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"ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM."—EPHESIANS IV: 5.

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Communications.

For the Lutheran Visitor.

"Life of Trust"

Mr. Editor: I have just received a book with the above title, which is a journal or autobiography of Mr. George Muller, of Bristol, England. It is a very interesting narrative of the acts of one of the most remarkable men of our day.

He was born in Prussia in 1805, educated at Halle, and was confirmed in the Lutheran Church, where he commenced his ministry. I can tell what I wish to say of him better by quoting the language of Dr. Francis Wayland. He says of Mr. Muller: "A young German Christian, fiendless and unknown, is conscious of what he believes to be a call from the Lord to attempt something for the benefit of the poor vagabond children of Bristol. He is at this time preaching the gospel to a small company of believers, from whom, at his own suggestion, he receives no salary, being supported day by day by the voluntary offerings of the brethren. Without the promise of aid from any being but God, he commences his work. In answer to prayer, funds are received as they are needed, and the attempt succeeds beyond his expectation, (or rather according to his expectation). After a few years he is led to believe that God has called him to establish a house for the maintenance and education of orphans. He is impelled to this effort, not only from motives of benevolence, but from a desire to convince men that God is a LIVING God, as ready now as ever to answer prayer, and that in the discharge of any duty to which he calls us, we may implicitly rely upon his all-sufficient aid in every emergency."

He determines to solicit aid from no one, and that he will publish the name of no benefactor. He began first his "Scriptural Knowledge Institution," for the purpose of aiding voluntary missionary enterprises and teaching destitute children and adults to read and write, and to distribute Bibles and tracts. Reading the Life of Franke, he conceives the plan for an orphan house in Bristol.

Money comes in just as he needs it, and always in answer to faithful prayer. His plans and his work enlarge, and donations increase in proportion. *Now he has five buildings, costing about \$500,000.* The whole amount entrusted to him by individuals from all parts of the world since March, 1834, is something like two millions of dollars. Mr. Muller himself says: "The most universal complaint of religious institutions is the want of funds; but as to ourselves, we state it joyfully and to the praise of the Lord, and through him, our Patron, we have not only had enough, but abundant." Since 1834 he has received into his schools 17,000 children, and into his orphan houses nearly two thousand. He has distributed 95,000 copies of the Bible and New Testaments, 30,000 smaller portions of the Scriptures, 33,000,000 of tracts, and aided 100 missionaries.

Rev. Dr. Sawtell, who visited these orphan establishments in 1860, says: "I saw what might be called the standing miracle of Bristol—a man sheltering, clothing, feeding, educating, and making comfortable and happy hundreds of poor orphan children, with

no funds of his own, and no possible means of sustenance, save that which God sends him in answer to prayer. I confess, on my first visit in 1860, I had reserved to myself a wide margin for deductions and disappointments; but after a few days of careful investigation, I left Bristol exclaiming, with the Queen of Sheba: "The half had not been told me." Here I saw, indeed, seven hundred children fed and provided for by the hand of God, in answer to prayer, as literally and truly as Elijah was fed by ravens with meat which the Lord provided."

Mr. Muller is master of six languages, and reads three or four others. His library consists of a Hebrew Bible, three Greek Testaments, a Greek Concordance and Lexicon, with five or six versions of the Bible. His knowledge of the Bible is extraordinary; he has read it through, he says, perhaps more than a hundred times. Of his sermons Dr. S. says: "It is worth crossing the Atlantic to hear them."

His implicit faith and his power of prayer put to shame the puny efforts of the whole Christian world. Although often without a farthing, and no provisions for the following day, he never doubted the faithfulness of God; and when means were sent him to lay by for old age, or future contingencies, he unhesitatingly sent them back, and refused to accept them. In order to begin his *Life of Trust* he gave away in charity all he and his wife possessed, and began without a farthing. Whenever he needed anything, he prayed for it, believing he would receive it, and he was never disappointed. And is not this, after all, the mind of the Holy Spirit?

After reading Muller's *Life of Trust*, two facts press themselves upon me. I ask myself: Is prayer really a power, or is it merely an arrangement of the divine wisdom for the purpose of causing our christian graces to grow? God's dealings with Mr. Muller clearly show that it is a power, and not merely a power, but a transcendent power, which prevails over all material agencies, and even with God himself, and as such, actually accomplishes what no other power can. It commands, with irresistible authority, any and every ordinary means, and makes everything subservient to its superior efficiency. But, of course, we speak of the prayer of faith.

