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Rev. Rude & Miller, Editors.

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Communications.

For the Lutheran Visitor.
General Synod, South.
NUMBER VII.

FOREIGN AND HOME MISSIONS.

The minutes of the General Synod clearly show, that although it has not been able to consummate all its intentions with regard to Foreign and Home Missions, yet it has not been negligent or neglectful of these important church interests. The attention of Synod was called to the former at its convention of 1866, and the committee having the subject under advisement, reported, "that on account of the peculiar circumstances surrounding this Synodical body, nothing had been done in the matter of the appointment of missionaries, or the establishment of missionary fields of labor." From this report it would appear that even prior to 1866, the subject of Foreign Missions had engaged the attention of Synod. The "peculiar circumstances" adverted to in the report was unquestionably a want of funds, and the pressing and more important claims of the home field. That little or nothing has been accomplished in this respect, must not however be attributed to a spirit of indifference to the command of the Master, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," but to a lack of means, taken in connection with the lamentable condition of many important points within its own borders demanding immediate assistance. It is possible that the causes above stated, as well as some others that might be named, have exerted an undue influence in determining the action of Synod, and that in this particular it has failed to meet its responsibility to the church and to God. Although limited in resources, yet "rich toward God," the churches of the General Synod, in the exercise of a liberality that abounds, may, notwithstanding, win the commendation of the Lord. "She" hath done what she could.

With respect to the latter, (Home Missions) it is known to all conversant with the proceedings of the General Synod, that it has received special attention. The legislation upon the subject has been somewhat *confused*, and the practical results for good have been by no means proportional to its importance, and to what might have been expected from the amount of labor expended upon its consideration. From the final action of Synod it appears that the work of Home Missions is committed to the care of the District Synods; each operating within its own boundaries. A Central committee of the General Synod was appointed, consisting of Rev. S. A. Reppas, D. F. Little, D.D., and Mr. Wm. McCauley, (the latter being treasurer). "In view of the vast field of Mission work, and the urgent want of means to carry the same forward, the District Synods are recommended to address themselves more energetically to the work, and to co-operate to their fullest extent with the Central committee in the general work of missions."

This in our judgment is a wise disposition of the whole matter; and taken in connection with the action of Synod at its sixth convention, we need no further legislation on the subject, unless perhaps its reduction to perpetuity, unity and compactness. From the above extracts and remarks, the friends of the General Synod will understand to what extent Home Missions have shared in its sympathies and counsels, as well as what it has done to realize its design purposes. If the General Synod has failed in any degree to meet the reasonable expectations of its friends, that failure is not justly chargeable to a want of interest and continuous effort in its behalf, but to other causes, the principal of which was a want of means vigorously to prosecute its plans. Unless the churches of our communion arose to a scriptural sense of their obligations to God and man, in planting missions and disseminating the gospel to the dispersed within our borders, vain indeed will be the deliberations and actions of the General Synod. Without their hearty co-operation in furnishing the funds necessary to the successful prosecution of her enterprises, the ways of Zion must languish, and our educational and missionary interests become paralyzed.

Synod at an early day thought it desirable "to adopt some efficient measures to furnish our people with a weekly paper, and it was considered essentially necessary to our welfare as a church that such a paper should be immediately established, reflecting the views of the General Synod." Accordingly an arrangement to this end was entered into, but, proving mutually unsatisfactory, and an entangling alliance, was discontinued in 1863, at which time the General Synod

"Resolved, That it is inexpedient for the General Synod to continue longer to endorse any paper as its organ, or select any editor for its conduct; and that in view of these facts, we leave the publication of papers of the church to individual enterprise, and their success to their respective merits." And thus perished by the action of our Synod an agency which, two years before by another, was "considered essentially necessary to our welfare as a church." Since then the General Synod has not had an official organ, and grown wiser by experience is not likely again to experiment in that direction. "Esperantia docet Stultos." The church is now supplied with the *Lutheran Visitor*, published by Dr. Rude. It is an excellent weekly—conducted with marked ability, and is deservedly popular. It receives the moral support (and we suppose the substantial also) of the churches in connection with the General Synod, as well as of a host of personal friends, and others who appreciate its merits as a *live* paper. It is the duty and also the interest of our people to foster and sustain a church literature in the South; and to be profited in this respect by the laudable example of sister denominations. Every family in our church should patronize the *Visitor*, and most especially the younger members, both male and female, should make themselves acquainted with the doctrines, usages and operations of the church at home and abroad. With a majority of our communion, I know of no way in which so much wholesome intelligence is likely to be gained as by the careful reading of the church paper from week to week. By this means a proper church love is cultivated, and qualifications attained for positions of prominence or usefulness. Destitute of a church paper we can not prosper as we should. Here, as in a mirror, may be seen her urgent calls for men and means, and the efforts which God's faithful servants are making to meet them. Here, too, will be found choice and valuable selections. Original communications from various pens—and miscellaneous matter in quantity and quality to suit all ages and tastes, (not vitiated) enough to "mend the morals and improve the heart." The paper is not supported as it should be, and as its merits and importance demands. All manner of excuses are urged as reasons for the delinquency, and yet it is not infrequently the case that the very persons who urge them, support two or three secular papers. "Brethren, these things ought not to be." If our church in this land is ever to take rank with its leading denominations in moral power and social influence, our people must become more intelligent, more highly cultivated.

