiously over the sides of the boat—it is overturned, and the almost frantic father is struggling to save his beloved ones from a watery grave. His son Jefferson is near him. As he attempts to rescue him, the little child lifts his clear voice, in this hour of sore need, above the roar of warring elements, and in the face of grim death, cries: "Never mind me, pa; save ma." Surely the guardian angels smile as they listen, and descend at God's bidding to save. One by one, almost miraculously, was the family rescued from "the deep"; one, a little girl, was seized by her long hair as she was sinking to rise no more until the Resurrection morn. And they were all brought to the shore—not one was missing.

On the following Sabbath the aged pastor gave thanks to a merciful God who had interposed to deliver his flock, and permitted them there in the temple of God to mingle their voices with those of their fellow-worshippers in prayer and thanksgiving. In the afternoon, when the teachers and Sabbath scholars were gathered together, the pastor again alluded to the great deliverance God had vouchsafed to some before him—teachers and scholars. He addressed the boys of the school, reminding them that one of their number, in an hour of imminent peril, unappalled by the horrors of the scene, had asked that his young life should be sacrificed to save that of a beloved mother. He exhorted them to imitate the example of their little companion in his devotion to his mother; and that the lesson might be still more impressive, the Superintendent beckoned to the little child to come forward and stand in the chancel. Many eyes overflowed as they rested gratefully upon the face and form of that tiny boy, who had been faithful to his mother—even unto death. And many were the fervent prayers that ascended to the footstool of God, that the holy teachings which had developed so pure a love, might continue to mould the heart and to direct the walk and conversation of this little child, thus enabling him

still further to adorn the religion of his Saviour, and to become a rich blessing, not only to his own family, but to the whole community.  
C. L. B.

## Ministerial.

### Apologetic Preaching.

The question, How far should preaching be apologetic? was suggested by a sermon we lately heard at the opening of a new chapel. The preacher, who was an eminent and highly gifted man, selected a text which set forth a leading doctrine of the Christian faith. From the nature of the occasion, we hoped that the sermon would consist of a luminous exposition of the great truth, and an application of it to the consciences and hearts of the hearers. Instead of that, the time was almost entirely occupied with an elaborate defence of the doctrine against its skeptical adversaries, though probably not one of them was present to be confounded or convinced by the preacher's arguments. The discourse, though an able and eloquent one, disappointed us. But it led us to ask whether, in some quarters, the same style of preaching was not practiced to an unwelcome extent. St. Paul said that he was set for the defence of the gospel, and in some measure all Christian ministers have the same vocation. It is very desirable, when occasion requires, that they should be able to repel the attacks of unbelievers. But there are some men who seem to think that they ought to do nothing else. They imagine themselves to be always preaching to a congregation of skeptics, to have continually before them representatives of all the heresies of the times. Every sermon is a Bampton Lecture on a small scale. They appear to get their inspiration not so much from their subject, as from the doubts which have been expressed with reference to it. As if their only interest in truth was to fight for it! The city of God is, to their mind, in a state of perpetual siege, and the noise of war always raging around their walls. They seldom lead their hearers forth for a peaceful walk, bidding them to mark well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces, that, enmeshed with the sight, they may exult in citizenship, or desire to share in its privileges.

In most congregations, the majority consists of persons who are never reached by the skepticism of the age, and feel no interest in it. They need reproof for their faults, comfort for their sorrows, strength for their conflict with temptation, and for the performance of the every-day duties of life, or to be aroused from their indifference to the whole subject of religion. For their minister to be ever bringing before them, for refutation, the infidelity which he, perhaps, has met with in the course of his own reading and study, is very much like feeding them with stones when they need bread.

Then, again, to be always speaking of truth in an apologetic tone, is calculated to weaken its influence. If every doctrine of the faith is treated as an open question, it gives to religious teaching an air of uncertainty, which ought to be carefully avoided. It was formerly the practice of Scotch ministers to preach from the same text for many Sundays together. One day a young man stole into a church during the sermon, and the first words he heard were, "We now come to the thirty-second objection to this doctrine." He instantly thought to himself, "What an objectionable doctrine it must be." Are there not many sermons which have a similar effect? Do they not often shake the confidence of those who already believe, and create doubt in minds where it never existed before? It may be fairly questioned whether it is wise to drag people through all the mazes of modern infidelity, merely for the pleasure of showing them the way out, and especially when there is a danger that some of them may be left behind. The very apostle, who was himself so great a controversialist, said: "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil."

Another fact, which weighs against the constant adoption of this style of preaching is, that the class for whom it is intended are seldom convinced or satisfied with it. When the preacher supposes himself to be in conflict with a skeptical adversary, he generally imagines one who is weaker than himself. He puts into the mouth of his opponent only those

objections and arguments which he knows he can refute. He makes him speak or be silent, just as it suits his purpose, and, as a matter of course, gains an easy and complete victory over him. By this means he may obtain some applause from the less thoughtful portion of his audience, but if there should happen to be a real living unbeliever present, he thinks himself treated unfairly. He only wishes that the proprietors of the time and place permitted him to speak out in answer to the preacher, mounted upon "Cromwell's castle," who has it all his own way, and attacks a man when his hands are tied.

