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Communications.

For the Lutheran Visitor.
Review of Rev. J. H. Gross.

It is not the subject of property, and our author has only reproduced the main points of the Lutheran doctrine, and has decided many a point, and especially by Rev. J. H. Gross, D.D., in his "Answer to the Roman Catholic."

It will be remembered that I am not reviewing the book, not defending it, but showing that the author has done his duty, and deserves the credit of having written a book of the severest character.

He takes up Paul's words in 1 Cor. x: 16, "The cup of blessing," &c., and says, "These words indeed have reference to the Eucharist, but the 'cup of blessing' is simply the equivalent of the Hebrew *shewbread*, over which thanks and praises were offered at the conclusion of the paschal banquet."

"According to the Literalist, the sacramental wine is the blood of Christ, and, of course, in drinking of the cup over which the thanks are given, we have communion with Christ; and in eating of the sacramental bread, it being, as he says, 'the body of Christ,' we have communion with the body of Christ, and are accordingly united with him through means of the visible elements."

"To have communion with the body of Christ is to have fellowship with Christ, inasmuch as we are partakers of the sacramental bread and wine in commemoration of his vicarious death. The Christians thus eating and drinking sacramentally, commune with their Lord, or have fellowship with him in precisely the same way in which the heathens, at the celebration of their sacrificial banquets, had communion or fellowship with their gods to whom the sacrifice was offered."

That is according to our author: The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not a sacrament—an ordinance of Christ "instituted in the Christian church, having a divine assurance of grace attached to it," but simply a commemorative festival such as was held by the heathens, and the bread and wine are similar in signification to the sacrifices offered by the heathens in honor of their gods. This is the "essence of progress!" the rules of which were unknown to Luther.

The passage in 1 Cor. x: 16, while it is not intended to teach only as a confirmation of Christ's words, as doctrine on the Lord's Supper, is nevertheless, as Luther properly calls it, "a thunderbolt on the heads of errorists in regard to the Lord's Supper." St. Paul expressly mentions two elements, the bread which is the earthly, and the body of our Lord which is the heavenly, and says that these are the communion.

The bread is not the body, it is not commemorative of the body, it is not the communion in sign or symbol of the body, but it is the communion of the body. Gross says: The cup is the sign of the blood, the bread is the sign of the body; but St. Paul says: The cup is the communion and not the sign of the blood, and the bread is the communion and not the sign of the body of Christ.

On Mr. Gross' theory any bread, that of the heathen festival, for instance, was just as much a symbol or sign of Christ's body as the bread used in the Lord's Supper; but Paul says: "The bread which we break, the cup of blessing which we bless, is the communion of the body and blood of Christ." According to Gross, we receive the bread to be reminded of the body; according to Paul we receive the bread to receive Christ's body. If the bread is to be broken simply to remind us of the broken body, why did Christ not tell us that bread at ordinary meals should remind us of his broken body?

There is a "communion of the body and blood of Christ," in some form in the Lord's Supper. What is it? Is it real or imaginary? St. Paul, says Dr. Krauth, draws a parallel between the Jew and his sacrifice, and the Christian and his sacrifice, after the flesh, and Israel after the spirit. "Israel after the flesh, or the Jews, have the typical sacrifice of the body and blood of animals, on

the typical altar, and eat of the typical sacrifice of animal body and blood at the Jewish festival, the sacrificial supper, and thus partake of the typical altar. Israel after the spirit, or Christians, have the real sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ on the true altar, and eat of the true sacrifice of Christ's body and blood at the Christian festival, the Lord's Supper, and thus partake of the true altar."

It is, and has been always called by the church the communion, and it alone is such; but if "communion," as used by St. Paul, is only spiritual, as the Christian communes with his Saviour in his closet, or, as our author contends, such as the heathen had at their festivals, why call it the communion? If it is only fellowship with others at a festival, why "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat." How can he "eat and drink unworthily," "eat and drink damnation to himself," "not discerning the Lord's body?" How can he discern a thing not there to be discerned? The universal Christian consciousness and language attest the supernatural reality of the presence of the body and blood of Christ.

It has been said by Dr. Dick that "no trace of the doctrine of the Real Presence can be found farther back than the eleventh century;" and our author boldly asserts that it was conceived in the twelfth century. I put but little confidence in what many of the fathers say, for they are now made to say anything; but I quote the following:

Ignatius, A. D. 107, says: "The Eucharist is the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is one cup for the uniting of his blood."

Justin Martyr, A. D. 165: "The food over which the Eucharistic prayer has been made is the flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus."

Irenaeus, A. D. 202: "When the mingled cup and broken bread become the words of God, it becomes the Eucharist of the body and blood of Christ."