Again, I ask myself: Why do we not exercise such faith as Mr. Muller? Not because we have not God's will on the subject. His promise is explicit and clearly revealed: "Whatever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Now, if we give this a reasonable interpretation, we must conclude that it includes whatever means are necessary for carrying forward God's work, and that it also includes all the little accompaniments, as well as the greater. We do not forget that God uses agencies; but man is his agent as well as the gold and silver, and it is as easy for him to use the one as the other.

Is not our difficulty, after all, to be found in the *greatness* of the promises? They are so "exceeding great" that we "stagger at the promise of God through unbelief." We are not "fully persuaded that what he has promised he is able also to perform." We "ask and receive not, because we ask amiss"—not realizing that God is willing to do such great things for us. In the 11th chapter of Hebrews we have a catalogue of the triumphs of faith, in which almost every form of what is commonly called natural laws is brought into subjection to faith. This is doubtless to teach us that nothing in heaven or on earth can stand before *faith and prayer*.

BETH EDEN.

God With His People.—God did not take up the three Hebrews out of the furnace of fire, but he came down and walked with them in it. He did not remove Daniel from the den of lions; he sent his angel to close the mouths of the beasts. He did not answer to the prayer of Paul, remove the thorn in the flesh; but he gave him a sufficiency of grace to sustain him.

The question is, not whether a doctrine is beautiful, but whether it is true. When we want to go to a place we don't ask whether the road leads through a pretty country, but whether it is the right road, pointed out by authority—the turnpike road.

Wear your learning like a watch, in a private pocket, and don't endeavor to show it unless you are asked what o'clock it is.

Sermon.

From the A. R. Presbyterian.
Christianity the only Religion for Man.

[A Sermon, preached by request, before the graduating classes of the Male and Female Colleges at Due West, S. C., on the 11th of July, 1869, by Rev. D. O. Phillips, of Louisville, Georgia.]

"Lord to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." John, vi: 68.

Some one has said "the manner of an expression is the visible soul of the thought expressed." It is true. And there is a peculiar manner about this answer of Simon which throws his idea to the very surface of his language, and commends it to our patient meditation. By necessary implication he admits two great truths which have been established alike by Divine Revelation and all human history:

1st. That man is naturally a religious being, and therefore does and always must have a religion of some sort.

2d. That nothing but revealed christianity ever can satisfy the demand or meet the exigency of that religious nature.

Let these two propositions be our present theme. These disciples lived in an age of great moral revolution, in which, each turn of the wheel was vainly expected to bring up something which would prove a great moral panacea. And the wheel was quickened in exact proportion to the disappointments it brought. For men had become somewhat reckless in their long bewildered chase after happiness—

"That something still which prompts the eternal soul."

For which we bear to live or dare to die."

And they effected great changes with a thoughtless rapidity which allowed no adequate time to test fairly the value of any theory. In fact if it were possible for men to be Atheists, they had desisted from search long before that time in fixed despair. For they saw the whole past literally strewn with the wrecks of religious systems—high hopes and sounding claims, but blasted expectations and withered fruits. The long, loud demand of human nature for a satisfying religion had been answered only by the questions, "what shall it be, and where and how found?" True there had been candidates enough seeking popular favor. A multitude of religious dogmas, moral systems, philosophic theories, civil governments, social compacts, isms, ites, and ologies had been on the stage. Each had acted out its part, but all had retired amid the hisses of the disappointed audience, and the loud groans from a crowded lobby. And still as one came raised the anxious inquiry: "O! who will show us any good?" another sent back the startling response, "how shall man that is mortal be just with God?" The soul panted after a satisfying religion "as the hart panteth after the water brooks." But nature, with frowning mockery, said, "it is not in me." And in the midst of a wide spread infidelity and a universal demand, the baldfather continued to blaze in the valley of the son of Hinnon, and Juggernaut still stalked over crushing forms along the sunny banks of the Ganges.

Such was the whole moral world at this period; and such, indeed, it had been for forty centuries. For the splendid civilizations (if they ever existed) of the far off East and of the olden time, which had descended from Nimrod, Cheops and the fancied children of the Sun, lacked the vital spirit of christianity. And though they had lived and worked and died (if they did so), they left no children and no legacy to the world but material works, mental imbecility and moral chaos. They gave the world no peace of mind—they made man no better; and they left him no wiser, even if he could tell who and what they were. But all their apologists can say for them is, "possibly they were." There was no hope in them. "Systems of philosophy—from that of Zoroaster of Bactria, probably the best, down to that of Epicurus, certainly the worst, with all the brood between, which spread like a prairie fire from the Hellespont to the icebergs, each put in the claim, 'I have found it.' But they soon eclipsed the opening dawn of Persian light, and made all beyond, one vast field of bleaching bones. The most sanguine soon saw that, like much of their modern offspring, they were only "philosophy falsely so called."