Even when every panicle of controversial chivalry is observed, and such questions are treated with the utmost fairness, they can very seldom be treated exhaustively in the short space of time allotted to a sermon. To be a successful apologist requires a logical mind and great dialectic skill, qualifications which many useful ministers do not possess. A man may be a good ploughman, or a good mason, and yet not be a good soldier. There are many who are eminently qualified to cultivate the barren wastes of a sinful world, or to build up God's spiritual temple, who make but a very poor figure when they come to fight with the enemies of the faith. Their feeble advocacy does far more harm than good to the cause they wish to defend. What a man can not do well, he had better let alone.

There are some amongst us who consider it an end of all strife to appeal to the authority and example of our Puritan forefathers. It may be said that their preaching and writing were, to a great extent, controversial—that they used their rare endowments and their vast learning to oppose the religious errors of their times. Very true, and no one would wish to undervalue their important services in this direction. But, on the other hand, it may be doubted whether this was the most permanently valuable part of their labors. Will not Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted," and his "Saint's Everlasting Rest," be read with unabated pleasure and profit, when his ponderous tomes of polemic theology stand neglected and unopened on dusty book shelves?

It is not, of course, meant that ministers should have no sympathy with the doubts which will often distress the minds of their most intelligent hearers, or do nothing to remove them. But a ministry which is only or chiefly anti-skeptical, is not likely to be a very fruitful one. It is generally positive didactic preaching which brings sinners to repentance, and does the most to promote experimental and practical religion.—London Freeman.

### Use of the Voice in the Pulpit.

The United Presbyterian very justly and pertinently says that "Voice power in the pulpit is one to be cultivated. It is an essential part of the highest power of eloquence, and a great means of usefulness in the pulpit. Even comparatively weak voices may be so cultivated and used as to be of wonderful effect. The effect of a singing-master's lessons on a vocalist, in bringing out tones and compass of the voice, show what may be done by the preacher in the cultivation of the same art. It must be a natural voice which is used, for no bawling will be half so audible as a man's own key-note. He must address himself to some one at the farthest end of the space he preaches in, and throw his voice out from him into the circumference of the building. The chief effort used, and the chief watchfulness required, is to sustain the end of the sentence; where it would be natural, in conversation, to drop the voice slightly. Otherwise a man can not be too natural, or speak too nearly as he would in conversation. The voice must be rested by speaking in different notes within the compass of the preacher's natural scale. By changing the keys, he will rest one while using another, and so avoid fatigue.

As nothing is so wearisome to the audience, so nothing is so fatiguing to the preacher, as that monotonous which "flows muddily along." A medical man gives his account of the cause of clerical sore throats. He says they proceed from men stooping in reading, so that the throat does the work of the chest and lungs, which can not act as they would if the posture was upright, with the shoulders well open.

a sermon, how much may be done to help delivery and save the voice? If any one doubts this, let him take a sermon of long-entwined sentences, where there is no stop for ten lines, and another of short ones, and try the difference. Pauses there must be; and some preachers have great art in so making the stopping-places on the road as to call attention to the finest views. While they must pause somewhere, they select such opportunities for resting as leave the result of a section of the discourse to linger on the minds of the hearers. This should always be done where there is a break in the argument, and, if possible, driven home with some terse aphorism or proverb, containing the sense of what has gone before, so as to leave the substance of each section of the sermon in some tangible and portable shape on the memory of the audience. After some mail had been driven home and clinched, let the hammer pause awhile and listen for the responsive echo in the soul of the hearer.

## Practical.

### "Come Ye to the Waters."

There is on record a case of a very wicked and hardened man whose feelings were so touched by the soft notes of a dove, that he was by the "Divine Spirit led to Christ and to a Christian life. In the incident below the prattling of a babe was blessed to the same result. During a revival in a town in Ohio, a man who had been very worldly-minded was awakened, but for some time concealed his feelings even from his wife, who was a praying woman. She left him one evening in charge of his little girl of three years of age.

After her departure his anxiety of mind became so great that he could not rest, and he began to walk the room in his agony. The little girl soon noticed his agitation of mind, and inquired, "What ails you, Pa?" he replied, "Nothing"; and endeavored to quiet his feelings, and divert his mind from the subject. But all in vain. Conscience would not hush up at his bidding. He could not calm the troubled deep of his sin-polluted heart. After sitting a short time, he rose again, and commenced walking to and fro as before. Soon the attention of his little daughter was again arrested, and wondering, doubtless, at her father's uneasiness, and ignorant of its cause, she looked up sympathizingly in his face, and inquired with all the artlessness and simplicity of childhood—"Pa! if you were dry, wouldn't you go and get a drink of water?" The father started, as if a voice from heaven had fallen on his ear! He thought of his thirsty soul, famishing for the waters of life! He thought of that living fountain opened in the gospel, and he heard the voice of Jesus saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink!" "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!"