Ambrose, A. D. 307: "We, receiving the one bread and the one cup, are receivers and partakers of the body of the Lord."

Chrysostom and Theophylact, and John of Damascus, all say that when Paul says "communion" he means not "participation," but "signifies something more, and indicates the greatness of the joining together."

We could give many more, but why burden you with an accumulation of authorities? I have quoted these to show that men, to carry their points, make many assertions that facts flatly contradict.

Olshausen in his critical exegesis of 1 Cor. x: says: "Blessing the cup, the bread, describes the effect of prayer whereby the elements cease to be common bread and wine, the coming of the *verbum ad elementum*, *ut fiat sacramentum*, not transmuting the substance, but present at the moment of receiving."

An examination of his Commentary, Vol. iv, pp. 313, 316, will show a magnificent explosion of our author's "exegesis," and the true interpretation of St. Paul, as will any other sensible commentator.

Our author says that the "eating and drinking unworthily" was "a bacchanalian celebration of the Lord's Supper;" and that the "damnation" to which they were subject was "a punishment which resulted from intemperate behavior," and was "disciplinary or corrective, and therefore adapted to amend the evil ways of these unworthy Christians." All the same as if they had gone to a public dinner and overloaded their stomachs, or to a drinking saloon and imbibed too freely. And it was "disciplinary." Then all a poor sinner need do to avoid being "condemned with the world" is to "eat and drink unworthily," and God will make his gluttony or intemperance "corrective," and save him from the "condemnation of the world." Here is "exegesis" according to modern rules, of which Luther, the Literalist, was so ignorant.

J. HAWKINS.

HEART-POWER.—There is a prodigious power in singleness of love for Jesus—in the doing "just one thing," and that is to live solely for the Master. A man of very moderate talents and endowments becomes a leading mind as soon as Christ gets complete hold of him. I can point to more than one plain, modest, moderately educated Christian, who has attained to a great propelling power in the church, simply from the momentum of his godliness. He follows Jesus so heartily, so persistently, that he carries others along with him by his sheer momentum. And that is not brain-power, or prairie-power mainly, but heart-power.

Selections.

Family Religion.

Dr. Van Dolan in the Christian Intelligencer has a good article on the importance of family religion and worship, and the excuses for the neglect of this duty—such as want of time, &c. He says:

"How comes it to pass that the penurious heads of families find time to trade, to farm, to gossip, to visit friends, to attend elections, to frequent the theatre, the dance, and a thousand other scenes, but no time to pray with their families? We once saw a young merchant urging with energy, arising to vehemence, a successful business. We accosted him as to neglect of this and other duties.

"No time sir; no time, sir," replied he, in urgent haste.

"Well, my dear friend, God will give you time by-and-by."

"Only one week after, he was driving with Jehu speed along the avenue, and one of the tires of his wheel broke. His splendid team being frightened, became unmanageable, ran away and fung him against an iron lamp-post, and broke both his legs. His very first thought he afterward confessed, was the reply to the above question. 'Will you have time enough now to pray, Alfred?'"

"For three long months, like a chained eagle, that fiery-hearted merchant was confined to his couch at home. It was harvest time for eternity as it regarded the interest of his soul.

"The strongest argument in favor of neglecting family worship is seldom fairly stated—it is a want of the heart for the duty. Men that have not been renewed find it a hard task to play the hypocrite alone; but to subject themselves to the scorching glance of children and servants—this is too much."

Troubles in Clusters.

It is characteristic of our discipline under troubles that they come in clusters; they move like the stars, in constellations. They sweep upon us like the waves of the sea; one goes over our head, and we lift our face dripping, and another buries us, and we gasp and choke, and begin to breathe again, and a third and fourth deluge us, and drowning seems inevitable. So true is this that we have made a proverb of it, and say, "Misfortunes seldom come alone," or in more general language, "It never rains but it pours."

The patriarch of us is a notable instance of this style of providential dealing. There he sits in his princedom, in honor, ease, and prosperity, when a boding messenger rushes in to tell the fate of "the oxen" and "the asses." Scarce are his tidings delivered, when another announces the destruction of the flocks. Before he can fairly finish, a third brings news of the robbery of the camels; and upon his heels comes a fourth with the tragedy that has bereft him of sons and daughters. There is no time to gather strength between the strokes. Job might have originated the proverb, "Misfortunes never come single," or opened his mouth with the complaint, "It never rains but it pours." But he had something better to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Our own experience will have been exceptional if it does not attest this frequent peculiarity of trial. There are days in which everything seems to go wrong with us. Disappointment succeeds to disappointment, failure to failure, wave to wave, till we have no strength nor hope left.

