

THE LUTHERAN VISITOR.

Revs. Rude & Miller, Editors.

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Communications.

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

NUMBER IX.

Our author, after coming so near the truth in his last chapters that we have reviewed that the very atmosphere became pleasant, now devotes sixteen pages of his book to the poor, miserable, nonsensical argument, that the eating of blood of animals is forbidden in both the Old and New Testaments, and therefore the Saviour could not require us to drink his blood in the Eucharistic Supper! If there is any argument in all this, we freely confess that we have failed to see it, except that our author puts the Saviour's blood, by which the world was redeemed, on a level with the blood of a strangled goat! I beg to be excused from reviewing these three sections of his book; and if any reader of the Visitor wishes to deny the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper because the Bible forbids converted heathen from drinking, or rather eating the blood taken from animals while living, let them deny.

Our author then reviews the sixth of John. He says, "With direct reference to the doctrine of the real presence." "The words are figurative and have a spiritual import," which we believe, "but do not imply supernatural and incomprehensible mysticisms, as Luther and others taught." This we deny and contend that the eating of Christ's flesh is, of all mysticisms, the most supernatural and incomprehensible. To believe in the doctrine of Christ, and live by his grace, is supernatural—it is not according to the fixed laws of nature, it is not natural at all, and no naturalist can comprehend it; but in thus believing Christ's doctrine, and thus living by grace, are we in Christ, and Christ in us, and the part his flesh has to do in all this, so that it can be said we eat his flesh, is a greater mystery still.

But, as Lutherans of high authority inform us that this chapter in John has no reference to the Lord's Supper, and can in no way affect it, I pass it over.

His next chapter is headed, "The doctrine of the real presence in the Lord's Supper must be forever retained; for the Book of Concord, of which it forms a part, is required to be subscribed."

We reply that we expect to retain the doctrine of a real presence, and that the Church will retain it forever, not because the Book of Concord contains it, but because the Bible teaches it. I, and thousands of others, hold the doctrine, who never have subscribed the Book of Concord. And to abolish and destroy forever the Book of Concord, would not in the least affect the doctrine. A large part of the Episcopal Church, and a large part of the Lutheran Church in this country, who reject the Book of Concord, believe the doctrine. Mr. Gross himself says he believes in a presence, and there can be none but a real one, and he despises the Book of Concord.

It is taught in the Augsburg Confession, and if Mr. Gross, or any one else, can not believe it, his conscience is troubled about it, he ought to hunt a church that teaches no presence; but that church will not be found among the orthodox denominations in the United States.

His next chapter has this singular heading, "By subscription to an unalterable creed, progress in religious knowledge is stayed, and violence done to conscience."

What does he mean by "unalterable creed"? He can't mean the Augsburg Confession; for some of his party did alter that one night, and the Definite Platform came to light in the morning, lived that day, and died. This fact proves two things, first, that creeds can be altered, and secondly, that they are not eternal—both pleasant facts—to our author.

However both the argument may be that is founded upon our author's proposition, it amounts to nothing, as no advocate of creeds contends that they are unalterable. Any church has a perfect right in the sight of God and man to alter its creed whenever it has a better one to substitute. Our author will find no Lutheran deny this; but that church will be very apt to hold to its creed until it has a better one to take its place.

Let the proposition of change of the Creed be submitted to the Lu-

therans of any of our General Bodies, and that will test the matter.

I have no doubt of the fact that, if such an effort was made, much as we boast of progress, there would be a sublime rally around the grand old *Augsburg*, with its glorious history and immortal doctrines, and a shout would come up from the host of confessors, "Touch not the ark of God."

We are not going to exalt our Creed above, or up to the Bible. The Bible is divine, the Creed is human. The Bible is infallible, the Creed may err. But every upstart in the church has no right to set up a creed, and go off in a tangent any time he is not worshiped by the brethren, or whenever he feels inspired to tell the world his fancies.

Now no one will proscribe Mr. Gross in his researches, and if he finds that the Creed of his church varies from the word of God, he is at liberty to follow the divine and not the human; but he must be sure that what he holds at variance with the Creed is according to "the law and the testimony"—the very "thus saith the Lord."

