

THE LUTHERAN VISITOR.

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

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Communications.

For the Lutheran Visitor. The View of Heaven.

A servant of Christ, whose head faithful labor in the vineyard of the Lord had whitened, traveled, accompanied by a young friend, a few summers ago in Switzerland. The object was recreation, after long continued and arduous work. Their wanderings among the mountains led them one day to a naked wall of rocks, the lofty top of which was covered with an imposing castle. "We must ascend to it," said the young man; "the view up there must be glorious." His aged companion assented, and both commenced at once to climb up the steep and rugged path. When they at last arrived at the gate of the castle, permission was asked to see it. It was freely given. They were first taken to the garden, where a truly magnificent and beautiful picture of snow-clad mountains and green valleys unfolded itself before their delighted eyes. The young man's heart was filled with rapturous joy, and his lips overflowed with loud praises to the majesty and glory of God. The aged man is silent. The more excited his youthful companion becomes, the greater is his reserve. At last the former exclaims: "But is not this view wonderfully beautiful?" "Yes," said the view of heaven is yet more beautiful. The youth stands awhile lost in thought, and as they moved on, asks carelessly: "Do the people in the castle think so?" "We will inquire," said the other. "O no! how can we do that? It is not proper." "Certainly it is. Come let us ask." There is no help for it. The young man follows his aged leader. They enter the castle, which evidently belongs to a rich and distinguished man. The porter inquires, whether they want to speak with any one in the castle. The aged man answers quietly: "The porter hesitates, he thinks the visit ill-timed, as it is the dinner hour. He demurs; there is company; he makes other objections. The aged man is firm; he presses his request. 'Whom am I then to announce?' asks the porter. 'Tell your lady, that an old man desires to see her.' The lady appears, and the earnest soldier of the cross addresses her. 'We have come,' says he, 'to thank you kindly for permitting us to enjoy the beautiful view; but the view of heaven is much more beautiful. Do you believe this?' The lady is astonished, she turns around, hurries off to her husband, whom she requests to go and speak to a most extraordinary man, who talks very strange, and whom she can not at all understand. The gentleman goes, and the aged pilgrim addresses him: 'We have come to thank you kindly for permitting us to enjoy the beautiful view; the view of heaven is far more beautiful. Do you believe this?' The gentleman stands for a few moments wrapped in silent meditation. At last he answers: 'I have company; would you be willing to ask my guests this question?' 'Gladly, if you permit me.' Together they enter the large dining room. A large and fashionable company are seated at the magnificent table; but earthly splendor has no attractions for the faithful disciple; he approaches the table, and repeats the third time fearlessly the same question, and adds impressively, 'Do you believe this?' Nor does he stop there. He keeps on, and preaches the gospel in demonstration of the Spirit and with power to the brilliant assembly. The hearers become uneasy. They are not prepared for such an entertainment. While the aged preacher bears witness to the truth as it is in Christ, one guest after another leaves, and when he is done only a few remain over. He now turns to go too, but the gentleman presses him to stay. He declines; but in vain. He remains. At last he refuses to stay any longer. The owner of the castle then asks the favor of a private conversation. The two enter a private chamber, the windows of which open in the garden. "Look," says the gentleman. "Do you see that bush yonder? I knelt down behind it this morning, and asked the Lord to send me an angel to strengthen me, lest I this day should deny His name. I have but lately become a believer in Jesus Christ, and I was afraid that I would not have strength sufficient to confess my Lord and Saviour, if necessary, before the company, which I could not avoid inviting on the occasion of moving into my newly erected castle. I asked him to send an angel to me—and you came."

What passed between the two we do not know; but we are able to add, that the wonderful answer to the prayer of faith united these two believers in lasting bonds of christian friendship.—*Pilger aus Sachsen.*

For the Lutheran Visitor. Christians Blessed with Abraham.

The outward distinctions of life awaken the envy of some persons, and engender discontent in the bosom of others. One individual seems to be the favorite of fortune, whilst another equally well deserving, seems to be doomed to misfortune and mishaps through life. Indeed, we sometimes see the wicked flourishing and spreading himself as the green bay-tree; whilst the upright are doomed to poverty and earthly misery. And yet how little depends upon the outward and earthly condition and circumstances of a man! Neither wealth, with its ease and enjoyment, nor poverty, with its rags and wretchedness, recommend an individual to God. It is not the outward surroundings, but the heart upon which God looks. If eternal happiness depended upon the wealth or popularity or honor of an individual, many humble and obscure christians would never obtain it. But it does not depend upon any earthly distinction, and many who are now in possession of their thousands, and have the praise of admiring friends accorded to them, will fall of an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Many of the favored ones of earth, who receive their good things in this life, shall be cast out into outer darkness, whilst many an obscure but devout servant of Jesus Christ shall be brought into the courts of eternal bliss, to reign with him. Our outward conditions, or poor to a proverb, is neither a recommendation nor an objection with God. It is the life and actions—the habitual temper of the mind—the condition of the heart—by which we shall be judged.