Now, it is just this speciality of discipline that works its happiest effects. It calls our attention to the divine dealing. We are walking safely and quietly on our road, when a buffet is administered, and we go down. Well, we get up on our feet again, brush off the dust, and, if that's all, stride along, with the comment, "Time and chance happen to all." But it isn't all. Before we are fairly erect another comes and beats us down a second time, and struggling to our knees, a third prostrates us, and while we are down we get a fourth. The treatment begins to look rather special. It demands recognition, and thought, and inquiry. It puts us upon asking what is meant, by studying into the lesson that has such emphasis and cogency.

The same process empties us of self-confidence and self-reliance. We could bear one stroke, and go on

with a stout heart. But the many strokes make us sore all over, disable us and we have to cry out for help. It is the accumulation of troubles that wrings from our lips the prayer, "Save, Lord, or perish!"

This is the dealing that shows God's thoroughness and faithfulness. He has taken us "in hand." He means effective treatment. Our hurts are not to be "healed slightly." Such discipline perfects obedience and resignation. After this, nothing will have no smart. We shall not mind the stinging of a scorpion, after we have been crushed in the coil of serpents. And only great deliverance can come to great sorrows.

The Clouds of the Bible.

It is an interesting study to observe what an important place clouds are made to occupy in the history and imagery of the Bible. The presence, the throne, and the motions of the Divine Being are frequently associated with clouds. "Clouds and darkness," it is said, "are round about him." "He maketh the clouds his chariot," and "The Lord rideth upon a swift cloud." A cloud was the symbol of the divine presence with the armies of Israel in their journeyings. Thick clouds, which sent forth piercing lightnings and fearful thunders, rested for weeks on the brow of Sinai while Moses was closeted in council with Jehovah. A cloud filled the temple in Jerusalem at its dedication, radiating a brightness so intense that the priests were unable to remain in its presence.

"A cloud the size of a man's hand" arose out of the sea, assuring the prophet of coming "abundance of rain," as other seemingly insignificant pledges have often since betokened approaching showers of blessing. Isaiah in vision saw the people "fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows," in their future rapid gatherings to the church. Hosia reproached the waters with the evanescence of their virtues, declaring that their "goodness is as a morning cloud." Job prayed that "a cloud might dwell on the day of his birth, hiding it with darkness. He perceived also the wisdom of God in "binding up the waters in a cloud," and in "knowing the balances of the clouds."

A "bright cloud" overshadowed the mount of transfiguration, at which the disciples "were sore afraid," notwithstanding the gracious words that proceeded from its silvery foldings. "A cloud received Him out of their sight," as the disciples stood in utter bewilderment of wonder gazing after their ascending Lord. The Son of man shall "come again in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." "Descending with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Many of our most distinct conceptions are gained by the aid of contrasts. So also are some of our most satisfying enjoyments. That "how in the cloud," appearing after the long rain of the dreary, desolating deluge must have seemed clothed in incomparable brilliance and beauty to the vision of the small company of voyagers. If even beauty had power to charm the eye and glorify the soul-pulses of the beholder, then these long-impressed mariners must have been thrilled with the intensest delight at beholding the radiant glory sweeping the arch of the sky. So also are our joys intensified when set against the dark ground of adverse experiences gone by. None are so grateful for health and vigor as they who are fresh from the conflict with sickness. The lame, restored by the Saviour's touch, leaped for joy, while men who had never suffered lameness made no such demonstrative use of their powers. To the hungry a feast has charms which the full can not realize, and the sweetest rest is reserved for weary limbs.

In Christian experience the deepest darkness and sorest trials are associated with the holiest consolations and strongest assurances. The hardness and damp and cold of the dungeon are dispensed and forgotten when the warm breath of an angel falls upon the believing prisoner. The bitter anguish of Gethsemane is softened when the strengthening angel lifts up the prostrate sufferer. Sorrows, toils, disappointments, trials, weariness, abasements by friends, persecutions and deaths are all forgotten when our vision rests on the glorious rainbow of promise, the sure token of God's gracious disposition toward us.

And yet how we dread to enter under the shadow of these clouds. Their darkness terrifies us; like the disciples, we are "sore afraid." It may be that the voice of the Saviour himself has called us, and his own presence has led us to the place where the shadows rest. But forgetting his presence, our trust forsakes us and we are shaken with fear. Could we but always be conscious of the sweet presence of Jesus, how should not our hearts exclaim, even though the shadows be in, "Let us make here tabernacles and abide, for it is good to be here."