Our author says: "It is high time for mankind to wake up to the fact, that whatever is really essential to our salvation is palpable to the most ordinary understanding, but what is beyond is simply matter for learned speculation, or philosophic disquisition." This is true only in part, but not true in the sense in which our author uses it. Things may be "palpable to the most ordinary intellect" when that intellect has been taught; but will our author say that the larger portion of Revelation is only "matter for learned speculation, or philosophic disquisition"? Did God give it for this? Is not all Scripture given by inspiration of God, and is it not profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof? The Bible is not given, as he contends, simply to tell a man how he can believe in Jesus. It is as much his duty to honor Jesus, to glorify him, to defend the faith, to give an answer to every one that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us. Paul says to the Hebrews: "For now when ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you, which be the first principles of the oracles of God." "He gave some teachers." "Go and teach all nations." St. Peter says that Paul in all his epistles spoke of the Lord and salvation; and that in them are "some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." Those hard things must have been essential, or else how could they wrest them to their own destruction?

Our author is too rapid in drawing his conclusions, for I think I have shown most demonstrably, that even he, who can criticize Luther, and the Reformers, and the dead languages, and creeds, has himself most awfully wrested the Scriptures, but not, I hope, to his own destruction.

He closes this chapter by saying: "I think that I have demonstrated that the Bible, not man or human dictation, is the only authority in faith and christian life."

He demonstrated it by ridiculing commentators, expositors and creeds; but, after all, no man in any Protestant church denies the fact, expressly mentioned in all Church constitutions, that the Bible is "the only rule of faith and practice"; no Protestant would take from his Bible; and Lutherans, perhaps, do their part in assisting Bible societies, of which he makes particular boast. He certainly "fighteth as one that beareth the air." J. HAWKINS.

RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS.—Plato, seeing a child do mischief in the streets, went first and corrected his father for it. The father which does not correct his child when he does amiss, is justly corrected for his faults; and it is the pattern of God's judicial proceedings, as he visits the iniquities of the children upon the fathers who countenance and indulge them. Jacob was accountable to Laban for the whole flock; not a sheep or a lamb was lost, or torn, but it was required at his hands. Gen. xxxi 39. Thus must family governors be accountable to God for every lamb in the field, every child in the family, for every servant in the house. God will one day cry aloud in thine ears, Husband, father, master, wife, give an account of thy fatherhood, give an account of thy mastership! This made Joshua undertake for his house as well as for himself. Jos. xxiv: 15. And this made David careful of his house as well as his heart—"I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." Ps. ci: 2.

Selections.

The Sympathy of Jesus.

"It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." Jesus "suffered, being tempted," that he might be "able to succor them that are tempted." Able as a man. The humanity of Jesus could never have known human woe nor human wants, except by personal experience. How much soever the Godhead or a revelation might have taught him, this experience of sorrow was necessary to make him perfect—able to succor—a high priest who can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." "In the days of his flesh he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death," and "learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and being thus made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto them that obey him." How blessedly near does this revelation of God bring my Saviour to me! I want a *human* redeemer. God he must be, to save; man, to know my wants, to sympathize with me in my sorrow, to know how to succor. Such a Saviour is Jesus of Nazareth.

How touching that sympathy at the grave of Lazarus! He "loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Coming from beyond Jordan to the weeping sisters, he saw and felt as we all have seen and felt—but immeasurably more clearly and heavily in his case—the agony of bereavement and the weight of human woe. He saw the deeply lacerated hearts of the sisters, listened to the sobbing cry of anguish, the wail of the friends who wept with them, half suppressed in his presence, and his own human heart entered into sympathy with theirs, and grief brought the tears to his eyes, and the "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," wept with the weeping mourners! Of the mighty oppression weighing upon his heart; of the deep, pure fountain of sympathy, gushing forth in tears, we can only attempt to conceive. Such was his experience of grief in that hour, that we may easily believe the suggestion, that he "bore on his heart the burden of all mourners." Eighteen hundred years have passed since that hour of grief, and that manifestation of sympathy. They have been swept upon the throne of the universe, amidst the glories of heaven and the songs of angels; but in all that time never has a mourner by the grave of the heart's treasure, cried out of its agony, "O Lord Christ, pity and help me!" O Lord Christ, have mercy upon me! that Bethany, and Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus, and his own sense of sorrow and bitter tears, have not passed before him; and he has,

"In his measure, felt afresh" the mourner's sorrow, and responded graciously to the urgent pleading of the wounded heart. This is no fancy—no dream of a disordered mind. It is fairly deducible from the Word of God. It makes my sorrows brighter to know that he felt them, as it makes the cross a glory to know that he bore it to save me from the wrath of God.

