

THE LUTHERAN VISITOR.

Rev. Rude & Miller, Editors.

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Communications.

For the Lutheran Visitor. Luther a Revivalist.

Editor: Suppose I should make the assertion that Luther was a revivalist. You would say, "Sunday-schools did not arise in the time of Luther. The system was not organized until two centuries or more had expired after the days of Luther. How could he have had no existence?" I would then refer you to his private works. I would quote that familiar expression of his, that he was a minister of the gospel he would be a school teacher; and his reason for saying so, that he would thereby come in contact with the minds of children, and impress upon them the doctrines and truths of religion. I would also quote his language with reference to the office of the ministry, when he said, that should every discouragement meet him and weigh down his spirit, the pleasure and solemn duty of instructing children would be sufficient to sustain him in the ministry. I would continue to quote, page after page, from his instructions to his "dear Germans," his interest in children, and his hope of the church through their proper education in religious matters, until you would not only admit that he was a Sunday-school teacher, but you would wonder that the entire Sunday-school system did not spring bodily from his great soul. You would wonder farther, that two centuries should have passed before the church could undertake him, appreciate and put to practice his comprehensive views on this subject. If I assert that Luther was a revivalist, you will not expect me to prove, first of all, that protracted meetings and a regular system of what are now called revivals existed in his day, any more than that organized Sunday-schools existed. I prove the former assertion. You would be asking too much. You might as well demand of me to prove that Luther was a mourner's bench, before you would be persuaded that he was a revivalist. But you have a right to expect that I should quote, fairly and without garbling, thoughts and opinions and instructions that involve all that we claim for a revival. This I propose to do, and meet, from the works of Luther, all the objections that opposers of revivals urge, and continue to harp upon, contrary to facts and results that are everywhere patent. To assert and prove that half of our ministers were subjects of revivals and protracted meetings, has no weight with opposers. To point to Gettysburg and instance any given number of young men, in any given year, who came there for the purpose of qualifying themselves for law or medicine, and by a revival half the number give themselves to the ministry, is no argument. Even this year's experience in that institution demonstrates this statement, but such information amounts to nothing with persons determined to oppose all revivals. If you ask such persons why they reject such facts brought in evidence, they are more likely to say they are unscriptural. We will therefore let Luther himself answer their objections, in his own language.

Before proceeding I would say that my arguments are intended only for those who respect Luther's opinion and his most wonderful interpretations of Scripture, and not for those who regard him as far behind the present age, ignorant of the great advancements in biblical interpretation that they themselves have made, as unacquainted with the rules of exegesis, as living in a rude age, an old fossil of former centuries. I have nothing to say to such theological insects that buzz over the grave of Luther, only because he is dead. Were he living, they would have such a wholesome dread of his formidable inkstand as not to venture within a hundred yards of him. He exhibited a great deal of human nature through his delineations of beast nature. He always respected his favorite beast, the lion, and never suffered him to be insulted. It was only when the lion was old, and feeble, and sick, and positively incapable of any defence, that he suffered the jackass to kick him in the face. When Luther was alive his mighty battles were fought with emperors, kings, popes, prelates, cardinals, senators, universities and theological faculties, that made attacks

upon him through every available avenue of human intelligence and human learning; and he was then in his glory, when defending himself, with the Bible in his hand as his only weapon. What a pity that he did not understand the Bible!!! But the great conflict is ended. Luther is dead, and the veriest simpleton may dance upon his grave and insult his memory with impunity. To such I have not one word to say.

The opposers of protracted meetings may not be aware of the fact that Luther once held a regular protracted meeting of eight days' continuation. It took place at Wittenberg under the following circumstances: He returned to Wittenberg from his "Pastors" on the 7th of March, 1522. He immediately ascended the pulpit and preached from *Invenio et Remittit*, that is from the first to the second Sunday in Lent, including both days, every day, through the week. During this time he preached to thousands, exhorted, talked, prayed, visited, in short held a regular protracted meeting. The effect was tremendous. The excitement was almost beyond comprehension. For a full, detailed account I refer the reader to a letter of Dr. Schuff to the Elector of Saxony dated March 15, 1522.

For the Lutheran Visitor. Minister's Wife.

It is a popular opinion among all the members of a congregation that their pastor's wife should be the centre wheel (as well as the pastor himself) upon whom the spiritual vitality and prosperous condition of its members revolve.