Yes, it is good to sit beneath the shadows if the face of Jesus be our light; to be cast into the crucible if he "sit as the refiner;" or into the furnace of fire if the face of our companion shall be as the "countenance of the Son of God." The storm, and deluge, and desolation, and the hiding of the sun may be endured, if after it all the cloud shall become resplendent with the glory of God's countenance, and earth and heaven be joined together with the radiant symbol of his mercy.—*Religious Telescope.*

The Great Work.

"Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men." And we know, too, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; that he who was rich," for the sake of all the blind and infatuated sinful men about us, and in our world, "became poor, that they through his poverty might be made rich;" that he is "rich to all that call upon him," and has no "respect of persons," and by us has commanded his truth to be dispersed and his grace to be distributed. Let these views more deeply influence us, that we may never loiter in the work assigned to us, if we are truly recovered to God ourselves—that of "strengthening our brethren." On them who are perishing for lack of knowledge, never can we too earnestly, and affectionately, and yearningly "set our hearts." If you convert a sinner from the error of his ways, you "save a soul from death," and can a more powerful motive be urged? You place another child in the family of God; you open a mind to knowledge ever enlarging, and to feelings which shall yield a felicity more noble and sanctifying throughout eternity. You advance the rapture of angels; for "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." You brighten the joy of your Lord himself; for "he sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied." Happy will it be when this true estimate of man shall be taken by the universal church of Christ. Its terror will be shaken off, its disputes and bickerings silenced, and every energy put forth in the solemn work of saving souls from death. O Thou who hast set thine heart upon man, inspire us with some larger portion of thine own boundless and tender charity.—*Richard Watson.*

Beginning of the Religious Life.

We all know it is no easy matter, in some instances, to determine with certainty the real source, or sources, of a river. In the case of most of the great rivers, the sources are not easily reached—they are far off and high up; hundreds or thousands of miles must be trodden by the adventurous traveler before he comes even into the region where they may be found. And when he is there, standing by the very cradle of the waters, he finds, it may be, several streams from different hillsides, each having some claim to the honor of being the head; and when he, at length, assigns the honor to some one—if he does not give it equally to several—he does this on no inevitable principle of law for the case, but from taste, from personal opinion, or in a quite arbitrary manner. Or he finds that he can trace the river back to some one hillside or "mossy bed," out of which, however, a good many "new-born rills" come "trickling." So that while the whole earthly source of the river may be said, in one way, to lie quite open to the view, yet no human power can tell, exactly, where the flow begins. Or, again, he finds that the river issues at once, as in a considerable fountain, from the bosom of the earth. "Here at last can be no uncertainty." Yet even here an intelligent traveler has to think, that no water comes out of

the earth that did not go into it. His imagination therefore starts on a subterranean journey; following the bendings of the strain, and comes out to the light once more perhaps in a moss, or mountain hollow, or amid the mists and showers of mountain tops. In fact, it does come to this, most literally and simply, that every river begins in the air. Here is a parable for behoof of those who are apt to be over-wise, or over-curious, or over-anxious, about the real beginning of the religious life in the individual. What if we are not able to find it? What if it lies deep down, or far back, within the circle of that mystery which will be found to envelop all vital beginnings? Are we the worse for not knowing what God never meant us to know?—for not seeing what only Omniscience can destroy? Jeremiah was "sanctified before he came forth out of the womb"—his religion, implicitly, began before his life. Timothy had "faith" which "dwelt first in his grandmother," and then "in his mother." Paul was converted on the way to Damascus, we may say almost in a moment. But who can tell how many preparatory things had led up to that wonderful change—his religious education and his incorruptible conscience among them? flow into each individual being from the first, and we never can be sure that we stand at the ultimate springs. Religion in the soul, like water in the river, comes originally out of the air. "Every good gift, and every perfect gift, cometh down from above."—*Sunday Magazine.*

Duty, Not Success.

God commands us to preach the gospel to every creature; to do this faithfully; so to do it as to quit ourselves of responsibility, "to deliver our souls." Our business is to declare "the testimony of God," to be his mouth to our hearers; to preach the word, to be instant in season and out of season; to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine; and then to leave the hearer and God together. But does God require us to expect, in answer to our preaching and our prayers, that every creature who hears will be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and come to Christ? Does he require us to expect that any particular person will be thus the subject of his effectual call, and does he blame us if that person is not converted? Was this the manner and spirit of Christ's preaching? Did he expect the conversion of those to whom he spake, and was his expectation disappointed because they were not converted? The same inquiry may be made respecting the preaching of Peter and of Paul. Did they evince the more anxiety as to the results or the manner of their preaching? The discharge of their duty as the messengers, the ambassadors of God, was not this the one, the supreme thing in their ministry?