All that is essential to the real welfare and happiness of man, lies open to all who choose to avail themselves of it. Though there be much that we can never acquire in this world, all may obtain an inheritance at the right hand of God. "All can not become scholars, but all may be made wise unto salvation. All can not acquire wealth, but all may gain the unsearchable riches of Christ. All can not walk upon the high places of the earth, but all may be great in the sight of the Lord. Abraham, the founder of the Jewish nation, was considered the most dignified and indulged of the human race, yet every christian, however poor and despised, stands related to this extraordinary character, and is blessed with him." Through faith the blessings of the promise made to Abraham are also given to the true christian. If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. If ye belong to Christ—if we have believed in Him, and have taken Him as our portion, we have become heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. We inherit the blessings promised to faithful Abraham, and partake of the felicity to which he looked forward.

It is not by obedience to the law, but by faith, that we obtain the blessing, as Abraham did. All are on a level, and all are much the children of God in the same manner, and on the same terms that Abraham was. They who are justified by faith through the Lord Jesus Christ become the children of God. Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. If we are like him—if we evince the same spirit and character, we may be sure of salvation. So then, they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. They are justified in the same manner, admitted to the same spiritual privileges on earth, and shall be partakers of the same glory in heaven.

Where sin enters, pride will enter too, and supply the place of real honor, and as iniquity aboundeth, pride also aboundeth; else how could sinners boast of dignity, and take up mighty state, on account of verbal titles, or of transient manors, when they themselves must soon be eaten up with worms?

Selections.

The Promise.

Man is a creature of faith. He feels the need of something to trust in. He knows that he is not omnipotent—that, rather, he is weak and dependent. He must confide where he can not sway.

The world goes upon the seemingly frail, but mighty, strength of words given and pledged from man to man. One wants food and raiment. He asks the merchant for what he needs, and offers in return a flimsy, soiled, and it may be, a ragged bit of paper. But that scrap of paper is inscribed with words that convey the promise of a mighty nation; and for it the merchant gladly exchanges his costly goods. He has faith in that promise.

Enterprising men wish to build a great line of railway. They unite to form a corporate body. To carry forward the purposes and complete the plans of this body, capitalists pour forth their wealth in lavish streams, and receive in lieu thereof a mortgage, or a share of stock, or a bond. But these are only forms of promises.

Also, nations frequently borrow millions; and the lenders rest calmly satisfied with the promise to refund, though the given bond have many years to run.

Thus private wants, public enterprises and national necessities obtain their supplies by means of the appropriate promise. Truly, more than they often think, men live by faith.

But a promise, to be trustworthy, must be based on known ability and satisfactory evidence of an intention to fulfill that promise. Men are very chary—where money is at stake—of trusting unknown or doubtful promises. If the borrower—whether an individual or a company or a nation—be of questionable integrity, the lenders of money turn a deaf ear to and truthfulness of those in whom they are asked to place confidence.

The world gladly lays all its costliest merchandise, richest estates, and choicest delights, at the feet of those who offer a sufficiency of these man-made promises, though often they fail of fulfillment. Yes, many men will sell their honor, and their soul even, for a handful of paper assurances of earth's perishable good. Thus men's promises are honored—believed. Yet those of God are dishonored—disbelieved.

What words can fitly characterize the perverseness and blindness and distrust that must fill the hearts of men, to cause them to draw back from, and to discredit the Everlasting Father! Power belongs to God. His riches are infinite. He can not fail to perform what he has spoken. And if he has given us Christ, in whom are all riches, both of things present and things to come, shall he not "with him freely give us all things?" Let the mind dwell and reflect on those words "freely" and "all things," and learn the fullness and certainty of the Divine bounty and promise.

The Bible is the christian's check-book, given of God. It is full of "exceeding great and precious promises," all indorsed by Him who said, "Ask in my name." And all these when actually presented—that is, when their fulfillment is asked in faith—give to those who do God's commandments a right to draw, as they have need, on the bank of Omnipotence and Love—from the infinite treasury of the Lord's everlasting fullness.