But why should this be? Have the patrons of a merchant any claims upon his wife? Or the patients of the physician any claims upon his wife? Or the clients of a lawyer any claims upon his wife? Why then should a minister's wife be looked upon and called a mere nonentity, should she not happen to visit daily the members of her husband's congregation? Why should it be said, as it often is, by the fault-finding, long faced sisters: Poo! what does she care whether we live or die; she never comes among us, and never, even when sick, sends to inquire. Our poor pastor, how sorry we are for him. No wonder he looks so sad, when he has such a miserable companion to contend with. I for one intend leaving the church, and go to Dr. Smith's, for his wife is out visiting the congregation nearly all the time. Now that is just an illustration of the conversation that goes on in many of the Sewing Society meetings, particularly among the disappointed spinners and widows, some of whom had high expectations of becoming the "lady elect" when the bishop of the flock was reveling in single blessedness.

Of course there are exceptions, and many there are who love the pastor's wife, and would make almost any sacrifice for her comfort. They go to see her, not with the idea of peeping under the sofas and chairs and into the closets, to see if they can find any defect, or to scrutinize her personal appearance, whether her collar is clean, or her hair is in proper order. No, not that; but the kind member calls to relieve the weary wife and mother, to speak cheerily to her, and to tell her all the good news respecting the church. See how attentively she listens, and how pleased she looks, and how she regrets not being able to attend church regularly. Simply because she has no aid or assistance in the domestic and maternal cares of home.

Think of that, ye fault-finding members, and listen to what I say. Increase your pastor's salary, be more charitable in your donations to the church, go to see his wife with kind intentions, not expecting your visit always to be returned, and I can assure you there will be no cause for the unkind gossip, for under those circumstances "help" can be procured, and your pastor's wife will be able to attend church and society meetings more regularly, and perhaps visit with her husband and the members of his flock—though the claim they have upon her will not be any stronger than it was before, for she belongs to him and not the people. E.V.L.

While Christ represents us in heaven, it is our duty to endeavor to represent him on earth; and thus to be living "epistles of Christ—known and read of all men."

Our fallen nature is like a troubled sea, which is continually casting up mire and dirt.

Selections.

Why Preach the Gospel to the Heathen?

Because—to answer in a single word—they are lost; and if saved at all, it must be through faith in Jesus Christ the only Saviour. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?"

It would seem as if this matter is so plain that it needs no argument. But the old question still recurs. There is very much popular skepticism on the subject. Very many of those who consider themselves the teachers of mankind deride the idea of sending the gospel to the pagan nations. These heathen, say such, have some measure of truth in their religious systems. Christianity is a better religion than the others, for it combines the elements of good that are separated in them. But Christianity is not the religion of the world. See how much of good there is in Buddhism, in Brahmanism, in Mohammedanism. Read, they will tell you, of Socrates, of Plato; read how Confucius got as near the truth that fire centuried before Christ, he stated the Golden Rule, only in the negative form—"thou shalt not do to others what thou wouldst not that others should do to thee." Is not "the light of nature" enough? they will ask; why send what you call the gospel to those who, if they have not the best religion, have yet that which is sufficiently good for all practical purposes?

And this skepticism, which is very popular, finds its way too largely into the very church itself. Christians, trusting for their salvation only to "that name which is above every name," yet are willing to think that there is salvation for the heathen in some other way—viz., in the name of Buddha, or Brahm, or Zoroaster.

Indeed, to say, knowing what our words mean—"the heathen are lost"—is to state a most appalling fact, the real awfulness of which it is difficult, if not impossible, for the mind to grasp. It means that for these sixty centuries of man's existence upon this globe, the great majority have lived their short lives and gone away into outer darkness! It means that the great majority of those now living are going as fast as the stream of time can carry them away from light and hope and heaven and God! In the infinite mercy of God, we have received the gospel, the day star from on high has dawned upon our hearts. We would not be human, much less would we be christian, if we could think of the fate of so many of our fellow beings without a shudder. But we must not let our pity blind our eyes to the facts in the case.

We are not driven to the extreme of denying that the salvability of the heathen is possible, for, "with God all things are possible." The Holy Ghost can work by ways to us unknown; he is not confined to our narrow range of instrumentalities. Of course, there is no salvation apart from Jesus Christ, the Righteous. There is none other name than His given among men whereby they can be saved. We admit the possibility of the salvation of the heathen on the same ground that we admit, or rather believe, in the salvation of infants. In some cases—how many we can not say, for here only the Almighty knows—this possibility may have become an actual fact. Some of those who have had only the light of nature—Socrates possibly, Plato possibly, Antonius possibly—may be in the kingdom of heaven. "May possibly" are, however, the strongest words we can use.