There was no longer any hope in human philosophy.

Moral systems, civil governments and social compacts, then, as now, like pattering raindrops followed each other in quick succession, but only to pass off in the same muddy channel to the ocean of oblivion. There was no longer any hope in them.

Judaism, with its Divine origin and splendid ritual—its grand moral system and true paritan ideas—its real conservative influence and clearpointings to a higher, sunnier clime—its glorious Shekinah and sweet, soul-saying pathos—over whose grave while with all her fond love we sing lullabies to its rest—was by its own laws circumscribed to one spot. There it had lived out its day, finished its work, was hoar with age and was just then expiring in glory in the arms of its children. There was no longer any hope there.

Religions—those beautiful and captivating systems of mythology which you have all now read with so much pleasure and profit, I trust, which sprang up chiefly among the Ionian Isles, around the Dardanelles—which sang like the nightingale at Scio and thundered like Jove at Troy—which worshiped lords many and gods many, and were wafted to a quick immortality on the wings of Poesy by the sweet breezes of song—with all their gossamer theory and their perjured facts, their puerile imagination and starving reason—their May day literature and their laws of blood—their gorgeous Pantheon and their slippery Targem Rock, (what a halo of glory "circling round the dead")—had all utterly failed to yield the good which they promised and for which men vainly hoped.

All, though their name be legion, all of them, like a sparkling meteor in its quick transit, had burst into their thousand fragments, and left the world to darkness, to the disciples and to us.

All the splendid creations of fancy—the scintillations of genius—the sparkle of wit—the few gems of truth dugged up by long, patient thought from a few calm brains, and all the miserable spawnings of the religious world for forty centuries had been tried, landed, doubted, scorned, dropped—

"poning dreams.
Precludes to weep and sorrow."

until Hope herself, which had stood tiptoe and still prompted to perennial effort, grew old and wrinkled, and died. For final success, the star by which she had still steered, seemed hid in a black and angry heaven, and went down at last behind a stormy sea. It was night all over the moral waste and still no haven in view, and neither chart, compass nor helmsman on board. But the human conscience—the boatswain—faithful to his trust to the very last, still stood aloft, and powerless only for evil, piped out to the fear-stricken crew and passengers, "ship ahoy! breakers just ahead!" That was "the fullness of time." Just then was borne along on the night storm the angelic song, "We bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people; for unto you is born this day * * * a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." The disciples grabbed at the idea with hope and desperation. But the great public mind had become so entirely demoralized by incessant change, and disappointment, that, like a demoralized army, it was difficult to rally it or cause it to stand long enough at any point to produce order or sober second thought. The Saviour's theory was new, and multitudes flocked around him as the swarm around their leader, from the mere attractions of novelty. But when he candidly told them the truth of man's compound nature—his condemnation and depravity—his danger and helplessness—the crowd which had flocked about him with the ephemeral attachment of the butterfly to the flower, were offended, and turned away, still to seek for "something new." The disciples, taught by the past, hesitated and dangled between hope and despair, faith and infidelity. He said to them, "Will ye also go away?"—"Will ye continue to follow on in that eternal round which has always commenced in the necessity of human nature for a religion of some sort, and ended in disappointed hopes or blasted expectations?" "Or will you follow out to all its legitimate sequences this grand idea of Jesus and the resurrection?" What could they reply? They looked forward and backward. In the one way all was confusion; in the other,

silent darkness. But a religion of some sort must be had. And so a mingled feeling of hope and despair, choice and necessity, prompted their reply through Simon: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." In a word, they accepted Christianity because they felt that they must have a religion of some sort, and that none else could suffice.

Religion (*Religare*) means a binding back again. It is the reunion of dis severed ties of love and affection which once existed between man and that Being, or those beings, whom he calls God and worships accordingly. It may therefore be of ten thousand different kinds, according to the character of the God whom it accepts and the forms by which it worships him—from the Egyptian bowing before his axe, up to the christian in his temple, learning the rudimental lessons of "fairer worlds on high." But there is only one Christian religion. It accepts the Bible as true, God as its Author, and his Son as a mighty Saviour of lost sinners.