CONCLUSION.
We experience a degree of relief in being able to inform the reader, that the self imposed task of reviewing in part the proceedings of the General Synod, and also of vindicating its character from certain flippant charges which have been assigned as reasons for its disruption, is nearly finished; and that what remains to be said will consist of a brief resume of preceding statements accompanied with some general observations.

RESUME.
It has been our intention in this series of articles to set forth
I. The real causes which influenced the Holston and North Carolina Synods to sever their connection with the General Synod. These have been referred to an inherent defect in the bond of union—a want of genuine sympathy—local causes—self aggrandisement and a future policy yet to be more fully developed.
II. To meet in appropriate style the charges that have been rung upon "efficiency and modifications in policy." These it is believed have been shown to be rapid innuities, vague, meaningless expressions of empty sound—of much pretence and little significance.
III. And lastly, to set forth what the General Synod has actually ac-

complished in fulfillment of her proposed mission. From her minutes it appears that she has given to the churches under her jurisdiction a doctrinal basis, purely and unequivocally Lutheran. Also a Book of Worship, containing a uniform order of Service. That she has established and put in successful operation a Theological Seminary. That she has made provision for the work of missions within her borders. And finally, that she essayed the establishment of a church organ, which happily for all concerned, proved a total failure.
DELEGATE.

Selections.

The Gain of Godliness.

There is a spell of custom, the Scriptures call it a dead sleep, in which men are bound. They will not think, they will not feel for themselves; and, which is worse, they will not allow God to think and feel for them. Brethren, what comes of this slavery? The strong and immortal parts of your nature wax weak, the love of good degenerates, and the power of good altogether dies. To renovate your nature, to fill you with a divine nature, to make you, whatever your condition, the companions of God, and the members of Jesus Christ—objects of angel visits—the honored ministers of God upon this earth—and kings and priests to God—this, no less is the design of the Holy Scriptures, and their fruit to those who obey them. Know them, and upon the knowledge act, and all manner shall forsake your conduct, with all hypocrites; and all the struggles of passion with interest, and of interest with duty; and your character shall come forth in the strength and beauty of holiness, to the honor and glory of your Creator.

Then you walk with God, and his favor shall compass you around—you are in the way of his commandments, and the great peace which is in the keeping of them, shall be your portion—you are living by faith on Christ, and the spirit of Christ, and the spirit of Christ shall be in you—you are walking in the Spirit, and no condemnation remaineth for you. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, shall put your enemies to flight. The indwelling of the Spirit shall move your soul to divine attainments, and the world's hindrances shall not hinder you from running the race for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus.

I know nothing able to restrain or limit the perfection of the meekest man who will submit himself to the word of God. Hard labor may wear you down, but as your day is, so shall your strength be. Your own evil nature may hold back; but the Spirit is powerful over all carnal affections. Temptations may delude you; God will not suffer you to be tempted above what you can bear. Whatever man has been enabled to reach by divine grace, I see not but man, every man, by the same grace, may still attain; therefore adventure, under God's management, to any reach of holy and heavenly life. Put no limitation within the bounds of God's revelations. It depends not on station, it depends not on natural knowledge, it depends not on fortunate accidents, all it depends on is the craving desire to know, and the assiduous endeavor to attain. God is not loth to do his part, nor the work of God difficult to comprehend. Nought is wanting but the desire to be instructed, and furnished to every good word and work.