"Why is it," asked a brother, "that we as ministers, are sometimes so tempted, so tried in patience, and faith and love? More, perhaps, than other men, do we know the burden of human woe, and are we oppressed by manifold temptations." And I told him I accounted for it in this way: We are Christ's ambassadors. We, in his stead, carry on his work. Not the least part of that work is to succor the needy, cheer the despondent, comfort the mourner, enter into sympathy, as he did, with our fellows. He prepares us for our work by passing us through the fires of spiritual experience. We are tempted, that we may succor the tempted. We are led over rough and thorny ways, that we may gently lead others there. We are followers of our Master here, in respect to the mode that prepares us for our work. And each christian in his sphere—his measure—for the same reason, passes through the same experience of trial and of sorrow. It is that we may know how to comfort and to succor those whom, in Christ's stead, we seek to save. Made perfect through suffering! So be it, Lord Jesus, if I may follow thee here, and have fellowship with thee hereafter! If, thus, I am prepared to "weep with those that weep, and rejoice

with those that rejoice," let the fire burn, the flame quiver about my soul, the agony of sorrow oppress. I shall be like thee in suffering, and in sympathy for thy fellows; and like thee, when thou appearest in glory!

Prayer.

It would seem, at first thought, an unnecessary labor to say anything to the christian on the subject of prayer. We do not feel that instruction is needed to inform men and women, or even children, how to pray, and of the absolute necessity of food at stated intervals, to the maintenance of physical life, but prayer is to the soul what food is to the body. And do not all true christians pray with an appetite for divine nourishment as the appetite for food demands the daily bread? Well, it is true that, with few exceptions, the disciples of Christ pray daily with more or less earnestness, and go through, at least, with the form of kneeling and offering a lip service of praise and supplication. Of a very large number it is true, that prayer is a refreshment and delight, and multitudes can sing from a blessed experience,

"Oh, let my hand forget its skill,
My tongue be silent, and still,
This throbbing heart forget to beat,
If I forget the merciful."

But it is not also true, that the church of Christ, as a whole, fall to grasp the sublime promises which garland and perfume the mercy seat! How many pray and keep praying day after day and year after year, without receiving answers to their petitions, and, in fact, without expecting to receive them. Now, when we open the Bible we find it distinctly promised that God is always the hearer and answerer of the prayers of his children, when the petitioner is in an acceptable spiritual attitude before the Throne of Grace. See Ps. cxl: 17; Isa. lxx: 2; Matt. xviii: 19. The important question is, then, What are the elements of acceptable prayer?

1. In 1 Pet. iii: 12, and 1 John iii: 22, it is stated that God only listens to the prayers of the righteous, but this would seem to shut out every petitioner on earth, for even Paul confessed, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." But just here comes in the sweet power of those words, "For Christ's sake," which close every acceptable prayer. We can only come to God in Christ's name, pleading Christ's perfect righteousness, and as that spotless robe will cover our guilt in the day of judgment, so, by faith, we put on that robe when we draw near to the Throne of Grace, and thus clothed upon, we can come boldly, with full assurance, presenting the check on which is the name of Jesus written in his own blood. See Heb. ix: 11, 12, 21, 22; John vi: 7-16, 23, 24; Eph. iii: 12.

2. We must pray with a heart in which there is no emotion of anger or unkindness toward our fellow men. No matter how injured we may have been, yet only when we freely forgive and love even our enemies, will He who cried on the cross, "Father forgive them—they know not what they do," open for us the treasury of heaven's love and grace. Mark xi: 25, 27.

3. The one supreme motive in prayer must be the honor and glory of God. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Too many of our prayers are purely selfish, and God never answers them. If we pray for wealth, to gratify merely our desire for the luxuries of riches—if we pray for the lives of our dear ones, merely because our love clings to them and trembles to let them go from our sight—if we pray for health and life in order that we may enjoy the pleasures of this world as long as possible; in a word, when self is the burden of our petitions, and the glory of God in and through our possessions is wholly forgotten, then our prayers are never answered. There must be a subjection of self and self's riches, whether of money or life, or love to His glory, who sitteth on the Mercy Seat, and when our wills are absorbed into His will, the answers always come, though that all-wise will may give a different but richer blessing than in our ignorance we desired. Here is the secret of the power of Muller's prayers and others like him, who, forgetful of self, consecrate every talent of God's glory in caring for His suffering children, and who, in this posture of self-renunciation, seem to receive an assurance from above that their desires

are in conformity with the will of God.