The "Bonds" of the "Faithful and True" One are written with a "yea and amen," and whosoever is in Christ Jesus incurs no risk of their repudiation. There is, however, this peculiarity about these bonds, which distinguishes them from all others. We can not buy them till we sell all that we have, by dedicating all our powers and wealth and time to God. There must be no keeping back. But when this consecration is complete, we are put into the heirship and possession of these pledges of Divine bounty. And then the exchange is found to be one of amazing advantage and incalculable enjoyment. By it we obtain a claim on Omnipotent power; we quit the troubles and anxieties of life for the hope of a joyous eternity; our soiled and fragile possessions for an inheritance undecayed, imperishable.

We need more of that prevailing faith that can lay hold with vigorous

grasp upon that vast all-inclusive promise of Christ. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." But let us not ask "amies"—not that we may serve our own pleasure with the gifts of his bounty, but that we may be bolder and the better do his will.—*Western Advocate.*

He Shall Bear the Glory.

There is a glory of Christ, as the Head of the universal Church, by and through whom a perfect kingdom is offered unto God. When the challenge shall I send?—a voice came from the bosom of the Father, saying: "Lo! I come—a body laid then prepared me." In the fulness of time He unclothed Himself of light, laid aside the garments of praise, sped to earth, and "took upon Him the form of a servant." In the sweep of that condescension, he passed through all intermediate grades of being, until He came to man at the bottom of the scale: virtually assuming them to Himself, and laying in His incarnation the foundation of His universal Headship. As the reward of His voluntary humility, the Father has "crowned Him with glory and honor, and has put all things in subjection under His feet." But the ground upon which it is conferred, is the virtual comprehension of all intelligences in the descent through all to find the lowest. Man, too, as composed of matter and of mind, is a miniature representation or copy of the whole creation; so that by affiliation with him would naturally be established a right to the Headship over all.

The principle of Grace, moreover, wrought in the furnace of the Law, admits of a double application: to sinners in their guilt, for their redemption—to beings that are sinless, for their confirmation in holiness. The latter, though not needing to be freed from the scope of naked law; and is, in the generic sense of the term, a manifestation of grace or favor—since the Law is substantially one over angels as well as men, I see no reason why the grace should not be one, nor why it should not be wrought out, as a working principle, by one and the same agent in one and the same act of consummate obedience.

In its essence it is the same, whether applied to the guilty in their recovery from ruin, or to the pure, in preventing their fall into it. It is but the extension, in a new and glorious direction, of a principle that is capable of manifold uses, and which has clearly been wrought as a regulative element into the Divine government. But, upon whatever footing we choose to rest it, the revealed fact is—or, rather, the revealed series of facts—that Christ has been made "the Head of all principality and power," that the schism, which sin has made between men and angels, has been healed by the Peace-maker "through the blood of His cross, reconciling all things unto Himself—whether they be things in earth, or things in Heaven"—that angels are introduced through the redeemed into the glorified Church above, and with responsive praises unite in the worship of God and the Lamb. Of this glorious priesthood the Mediator is the Head. As the long procession, clothed in white, moves along the golden streets in the city of God, the adorable High Priest receives it at the foot of the eternal throne, gathers the united worship into His own censer, and waves it before the infinitely pure and blessed Jehovah. A finite worship is thus transfigured and rendered meet for acceptance even by the dreadful and glorious God.

Where is the saint on earth who is not, at times, overwhelmed by a sense of defect in the worship which He attempts to offer? Even when that worship is purest, when the heart is at a white heat in the glow of its desires, and when the praise bursts with true sincerity from his lips—still how far short does it fall of rendering the perfections of our Maker, and of meeting the fullness of His claim upon our adoration and love. The re-assuring thought is, that the Apostle and High Priest of our profession has for us entered within the veil; that His infinite merit perfumes our poor service; and that He lights the incense of our worship at the fire which burns upon His own altar. How much more blessed the communion of the Church

above! There saints and angels sing in alternate strains the praise of the unsearchable God; while the High Priest takes the united worship upon His own lips, and translates it into the speech which is never uttered save by the eternal Three in the awful mystery and fellowship of the Godhead.—*Dr. Palmer.*

The Captives of Calais.

About the year 1350, Edward III., of England, invaded France with thirty thousand men, and at the battle of Crécy defeated Philip, who was at the head of the French army. After the battle Edward besieged Calais, which, after an obstinate resistance of a year, was taken by the English king. He offered to spare the lives of the inhabitants, on condition that six of their principal citizens should be delivered up to him, with halters round their necks, to be immediately executed.