But if you rather prefer the fortune of the brutes that perish, to look upon the light of the sun, and eat the provision of the day, and vegetate like a plant through the stages of life, and, like a plant, to drop where ye grow, and perish from the memory of earth—having done nothing, desired nothing, and expected nothing beyond. If this you prefer to the other, then have you heard what you lose in the present; hear now what you lose through eternity—

You lose God's presence, in which all creation rejoiceth. You lose God's capacity to bless you with his manifold blessings, which the cherubim and seraphim can speak of better than a fallen man. You lose the peace and perfect blessedness of heaven, which from this earth we can hardly catch the vision of. Have you suffered spiritual oppression and drowning from fleshly appetites, freedom from this you lose. Have you groined under the general bond-

age of the creature, and called for deliverance, this deliverance you lose. Have you conceived pictures of quiet and peaceful enjoyment amidst beautiful and refreshing scenes, the realities of these you lose. Have you felt the ravishment of divine communion, when the conscious soul breathes its raptures, but can not utter them, the eternal enjoyment of these you lose. What Adam and Eve enjoyed within the unblemished paradise of Eden, with the presence of God, you lose. What Peter and John felt upon the mount of transfiguration, where they would have built tabernacles and remained forever, you lose. Can you, brethren, think of this world's goods, with contentment? If you are wicked, how do your sins find you out, or overhang you with detection. If you are holy, how your desires outrun your performance, and your knowledge your power; how you fall, are faint, back-sliding, are in darkness, are in doubt, are in dismay. You are not content with this world's fare, you long after something higher and better; hence the perpetual cheering of hope, and insatiation of ambition, and thirst after novelty, and restlessness to better your condition. When man cometh to wish, to expect to labor or care for nothing higher or better than his present condition, he is supremely miserable. God hath left these witnesses within our breasts out of whose mouth to convict us. He will say, "Ye strove after something better. 'Twas the labor of your life to reach it. I let down heaven's glory to your eager eyes. You put it away; therefore be it put away from your habitation for ever. Oh! ye who labor by toil and trouble to exalt your condition, will ye not exalt it far above the level of thrones or principalities, or any name that is named upon the earth?"

Would that, like St. John in the Apocalypse, I had seen, or like Paul in the trance, I had felt, the glories of heaven, that for your sakes I might unfold them, and have spoken of the removal of earthly disasters and embarrassments, which cleave to the lot of the religious in our kind, and to the lot of the wicked in another kind. But the removal of these is nothing. I have spoken of the gratification of all Nature's hungers and thirstings after truth, knowledge, goodness and happiness. But this is nothing, these distresses, these desires pertain to a weak and fallen creature. It behooves to speak of the enjoyments and desires of angels—of their fervors, their loves, their communions. But who can speak of them?

Yet if emblems can assist you, then do you join in your imagination the emblems and pictures of heaven. What is the condition of its people? That of crowned kings. What is their enjoyment? That of conquerors triumphant, with palms of victory in their hands. What their employment? Losing their spirits in the ecstasies of melody, making music upon their harps to the Lord God Almighty, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. For guidance, the Lamb that is in the midst of them shall lead them by rivers of living waters, and wipe away all tears from their eyes. For knowledge, they shall be like unto God, for they shall know even as they are known. For vision and understanding, they shall see face to face, needing no intervention of language or of sign. For ordinances through which the soul makes imperfect way to her Maker, there is no temple in the city of their habitation, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof. There shall be no night there, and they need no candle neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever, and the very sense hath its gratifications in the city of God. The building of the wall is of jasper, the city of pure gold like unto clear glass; the foundation of the wall garnished with all manner of precious stones. Every one of the twelve gates are pearl. Now what means this wealth of imagery drawn from every storehouse of nature, if it be not that the choicest of all which the eye beholds or the heart is ravished with—that all which makes matter beautiful, and the spirit happy—that all which wealth values itself on and beauty delights in, with all the scenery which charms the taste, and all the employments which can engage the affections, every thing, in short, shall lead its influence to consummate the felicity of the saints in light!

Oh, what untried forms of happy being, what cycles of revolving bliss, await the just! Conception can not reach it, nor experience present materials for the picture of its similitude; and, though thus figured out by the choicest emblems, they do no more represent it than the name of Shepherd does the guardianship of Christ, or the name of Father the love of Almighty God.

Then, brethren, let me persuade you to make much of the volume which contains the password to the city of God, and without which it is hid both from your knowledge and your search. And if in this volume there be one truth more precious than another, it is this, that Christ hath set open to you the gates of the city, and that he alone is the way by which it is to be reached. He hath gone before to prepare its mansions for your reception, and he will come again to those who look for his appearing. For his sake be ye reconciled to God, that ye may have a right to the tree of life, and enter by the gate into the city!—Edward Irving.

Righteous Judgment.