And to have a religion of some sort is just as universal and natural with man as to breathe the vital air. In every age of the world—in every country—in every social condition—wherever man has been found, he has been so found in the possession and practice of a religion of some sort. And he has always clung to his religion with the spasmodic grasp which the mariner overboard in a stormy sea fixes upon the rope thrown to him. There is with him no innate power of resistance and no power of relinquishment left. He grasps it. And then the dissecting knife has to be applied before the rope can be removed. No more has mortal man the power to resist or relinquish his religion. Flaming faggots of "antiquated" can not extract it from him if he believes it true. No traveler has ever returned from a jungle whose savage cannibalism was so deep and dark that there was no religion there; nor from a clime whose civilization was so bright and grand that there was no religion there. Here, as in the grave, "the rich and the poor meet together and are both alike." Nor are the many who in christian countries attach themselves to no sect or creed, on that account exceptions to this universal rule. It has no exceptions. Each of these has a private theory of his own, which, if asked, he will state with more or less perspicuity. Man's history proclaims him universally religious. And if we trace this universal fact of history back to its generating cause, we shall find it laid deep in the very constitution of the nature which God gave to man. He is rational. And the very first induction of reason is—"nothing can result from nothing, but things are." That there is somewhere an unseen being who created, that man is accountable to him, that destiny is fixed by him, that somehow a controversy has arisen between him and man, out of which grows danger to man, and which he needs to have in some way amicably adjusted, that therefore sacrifice is due, and a multitude of kindred propositions, are truisms learned in no school of ethics, from no human origin, and peculiar to no sect, age, country or social condition. They are held by all men; because they are inductions from nature, "God's elder revelation." They are deeply written by his own finger on every human heart; as well the untutored savage who sees God in clouds, and hears him in the winds, as the proud scholar, who, when he reared his altar, inscribed it "to the unknown God," or the great Jewish lawyer in the blaze of Sinai's fearful glory with the tables of stone in his hand. These might be pettishly dashed to pieces. But that could not silence the voice above, or remove their text from the heart where it had been limned forever by the finger of God. And the belief of such primary truths might well drive, as it always has driven the whole world to adopt some sort of system to effect a reconciliation with God. These systems may vary indefinitely in their form from his who enters in by the door into the fold down to her's who tosses the infant of her love into the burning arms of Moloch, and appeals to the drummers to drown his dying shrieks. That, however, is only a difference of form, not of fact and intention. It proves the necessity of revelation, not the absence of religion. The religious nature has called into being the thousand and one systems which have worshipped Gods of the air, earth and ocean, woods, hills and winds. It is nature seeking for an unfound supply for an

absolute demand within. It is infancy telling its tale of sorrows and expressing hunger and grief in cries, for lack of words it has not yet learned. It is God's voice on the mighty waters. For

"Whatever creed be taught or land be trod,
Man's conscience is the oracle of God."

Man is intellectual, which gives him his proud prerogative in this world and allies him closely to super-natural intelligences in the next. And if you shall call that intellect by the names consciousness, perception, understanding, judgment, &c., then, as your names import, its province is to realize, discriminate, reason, judge, conclude, &c. And within and all around man, God has piled up objects, facts, laws, realities and relations as the pabulum of these faculties. And when mind looks out upon the fair fabric of the material universe, listens to its loud song of praise, and sees its exhibitions of order, wisdom, beauty, harmony and design, it as necessarily reasons from effect to cause, and concludes these to be an effect of some intelligent, though unseen and unknown cause, as open the eyes see objects when opened in the clear light of day. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork; day unto day utters speech and night unto night shows knowledge." "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead." Thus, whether man be saint or savage, he of necessity reasons through nature up to nature's God. Sane mind cannot avoid it. "The undevout astronomer is mad." Mind must either run in some channel opened out before it and adopt some religious theory already laid down, or, like the wild wandering comet, blaze out an orbit of its own and originate a religion for itself, whether true or false—whether adapted to the demands of his nature or not. Tell me not of Atheism! As well call the sun an iceberg, or his warm cheerful rays the source of cold darkness. God has never allowed such a blot upon nature to exist as a sane minded Atheist, "albeit, 'the fool hath said in his heart there is no God.'" All nature cries "there is," and all sane mind catches it up and makes religion of it.