When these terms were announced in the city, there was a consternation on every countenance. The rulers of the town came together, and the question was publicly proposed, "Who will offer himself as an atonement for the city?"

There was silence in the Assembly. The form in which the question was put suggested another, which, after the lapse of a few moments, fell from the same lips: "Who will imitate Christ, who gave himself for the salvation of men?"

Eustace St. Pierre, the commander of the town, immediately stepped forward and said, "I will lay down my life for your sakes. I do it freely—cheerfully. Who is the next one?" "Your son," cried a young man, not yet arrived at manhood. "Who next?"

Another and another quickly offered, until the whole number was made up. They started for the English camp. Their families and fellow-citizens clung around them, groaning and weeping until the noise was of a tumultuous multitude.

They appeared before the king. "Are these the principal inhabitants of Calais?" he inquired sternly. "Of France, my lord," they replied. "Lead them to execution."

At this moment a shout of triumph was heard in the camp. The queen had just arrived. She was immediately informed of the punishment about to be inflicted on the six victims. She hastened to the king and pleaded for their pardon. At first he sternly refused to grant it, but her earnestness conquered, and the king yielded. Calling the captives before her, she said, "Natives of France, though you were ten-fold the enemies of our throne, yet we loose your chains. We snatch you from the scaffold. You are free."

What a forcible emblem is this of the intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ! When we submit our hearts as captives to the Father, and feel that we are condemned and lost, we have an effectual Mediator who stays the hand of justice.

The queen, by her relation to the victorious monarch, succeeded. Not another in his army could have done so. So Christ, by his relation to the Father—his Son, his only Son—can never plead in vain.

But Jesus has done more than the queen of England ever did for the captives of Calais. He gave himself: He shed his blood to save us.—*American Messenger.*

Follow Your Guide.

The people of Iceland live in regions we would scarcely think could be traversed by man or beast. The mountains on the island are mostly volcanoes, which for ages have poured out over the country vast floods of boiling lava, which has cooled in every variety of form, making great masses of rock tumbled together in the wildest confusion. Here will be a chasm seemingly without bottom. Here the dark crust of cooled lava will be too thin to bear the traveller. There a mass of ice and snow on a mountain side will tumble over the path, ready at a breath to fall upon, and crush, and bury the traveller forever. The loose stones, which are started by his footsteps, often roll down the sides of awful precipices, plunging from depth to depth till the sound dies away. Oh how fearful the fate of one who makes a misstep in traversing these paths!

But the guides pass over them as firmly and unconcernedly as we walk our good roads at home. And there

is but one course for travellers, that is to follow their guide, follow him blindly and implicitly.

It would not answer for one to say, "This path is not so blocked up with lava as that. It is pleasanter to walk in. I wish to examine these little creeping plants and flowers that grow on the edge of the cliff. I will go this way."

What do you think would be the result? It would not be long before you would hear a fearful fall, and a despairing cry of "lost, lost."

Just so, dear children, it will be with those who will not follow the heavenly guide. We are all passing over a way in life more dangerous than Iceland roads. We are all the time in danger of falling into sin that will ruin our souls. They look pleasant as the right path, but the end is death. Our guide has given us a book to teach us the way. So plain is it that nobody need make a false step. Jesus has gone the way before us, and we have but lovingly to follow his footsteps and we shall all reach the blessed home in safety and exceeding joy.—*Child's World.*

Plea for the Deaf.

We wish to make a plea for the deaf, that ministers would preach so that these can hear. Of course we do not mean those who are as deaf as an adder, but those ears are dull and muffled.

Every minister may take it for granted that at least one person partially deaf is always present in the congregation. Let him remember that person, and let him speak so that he or she can hear. Often have we with pain noticed the vain efforts of people with dull ears to catch what the speaker was saying; and what a look of disappointment gathered over the countenance of the unfortunate one as he settled back in his pew in despair. The sermon is to him a blank.

Let the Scriptures and hymns be more loudness. We have heard speakers roar at the top of a thick husky voice, so that nobody could tell what was said. On the other hand, we have heard orators who would pronounce every word so distinctly that it was a luxury to hear, and yet the volume of the voice was not great. Every one has noticed that Matthew says that when Jesus preached the sermon on the Mount he opened his mouth. This means he used his organs of speech so that the vast open-air audience could easily hear him.