4. We must abide in Christ if we would receive answers to our prayers. John xv: 5-7. Now this element in acceptable prayer is very often but strangely lost sight of in the instructions from the pulpit and the printed page. It is said, "Only believe that you will receive the answer, and you will have it;" but can I follow Jesus afar off, and yet receive answers to prayer? If I wish to send a letter from Chicago to New York, I stamp it and drop it into the box, and I am sure it will be carried one thousand miles to its destination if I have directed it rightly. Now can I send my requests up to the Throne of Grace in this manner? If I only direct them aright, "Our Father in heaven," and sign them, "For Christ's sake," can I send the prayer from a far country, from a cold and worldly heart, from a selfish, pleasure-loving spirit, and will it be sure to reach the ear of my Father and bring the blessing down? I may be sure that it will not.—Prayer has sometimes been illustrated by the telegraphic system, and it is said, "All you have to do is to touch the wires by a word, a sigh, a tear, and the impression of your desire is made on Jesus' heart." But there are no miles of separation between the true petitioner and Christ—no wire is needed. "If ye abide in me . . . ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." Only when we are abiding in Christ—when our hearts rest upon His heart, and we hear his voice commanding with us, only then can we pray acceptably. He who rushes from the world into the closet and very quickly rushes out again, receives no blessing; he who prays with the mind and heart crowded with business and cares, receives no blessing. No! Only when we abide in Christ; when we live, yet not we, but Christ lives in us; when we lean on His bosom and keep the eye of faith riveted on his love, only then are the prayers answered. But then they are answered always and at once. Matt. xxii: 10; Heb. xi: 6. See also Ex. ix: 33; Deut. x: 10; 2 Kings xi: 5.—Interior.

Preparing the Way.

Just before the days of Christ's public ministry, there was a voice heard crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Then came the baptism with water unto repentance, and the stirring exhortation to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Then afterward came he who baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Active repentance was the divinely planned preparation for that mighty quickening and that world-conquering revival in which Jesus and his apostles began to preach and to work and suffer for humanity.

The principle underlying this preparatory work still holds its force undiminished in this our day. This divine principle of sanctifying, active preparation is not abrogated. The foregoing cry before a marked revival in any church must be akin to that rousing, clear-voiced voice in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Crooked, questionable ways should be righted, lofty looks humbled, discussions healed, cold hearts warmed, and discouragement and doubt be driven away. Each soul should have the Holy Spirit's fresh baptism of devotion and abundant life. No weak-willed, superficial repentance will avail.

The voice in the wilderness, called for a vital, vigorous repentance, that brought forth fruits meet for its profession. Then mighty works shall be done, and many shall believe on the name of Jesus. When the way is prepared and the paths made straight for the Lord, then light shall flow in radiantly from the "brightness of his glory." The true Light can not bend his beams to suit the crooked ways of the backslidden in heart.

This must be a personal work. The word is direct: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Christ is waiting for the paths to be made straight for his coming to save mightily. We say, "His chariot wheels turn slowly." But may it not be that the way is so impeded, broken, and sinuous, that the Lord, in whom is no variableness and shadow of turning, can not come in his power and great glory. O, that each of us, in our own hearts, might begin to prepare the way, by seeking to follow more

and more closely the footsteps of Christ! Would that each pastor and editor, freshly endued with the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind, might begin the preparatory work, and, without fear or doubting, and in the spirit and power of the mighty wilderness prophet, echo earnestly the voice that sounded forth the Spirit-born, commanding word, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight!"—*Western Christian Advocate.*

Perils and Power of Merchants.

You have often been reminded, gentlemen merchants, that there are perils in business. Observation, if not experience, has taught you that they are truly great. Statistics show (if my memory serves me), that only about five per cent. of merchants succeed beyond a competency. Indeed, to command success amid all the dangers that encompass trade, demands a rare combination of the highest qualities that constitute a man. Risk is written on every invoice and every entry. Storms, sudden as they are severe, threaten every commercial barque. Few live out the sea. At Chicago and Boston, in the lurid glare of those fierce fires, as millions each hour went heavenward in flame and smoke, you read the uncertainty of human treasure!

But there are still other "risks," more insidious, more terrible; the risks of selfishness and selfishness in business life. Strong temptations, fascinating as the song of the siren to the "commercial travellers" of old, encompass, and sometimes captivate, merchants. There is such a thing as driving business until business drives us—of owning money until money owns us. Just as a man may "possess a habit" (of drink, for instance), until, by-and-by, the habit possesses him, and all is lost! The counting room is a crucible to character. Intricate, perplexing questions frequently present themselves—questions under the cover of trade involving right and wrong, especially in these days, when venture is great and competition close—when men instead of dealing squarely, as of old, resort to "rings" or "corners"—in North-western, or gold, or grain. There are risks here that may be nothing less than eternal in their issue! Risk of making "gold a God, the ledger a Bible, and the exchange a church," as Burke declaims. It has been done and will be done again. Beware!

"Custom is the law and rule of speaking," says Horace. "Custom" sometimes becomes "the law and rule" of trade. "Speculations," in this hurried age, may somehow lose the initial letter and become "speculations" and frauds. Sordid selfishness may sit enthroned in the soul, and the claims of God and humanity be utterly excluded.