This possibility, this mere possibility, does not change the awful fact that by far the greater part of the heathen world has perished, is perishing now—a part so great that the very scanty remnant, if remnant there be, is hardly to be mentioned. And this is so, not because God is a harsh and cruel tyrant, but because when these heathen knew God they glorified Him not as God. For even the heathen have not been left utterly to themselves. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 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; so that they are without excuse." There is a light of nature, and those who live under its dim shining are judged by it, not by the clear radiance of the gospel. If the heathen would live up to this light, they would be unconquered by a God who is infinitely just. But as the facts of all history as well as present experience show, man knows better than he does; his knowledge is vastly above his practice. "When they knew God they glorified Him, not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator who is blessed forever."

As the case stands then, the christian church has to deal, not with theories or possibilities, but with an awful and stupendous fact. Millions are going straight into an endless perdition. For his own wise reasons, to be made clear one day before a gazing universe, the Almighty, and All Good permits these nations, as He permitted their ancestors, to walk on in their own ways. He permits it, for these myriad human intelligences deliberately choose that which is evil, they are not forced into the road to ruin. But God lays upon his people the duty of carrying the gospel, with its light and life, into this darkness and region of the shadow of death. By that gospel the awful, abyssal darkness is to be illumined. Back, and still further back, its waves will roll, and the glad light that has already dawned upon the earth will broaden into the "sacred, high, eternal moon" of celestial glory.

Men and brethren, the question is not whether we will carry the gospel to the multitudes that are ready to perish. That is not optional with us. "The marching orders" of the church are explicit: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." We are not commanded to convert the world; that is a work for Omnipotence to do. Our business is to "teach all nations." When that has been done—and oh, how the skeptics, the coldness, the sloth of the church, retard the glorious day!—great voices will be heard shouting across the echoing heavens, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." Interior.

Oriental Customs.

In the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for January, Dr. W. M. Thomson, author of "The Land and the Book," gives some fresh explanations of the figurative language of Scripture. Thus the oft-repeated petition, "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us," is best understood and illustrated by picturing to one's self a royal sovereign and judge in his hall of audience, seated upon a low cushion, rug, or mat, according to Oriental custom. In this position the accused or the suppliant, standing before him, could not see his face, especially when bent down in displeasure, as implied in the form of the petition. This relative attitude can be seen any day in the audience room of Turkish pashas and judges. The petitioners are not allowed to sit down; but must stand, with hands humbly clasped together, and thus wait the pleasure of him whose will is law. If the petition is accepted, the favor granted or the suppliant pardoned, the man of doom and destiny lifts up his head, and with a benignant smile dismisses the rejoicing suppliant. But to turn aside the face, look down, and thus hide the countenance, has always been, and still is in this Eastern world, an alarming omen, foreboding rejection, imprisonment, or death, as the case may be. Moreover, these Orientals can do, when they choose, wonderfully darken the countenance. I have seen it, says Dr. Thomson, gathering absolute blackness, like a portentous cloud, ready to explode in death-dealing thunderbolts. And, on the other hand, when greatly delighted, the whole face is overspread with a warm, brilliant glow, very beautiful and fascinating. This is what suggested the petition so oft-repeated in the eighteenth Psalm, "Turn us again, O God; and cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." Imagine a suppliant for mercy standing in an agony of doubt and fear before his offended sovereign, who hides his

frowning face and refuses to give one glance toward the trembling wretch, and you have the exact conditions which may have originated the peculiar costume of the prayer, "Lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance. Cause Thy face to shine upon us."

At the Door.

Knock and it shall be opened, is the Saviour's word. It is mercy's door that opens at the sinner's knock. The hardest hearted, the most wicked, the veriest outcast may knock, and it shall be opened. Sinner, just as you are, just where you are, standing in the dark, undone, lost, unknown, helpless—just because you are outcast, you may come in. You may come into God's presence, breathe the heavenly atmosphere, and enjoy the communion of a child of God. Knock and see. Knock, and it shall be opened to your eyes and to your feet.

It is the door of life. Salvation is not merely escape from hell. That would be poor deliverance in the Divine estimation. The dead body should be buried out of sight. The wages of sin is death. Sin has killed men. They lie all about us, everywhere, dead in trespasses and in sins, dead and unburied still, corrupt and corrupting more and more. Their true life is taken out of them. And they can not get life back, they should be covered out of sight forever. But the salvation of the gospel keeps men from being cast into outer darkness. Not only so. It is infinitely positive and uplifting. It makes dead men live, and forever enlarges the capacities for life, and joy, and peace in the increasing light of eternity. People pass from death into life through this door of the Word. Christ is the door. The voice of the gospel is to all who are awake, knock; to all who are asleep, awake; and to all the dead, arise!