Fidelity must be measured by some standard. Unquestionably, a want of success in leading souls to Christ may and should awaken the inquiry, Am I faithful? and should stimulate self-examination; but success can not be the standard of duty. Duty, as God's ambassadors, is to be tested by the faithfulness, i. e., the truthfulness of the delivery of our message, to which nothing of human opinion may be added; from which nothing may be subtracted. Duty, as the shepherds of souls, is to be tested by the care, and watchfulness, and prayerfulness used in its discharge. Duty, as Christians engaged in seeking the salvation of our fellow-men, is to be tested by the zeal and love manifested in the sacred pursuit. Success, or the want of it, is not the gauge or criterion by which to estimate our fidelity.

Nothing Great but God.

When Massillon pronounced one of those discourses which have placed him in the first class of orators, he found himself surrounded by the trappings and pageants of a royal funeral. The temple was not only hung with sable, but shadowed with darkness, save the few twinkling lights on the altar. The beauty and the chivalry of the land were spread out before him. The censers threw forth their fumes of incense, mounting in wreaths to the gilded dome. There sat Majesty, clothed in sackcloth and sunk in grief. All felt in common, and as one. It was a breathless suspense. Not a sound stole upon the awful stillness. The master of mighty eloquence arose,

His hands were folded on his breast. His eyes were lifted to heaven. Utterance seemed denied to him. He stood abstracted and lost. At length, his fixed look unbent; it hurried over the scene, where every pomp was mingled and every trophy stern. It found no resting-place for itself amidst all that idle parade and all that mocking vanity.

Again it settled; it had fastened upon the bier, glittering with escutcheons and veiled with plumes. A sense of the indescribable nothingness of man "at his best estate," of the meanness of the highest human grandeur, now made plain in the spectacle of that hearsed mortal, overcame him. His eye once more closed; his action was suspended; and, in a scarcely audible whisper, he broke the long drawn pause, "There is nothing great but God."—*Sermons by Dr. Hamilton.*

Order in Creation.

Take up the commonest plant—the furze that grows on the common, the sea-weed that clings to the rocks washed by the ocean, or the fern that springs up in the mountain glen—and you may observe in its structure, in its leaves or pinnacles a wonderful correspondence of side to side, and part to part. Let the eye travel over nature as we walk among the cultivated fields, or the grassy slopes and valleys of our upland countries, or among the thick woods where the winds have strewn the seeds, and trees of every kind spring up, each eager to maintain its place, and to show its separate form and beauty—and we discover an order in every branch, and blade, and leaf, and shade, and color. Take up a leaf or flower, and examine with or without the aid which art can furnish, and observe how one edge has the same number of notches upon it as the other edge, and what nice balancings and counterpoises there are, and how nicely the lines and dots and shadings of color suit each other and recur each at its proper place, as if all had been done by the most exact measurement, and under the most skillful and tasteful eye. Enter the rich arbor or the cultivated garden and observe how the flowers have been enlarged and improved by the care which has been taken of them, and in this gayer color and that fuller expanse and more flowing drapery and rich fragrance, mark how God, who rewards us for opening our eyes and looking abroad on his works, holds out a still greater reward to those who, in love to him, or in love to them, take pains with and bestow labor upon them.

Rising higher, we find all leading events in the earth and heavens to run in periods. Plants have their seasons for budding, and growing, and bearing seed and fruit, and their whole existence is for an allotted time. The life of animals and of man himself is a period; and it has its periodic developments of infancy, youth and manhood, and of old age. The very diseases of the human frame have their periods. The events of history in respect of politics, civilization, science, literature and religion, can be arranged into cycles; and as a whole exhibit a regular, though a somewhat complex progression. The tides of the ocean, and in many places the currents, flow in periods; and in some countries, the winds blow and the rains fall at certain regular seasons. The variations of magnetism on the earth's surface seem to be periodical. The changes in the condition of the earth have been arranged into geological epochs. The year is a period and it has its seasons; and there are *magni anni* in the movements of the planets, and the revolutions of the binary and multiple stars, and, probably, also, in the movements of the constellations and groups of the nebular heavens.

"Spiritual plowman, sharpen thy plowshare with the Spirit! Spiritual sower, dip thy seed in the Spirit, to give thee grace to scatter it, that it may fall into the right furrows! Spiritual warrior, whet thy sword with the Spirit, and ask the Spirit, whose word is a sword, indeed, to strengthen thine arm to wield it!"—*Spurgeon.*

Were it not for sin, death would never have had a beginning; were it not for death, sin would never have an ending.

"He builds too low who builds beneath the stars."