The practice of slavishly reading manuscript sermons is against persons whose hearing is dull; when the head is inclined downward, and the eyes are fixed upon the paper, the enunciation is apt to be imperfect. It is of great assistance to understand a speaker to be able to see his eyes and to read the expression there.

Mumbling and muttering are always bad in their influence. We have heard of a man who was in the habit of asking a blessing at the table in so indistinct a manner that his little son once asked him, "Father, what is that you always say to your plate when we sit down at the table?"

Mumbling is inexcusable. Demosthenes cured himself of this fault by declaiming at the sea-shore with pebbles in his mouth. Some ministers preach as if they were practicing in the pulpit with the pebbles of Demosthenes.

We have understood that in some of the churches situated on Long Island many of the congregations are hard of hearing (we presume because of the wind and storms which prevail), and that one requisite which they seek in a minister is a loud, or at least a clear voice. A minister, however excellent, who mumbled or whispered would be unacceptable there.

Hear, then, this plea for the deaf, ministers of the gospel! Do not stop up the deaf ears, but blow the gospel trumpet in clear and unmistakable notes.—*Herald and Presbyter.*

Speak kindly in the morning; it lightens the cares of the day, and makes household and all other affairs move along more smoothly. Speak kindly at night, for it may be that before the dawn some loved one may finish his or her span of life for this world, and it will be too late to ask forgiveness.

The Devil as a Church Architect.

Not directly and personally, of course, but by insinuating himself into architects and building committees. As he walketh up and down the earth he must view some things with uncommon satisfaction. When he tempted the Lord in the wilderness, he was answered, "Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Having gotten this information, he makes use of it to hinder every word of God from getting into the life of man. If people will go to church and sit down to hear, Satan whispers to the architect to put in pillars to hide the preacher, and then to stain the windows to hide him more by the "dim religious light," and then, having kept out the pure light of heaven, to distribute the stained light in ghastly blotches, making the bald crown of one deacon a bright purple, and the nose of another to play with a lambent blue, and the face of some devout sister, who is homely enough as she is, to horrify with a ghastly green—the whole interior reduced to about the ghastliness of nature under a total eclipse of the sun.

Then the old serpent brings it about that the audience room should be acoustically as bad as possible. He suggests a long and narrow sarcophagus-shaped room, with a transept and an apse, and a high pointed roof and open rafters, and everything admirably adapted for shivering the words of God into echoes, and for accommodating swallows, if they could have restored their ancient privileges of nest building in the house of the Lord.

As for the preacher, whom the devil hates and would annoy and incommode as much as possible, he is placed in the apse or alcove, as far back as may be, cut off from magnetic communication with his admirers by a non-conducting empty space, as wide as may be between him and the front pews, while as to the half of the congregation seated

Then the adversary suggests, get the singers away from the congregations as far as the real estate of the society will allow, either behind the minister, or lifted up between heaven and earth in the rear gallery. If in the latter position, so that the congregation can not see them, nor well unite with them, and so that, if artistic and ugly, they can frustrate all congregational singing; or, if behind the minister, so that they can pour the confused waves of sound, organ and all, across the back of the defenceless head, submerging all the nerves of his tympanum as with great billows rolling over him, and each particular singer thrusting into his ears from behind, at close quarters, his javelins or songs. Give them, too, whispers the adversary, a small and narrow box in front of the organ, and then you insure a paid quartette, a fixed and staring fact, and to be stared at forever—and you will never get the poor, timid girl with a plain bonnet to sit there, nor the modest young man with a very long nose. And so you will have little hope of the grand and sympathetic and united praises of the great congregation swelling and surging up lustily from its own midst.

Keep out the light, hinder the speaking and hearing and praising, make things unsocial, formal, spectacular, medieval, final—let the plain people, who have a good many children and can not get themselves all up in a style becoming the church interior, peep in, perhaps inquire the price of a pew, and go away—all this suits the devil as a church architect. But he never liked the old-fashioned meeting houses, which were nearly square, and had the pulpit on the oblong side, and the deep, surrounding galleries, and the people brought up close and within range. Before the Old South Church of Boston is pulled down, let the people go in and take a last scrutinizing look, and then let them go out and speak to the architects and demand of them more christian common sense in planning church edifices. Mr. Heworth was asked the other day what sort of a church he would like have built for him. He replied, "You see any street speaker gathering around him a large crowd, every individual of which he is bound to reach and influence by his voice—well, I wish that roofed over."—*Springfield Republican.*