Sinners are not, in all senses of the word, dead like corpses. They have minds and hearts. They may be reasoned with, and urged by argument to turn to God and live. The voice which prevails is God's voice, and it carries with it the life-giving power. Christ not only called Lazarus forth, but sent out with His voice the omnipotent force which brought him out from the grave. He said to another, "Stretch forth thine hand"—and with the command he put into the poor palsied member the vitality that healed it. The man's will was responsive, was honored and used, else he had not been commanded to make effort. The healing was all the while conditioned in the cripple's choice. Suppose the man had acted appearances and reason instead of faith. "Why, Lord, thou hast asked me to do exactly that thing which I am unable to do. Anything else but that. I have not been able to lift this pendent hand for many a day. I can do nothing with it. No, no, Lord—I can't do what thou hast commanded."

That would have been all true in so far as it was a confession of his own inability. But the power to obey comes with the command to obey. The power is not inherent in the cripple, but is imparted by faith in the Healer. The Omnipotent speaks and accomplishes in a moment. The man simply trusted in Him who commanded—trusted for the strength to cure, and for the cure, doubling nothing nor wishing to measure the methods of the Divine work, and of course he was cured. The will of man and the effort of man went completely and untriedly out to meet the omnipotence of God, and behold Omnipotence was at the very door! The will of the man was made plus by the positive presence and mightiness of the Eternal. What the man lacked was complemented an accomplished by the infinite fulness of God. The door was within reach, even of a crippled arm and pendent hand. He stretched the withered member forth, and as it was lifted, it rounded out whole, and was instantly as strong, as beautiful, and as supple as the other.

So God quickens dead souls. The sinner must believe if he would receive. He must knock if he would enter. And if he knock—bless God again!—the if—is on man's side of the door—if any man knock, it shall be opened.

When a visitor is admitted to your dwelling through the outer door, he is not left standing in the hall, or beately across the threshold; he is conducted to the parlor or his dining room or the library. He is

welcomed, if let in at all, to the inmost cheer and best comforts the house affords. He comes to rest or to feast, as his condition may require.

So when a sinner knocks at the door of life, he need not stop with the first step into the mansion of holiness. No man need be a mere vestibule guest. The threshold is not the resting place. He who enters is expected to go from chamber to chamber in the great house of sanctification, gently knocking at and always welcome through, every inner door, until he steps into the very presence-chamber of the Almighty. He will find communion indeed. Jesus will sup with him, and he with Jesus evermore.

Suppose a pathway leading up a sunny mountain side, conducting you from one beautiful palace to another, and still another, each one higher, vaster and more magnificent than the one below, and yourself climbing and knocking, and entering hall after hall, till the summit were gained; and then a more beautiful door than all, swinging open of its own accord, and admitting you to eternal advances and glories—you have but a dim and imperfect picture of your privilege as a christian, of rising through this world into heaven, day by day, and step by step. You are to pray daily for greater nearness to God, greater likeness to Jesus, fuller life in the spirit.

This door of life and glory opens at the sinner's knock. Knock, and it shall be opened. It is radiant with light like the doors of the morning. You see the changes, the decays, and the dangers of the world, the separations of friends, the breaking of strongest and fondest social ties. Already many a dear one to your soul is immortal on the other side of the inner door. Knock, and it shall be opened to you.—*Sion's Herald*.

You Are the Light of the World.

Glorious is the ocean, the unity of waters; glorious is the aerial ocean, swathing the bounded earth and the encompassing ocean, to the depth of fifty miles, with a fluid far more mobile and mysterious than the particles of water. But incomparably more glorious is the ocean of Light, which not only permeates and encompasses the other oceans, but the universe; (all that turns) nay, how far it extends beyond the most distant orb, Geometry and Arithmetic furnish no means of calculation and imagination breaks down in the attempt to follow, perhaps to the throne of God, who dwells in light inaccessible. Do christians know that they are light? that of the whole inexhaustible store-house of figurative language of flowers, waters, stars, precious metals, gems, light has been most used, and that too, by the Holy Spirit, or those under His influence, to characterize them? Now, it is safe and salutary to suppose that this choice was made because it has more numerous, or more resembling conditions and properties to religion and its professors; hence it becomes our duty and interest to consider some of the properties of our similitude, from which "Sixty-plus" hopes their spiritual significance, or moral counterpart, may be inferred and given to the public by some of his readers.