He thirsted:  
"He longed to drink that crystal stream  
That flows the trees of life between—  
That its pure waters in his soul  
Might rise eternally to roll!"

He believed! and straightway fell  
at the Saviour's feet, exclaiming in  
heart if not in words:  
"Just as I am, thou wilt receive;  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;  
Because thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come!"

From that hour he saw  
the dawning of a new light, and the  
beginning of a new life.

### The Great Wheel.

Nicodemus was a converted Indian. His language was highly figurative. Once, when looking at the mill, he said to a missionary: "Brother, I discover something that rejoices my heart. I have seen the great wheel, and many little ones; every one was in motion, and seemed all alive, but suddenly all stopped, and the mill was as dead. Just so it is with my heart—it is dead as the wheel; but as soon as Jesus' blood flows upon it, it gets life, and sets everything in motion, and the whole man being governed by it, it becomes evident that there is life throughout. But when the heart is removed from a crucified Jesus, it dies gradually, and at length all life ceases."

When the doctrines of the Holy Spirit became more clear to his mind, he compared his body to a canoe, and his heart to the rudder; adding, "that the Holy Spirit was the master, sitting at the rudder and directing the vessel."—Ecclesiastical Treasury.

## Selling the Soul.

The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon tells the following story in one of his sermons: There is a story told of a most eccentric minister, that walking out one morning, he saw a man going to work, and said to him, "What a lovely morning! How grateful we ought to be to God for all his mercies!" The man said he did not know much about it. "Why," said the minister, "I suppose you always pray to God for your wife and family—for your children—don't you?" "No," said he, "I do not know that I do." "What," said the minister, "do you never pray?" "No." "Then I will give you half a crown, if you will promise me you never will, as long as ever you live." "Oh," says he, "I shall be very glad of half a crown, to get a drop of beer."

He took the half crown, and promised never to pray as long as he lived. He went to his work, and when he had been digging for a little while, he thought to himself, "That's a queer thing—I've taken money, and promised never to pray as long as I live." He thought it over, and it made him feel wretched. He went home to his wife, and told her of it. "Well, John," said she, "you may depend upon it, it was the devil; you've sold yourself to the devil for half a crown." This so bowed the poor wretch down that he did not know what to do with himself. This was all his thought—that he had sold himself to the devil for money, and would soon be carried off to hell.

He commenced attending places of worship, conscious that it was of no use, for he had sold himself to the devil; but he was really ill, bodily ill, through the fear and trembling which had come upon him. One night he recognized in the preacher the very man who had given him the half-crown, and probably the preacher recognized him, for the text was, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The preacher remarked that he knew a man who had sold his soul for half a crown. The poor man rushed forward and said, "Take it back! Take it back!" "You said you would never pray," said the minister, "if I gave you half a crown; do you want to pray?" "Oh, yes; I would give the world to be allowed to pray." That man was a great fool to sell his soul for half a crown; but some of you are a great deal bigger fools, for you never had the half crown, and yet you do not pray, and I dare say never will, but will go down to hell, never having sought God.

## The Kindest Master.

I was talking one day to a very cheerful old man, who was fond of speaking of the masters whom he had served. It was a pleasant thing to hear him tell of how many kind, good masters he had worked for. "Had you never once a hard master?" I said.

"Well, may be I had, but I forgot that sort; there's no pleasure in thinking of them."

I thought as I left him how much better it is to try and remember about the good, rather than the evil that has troubled our past lives; and thinking of masters put me in mind of the best of all masters. "One is your Master, even Christ." Our earthly masters provide us work, give us leave to toil, pay us wages for our industry, and we thank them, and serve them diligently. But our heavenly Master not only gives us freely the health and strength that enables us to toil, He provides that we shall rest from our labor. He gives us one day in seven, as a time of rest and refreshment. He calls to Him and says, "I will give you rest." Do we think of that kind Master as we should? Are we grateful that He has so tenderly thought of us as to provide for our repose and rest? We know that "He giveth His beloved sleep"—that great restorer of man's physical energies; but not merely does He give us rest in sleep, He provides for us a day of waking rest. On this holy Sabbath we can "rest in the Lord," enjoy the sweet calm of a day when all labor shall cease; when the tired world, weary with its six days of anxious care and toil, can peacefully compose itself to rest.—O, dear brother workmen, let no vain desire for earthly pleasure or profit make you unmindful of the claims of the best of Masters! For "His yoke is easy and His burden is light."