Gentlemen merchants, there is one thing worth all else besides. Each one of you is acquiring it, day by day. It is the only real property any man has, that he shall for ever have. Neither debts, nor debts, nor death; no, nor God himself shall take it away! It is the only abiding possession. It is not the soul itself—God claims that as his. It is character. Your character, good or bad, determines your value in the universe, here and hereafter. If it is good, though a pauper on earth you shall be a prince in heaven. If it is bad, though a very king on earth you shall be a beggar in eternity.

"Nor love, nor hate thy life,
But what thou livest, live well."
A man may purchase wealth, gentlemen, at too high a price. It may cost too much—take heed to the peril. "Riches," says the wise man, Bacon, "are the baggage of virtue—useful like the baggage of an army, but yet an impediment to its march" toward the heavenly home. But do not conceive that I utter a feeble philippic against wealth! Far from it! It is not money, but the "love of money" that is "the root of all evil." Money is might—power almost superhuman. "Gold can not purchase heaven, but it can pave the way to it." Ubiquity is impossible to man, except as wealth can make him ubiquitous. An ordinary man can feed and shelter an orphan or two. A wealthy man can feed and clothe and shelter in a marble palace home for centuries, thousands of orphans, as Stephen Girard, a Philadelphia merchant, is doing to-night. An ordinary man can sit by the bedside and minister to a sick sufferer. A man of wealth can give \$300,000 toward a hospital, where, "in perpetuo,"

this holy work can be carried on, as your own John A. Brown has done; and others in smaller sums have done likewise. A man may be a missionary—in India, or Japan, or any where. A man of wealth can be twenty missionaries—one in every nation under heaven, proclaiming the glad story of the Redeemer's love. An ordinary man may be a Bible reader, and a blessing in lowly and lonely homes; by wealth a good man can visit a hundred homes at once, and make glad a thousand hearts each day he lives.

I need not expand the thought. What grander, greater power for the glory of God and the good of man can any mortal achieve than through the wise and faithful use of wealth!—*From Address of Dr. Alexander Reed at the Anniversary of Mercantile Beneficial Association of Philadelphia.*

Believers' Sons and Heirs.

The religion of Christ while fulfilling the promise of blessedness to its possessor in the present life, assures him of a far higher state of blessedness in the life beyond.

It is a life of faith in which he is called to walk. It is by faith that the Holy Spirit shows him things to come. It is as a Son of God, and an heir with Christ to a heavenly inheritance, that, in view of the dissolution of the earthly tabernacle, God gives to him the earnest of the Spirit, or the assured hope of immortal glory in the resurrection with Christ, when He shall come to gather his people, and they shall be like him, and shall see him in his glorified humanity.

God's paternal love to us, in adopting us as sons and daughters, includes an heirship with Christ in his kingdom. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if so be, that we suffer with him; that we may be also glorified together." Rom. viii: 17.

Now it is the work of the Holy Spirit to assure us of this adoption and this reservation. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal. iv: 6. "For he which testified us, is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." 2 Cor. i: 21, 22.

And this sealing by the Holy Spirit until the redemption of the purchased possession, and this earnest or assurance which God gives to the christian of something better and more abundant hereafter, shall animate him in the christian conflict, and call forth expressions of gratitude for all these tokens of God's love. They are but the "first fruits of the Spirit," and yet they may be regarded as the pledge of an abundant and glorious harvest in the future.

Have we then the hope of sonship and heirship as God's children by adoption? Oh, let us never forget that this relationship includes eternal peace, and glory with our blessed Lord in his coming kingdom, and that it involves the duty of christian watchfulness, and fidelity in all that he calls us to do for our growth in holiness, and for the promotion of christian unity and peace on earth.

The hope that is set before us as children of God, who have been born again of the incorruptible seed of truth is productive of holiness. "For every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he [God] is pure." 1 John iii: 3.

While therefore waiting for the coming of our Lord, and for the redemption of the body from the defilements of the flesh and spirit, so that being justified and sanctified, we may be glorified with him at his appearing, and his kingdom. 2 Tim. iv: 1.—*American Messenger.*

When Christian Gillett lay on his death-bed, at Leipzig, in great agony, he said to one beside him, "I can not understand much now. Only let me hear you pronounce the name of the Redeemer; the very mention of Him never fails to inspire me with fresh courage and joy." In the paroxysms of pain he was thus inspired with courage to bear up, for he knew Christ as a sufferer, suffering and dying for men, yet patient and uncomplaining. Those who are called to visit the suffering believer may thus speak the name of Jesus, and soothe and strengthen by a single word, where longer discourse is tiresome, if not impossible.