Light is the most subtle, or penetrating, swift, spiritual, powerful, purifying, beautifying, vivifying and lasting of substances.

1. It is the most penetrating, partly by virtue of its subtlety, swiftness, projection, momentum—in short, by the will of God. It is absolutely impossible to make a perfectly somewhat dark room. A gimlet-hole will greatly illuminate the largest. It has been known to reveal the bed of the ocean to the depth of five hundred feet, with all upon it, with the distinctness of your parlor floor; hence, removing the various motions of the sea water, it would show, as through a glass, perhaps a magnifying glass, all the wonders and treasures of the lowest deep.

2. Its speed is inferred from its imponderability, subtlety, momentum and the non, or little, resistance of the medium (the air) through which it comes; but argument is unnecessary, as its unequalled speed has been proved by experiment and conceded by such expressions as "swift as light."

3. Spiritual. This word has been chosen, for the want of a better, to express its analogy to true, divine spirituality; however, its spirituality is now so far admitted that its mate-

riality is generally doubted, and that it is the aptest figure of "the true Light."

4. Its purity. Such a substance must needs be pure. It is an agent of bleaching. It breaks through a pestilential atmosphere or exhalation and brings health and joy on its wings.

5. Its power. For this see the other heads.

6. Beautifying. It is not only supremely beautiful in itself, but a prime cause of beauty in all other things. It opens the gates of the morning with the splendor of the pearly gates of the Apocalyptic City. It closes those of evening, with Heaven's farewell smile of sunshine, modified and mellowed by all prismatic beauty. It falls upon the clouds and borders them with a rivaling, blending and flashing edging of silver and gold. It clothes the earth with beauties of all hues. It creates the brilliant plumage of the birds and gives to one of them the name of Paradise. It is the great Painter.

7. Vivifying. It is the great mediate source of life, which appears from the fact that all animal and vegetable life declines in the partial deprivation of light and departs in the contending and total absence, but is restored with astonishing rapidity on its return to the withering and dying sufferer. Light and life are often used as synonymous. Some ancient philosophers made it a god and creator. From the foregoing head, we may reverently conjecture that Light, eldest "first-born of heaven," was created first, because the Creator would make it a condition, or necessity of the animals which were to follow.

8. Its durability. It seems impossible to conceive of the destruction of light. It seems too much an essence, a property, a spirit, for that. The sun has been shining for more than six thousand years, and yet philosophers say there has been no diminution of its illuminating power. If its primal source is reflection from the throne of God—from the uncreated Light, it follows that it can not cease to exist.

Christian, behold your portrait, limned by Christ himself and touched by John and Paul, and their brethren, the prophets. Trace the resemblances.—*Mem. Presbyterian*.

Antiquity of the Scriptures.

Few of us ever stop to think how old the Bible is. Yet "the Scriptures are believed by candid critics to contain the most ancient forms of truth now known to men." With the aid of chronological tables, any one may easily make profitable comparisons between the antiquity of these books and that of other writings and events. The Scriptures contain the only authentic history of the world before the flood. We find in the Pentateuch one or two stanzas of poetry composed in the antediluvian period. The Hebrew statutes were enacted a thousand years before Justinian reformed the Roman jurisprudence. In the Bible we have the record of chartered rights secured to the people more than two thousand years before the Magna Charta. What a sensation would be produced if the first chapter of Genesis should appear for the first time in one of the newspapers to-morrow! Yet there can be no doubt that chapter contains the oldest writing, twenty-five hundred years before the invention of printing. Xenophon's record of the conversion of Socrates, in his memorabilia, seems as an old book to us; yet similar topics were discussed in Ecclesiastes six hundred years before. The works of Tacitus, Plutarch and Quintilian are not modern; yet the books of the New Testament are older than they. As to the book of Job, its age is beyond conjecture. Those who make it as modern as they can are compelled to place its origin at least one thousand years before Homer. When Pharaoh was King of Troy, Job was of remote antiquity. The name of Alexander has no modern sound for us, yet when Alexander invaded Syria, the book of Job might have been read before him as the work of an author more time-honored than the name of Alexander is now. The writings of Confucius are modern when compared with most of the Bible; and the most that the Hindus can justly claim for their sacred books, the Vedas, is that they were written five hundred years after the death of Moses. The Koran is a book fresh from the press compared with the Scriptures.