Man has a distinct moral faculty—a peculiarity of constitution, which makes him as naturally and necessarily religious, as do the wings of the eagle make it aeronautic, or the fins of the turbot make it aquatic. He has conscience—a faculty which recognizes the innate distinction between right and wrong in human action—a faculty which always accepts the will of an unseen being as the standard of that right and wrong—a faculty which causes all men to feel that they are in danger of suffering penalty for the infraction of some law of that unseen being—a faculty which has always driven men to try to appease that being by offerings of some sort; it might be a lamb by divine direction, or it might be his first born son by his own direction. But to reconcile offended deity was the import and design of every religious right of the past, whether among christians or savages. Conscience raised the question, "wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, or bow myself before the most high God?" And if it was not directed by revelation to the Lamb of God; which is revealed christianity, then it was directed by something else to thousands of rams or some other form of at-one-ment.

It were just as easy to separate between caloric and heat in the natural world, as between conscience and a religion in the moral. Where the one is there also must be the other as certainly as the report follows the flash upon the bosom of the summer cloud. Conscience is universal. So also must religion be.

Conscience is a crowning constituent in that strange complex nature which God has given to man, and faithful as the baited hook, it will fish up a feeling which looks aloft, smiles complacently in view of its hope, and exclaims, "there is no night there," or "a certain fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation"—

"So do the dark in soul expire,
Or live like Scorpion, girt with fire.
So writhes the mind renorse hath risen,
Unfit for earth, undoomed for Heaven."

Conscience! who has not smiled complacently as he has seen it point away to future realities, and heard it whisper amid the fall of country, the desolations of home—the wreck of

health—the solitude of the heart—the crash of fortune and the frown of fate—

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green?"

And who has not covered, like the galley slave in the out-bound prow, as he has felt that conscience quiver and heard it exclaim—

"But O, that pang where more than madness lies,
The wags that will not sleep and never dies;
Thought of the gloomy day and ghastly night,
That dreads the darkness and yet loathes the light."

Conscience makes cowards of us all, because it will grabble up futurity and hold it up in present view. Conscience is the great religion generator. It may freeze among the Giesers or parch amid Sirocs, it may triumph gloriously with Luther entering Worms, or slaver and snivel with Mahomet astride his alborak; it may sing sweetly at Jerusalem or mourn by the rivers of Babylon; still it is a witness for God in every human bosom. And all who have it of necessity have a religion.

Man has a cluster of moral affections which have been as accurately defined and classified as the bones of this hand or the muscles of this forearm. I need not name them. These, like the young tendrils of the unsupported vine, are forever reaching out and seeking after something to which they may cling, and around which they may cluster and fasten for support. We call them *moral*, partly because they forever refuse to cluster around material objects. They seek to press into the deep mysterious unknown spiritual, and fasten on some spirit being which hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have, but which they can call God, and worship and love and adore accordingly. I think it was Taylor who strangely, and yet truly, called them "the God-seekers of the soul."

In the rich, unappropriated fullness of their powers, these sometimes give an imaginary existence to ghosts and fairies, wraiths and goblins of the night. Because they must have a spirit god of some sort. And if he be not furnished to them by written revelation, or if they refuse to accept the one there offered, then will they try their magic power conjure one into being of some sort. And in the intellectual caricature and moral abortion of the modern spiritualist and the splendid fictions and polished forms of "Aeropagns. You laugh at the little prattler as it toddles round and recoils with horror from the imaginary "buggerboo" in the next dark room. Refrain your laughter, for you stand on sacred ground. Have you never read, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained praise?" It is no imaginary being there. Nature's God is there, and nature in the child, though yet untaught, recognizes his presence, and instinctively uncovers and unveils before him. That child's fears are nature's own voice, needing only a little training to break out into sweet eternal melody. They are the incipient workings of that spirit which is in man, to which God gives understanding, until at length, poised on its own strong wing and confident in its own clear gaze, it is like him and sees him as he is.

As the earth does not choose, but from a necessity of her nature yields to the genial promptings of the suns and rains, the winds and dews of heaven, and shoots forth vegetation of some sort, just according to the seed sown in the soil; in like manner these moral affections have no power of resistance, but from a necessity of their nature shoot out a religion of some sort, just according to the facts sown in the understanding. Hence, man may vary indefinitely the form of his religion, but not the fact itself. He may choose among the innumerable theories placed before his mind, but he must choose and must adopt one placed before him, or create one for himself. Sir Wm. Hamilton, the great master of thought, has well said: "With the intellectual faculties religion is a sequence, but with the moral affections it is not, but is an intuition which might be called an original cognition of soul."

Here we rest with our first conclusion, fairly drawn, I trust, that man is naturally a religious being, and therefore does and must have a religion of some sort. And surely a being so formed ought to take up the exclamation: "I will praise thee, O Lord, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

[CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.]

Most of the shadows that cross our path through life are caused by our standing in our own light.