To the believer in Christ there is no more comforting thought connected with the great hereafter than is found the promise of a righteous judgment. Black and defiled as we are, our mighty sins are ever looming up to drive out our feeble faith; and thus would Satan bring us at last to the lowest regions of despair; but blessed be God, glimmering rays of hope fall on our pathway, from the great white throne, lighting and cheering us to persevere, sustained by the many sweet promises of our risen Redeemer, the Christ, who is to be our Judge. Even in our groping efforts after the right, how often do we have to mourn our shortcomings, and are tempted to give over the struggle in utter hopelessness, when sweet assurances are whispered to our fainting souls by the Holy Spirit, reminding us, faith and confidence in the sure refuge and hope that is set before us, knowing that "we have not a High Priest who has not been touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but who was tempted in all points like as we are." Therefore, in all things concerning us, His knowledge and sympathy is perfect. All our weaknesses are known to Him; and every motive He knows, before and better than we do. Even to our best and most intimate friends we are often in the strictest sense unknown; frequently our simplest acts are misconstrued, our noblest, openest motives misapprehended. Indeed, the misunderstandings and distrusts of life as often arise from want of knowledge as from want of sympathy and appreciation. Here the little springs of action are unseen, and we labor under the shadows of the night of our human existence. The influences which surround and affect us are biased by circumstances, but, there, all will be made clear to our vision as the noon-day sun, and the many tangled net, of mysterious Providences will be unravelled to our wondering gaze. Then and there "we shall know, even as we are known," nothing hid from the All-seeing Eye. He will judge us righteously, each one for himself, and not for another.

Nay, heinous as our errors or crimes may appear to our fellow-creatures, God Himself, within us, and around us, will decide the measure of our guilt, appreciating, if there be secret wrongs, or palliating circumstances. With His ever ready and yearning love, will discern that faith which, though but as "the mustard seed," inspires the prayer and drops the tear of penitence. Our righteous Judge will give impartially to each one his righteous share of reward. And in whatsoever state that may be, through all the ages of eternity, none will ever have opportunity nor cause to complain.

But even while we must look with trembling awe upon the certain and unchangeable fates of the Almighty and Everliving One, there are few, I imagine, who would not rather trust His decrees than the blind, feeble, corruptible judgment of man. To be weighed in the balances of man, and found wanting, does not always argue a fair and just decision, nor necessarily imply we should be found wanting in the scales of Divine Justice. For our God looketh not as man, upon the heart. His pure and scrutinizing gaze can discern clinging to our earthly tabernacles, though dimmed and married by sin, even the smallest particle of

the gold dust of faith. While to man's imperfect vision is revealed only the coarser sands of baser metals.

In times of sore trial and temptation, when human nature asserts ascendancy, and faith grows dim, perhaps one is led aside for a time from the path of duty. Then, when overwhelmed with remorse and humiliation, turns to some cherished earthly friend for comfort and sympathy, instead of that support on which they had leaned, meet only the cold and heartless reproof, and withering look of contempt, think you not, in such an hour, one would not rather meet the righteous, yet merciful judgement of the Divine Judge? Drops of love mingled with pity are overflowing from His wounded side to wash away our guilty stains, and we hear Him saying, "all the fitness He requireth is to feel our need of Him." And we feel our need of Him when we see our own goodness to be but as filthy rags, and discern with the eye of faith, that in the person of Jesus Christ, all our righteousness has gone before us. In His perfect sacrifice and atonement has been fully met all that was required of us. We stand "accepted in the Beloved," "who ever liveth to make intercession for us." Resting upon these precious promises, as some blessed oasis in the vast desert of this blighted world, may not our souls steal a mighty calm—a glorious realization of that "peace of God, which passeth all understanding?" Oh, then, let us cling to this "Rock of ages," whose shadows comfort and cheer us in a weary land. Let us clothe ourselves in the robe of Christ's righteousness, and we need have no dread nor fear how the end shall be. The One to be our Judge is "One mighty to save," and has promised never to leave nor forsake those who put their trust in Him.

Inspired by a holy joy in this prospect of a righteous judgment, let us see to it, we persevere in the right path, and press onward with higher and holier aims, holding with firmer faith to His gracious promises, as the "sheet anchor" of our souls.—Earnest Worker.

Christ's Compassion.

It is enjoyed upon Christians that they strengthen themselves in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; but how many there are that neglect this duty, and all their lives travel on their journey like Bunyan's pilgrims—Feeble-mind and Ready-to-halt. They are like a bruised reed and smoking flax—weak, feeble suffering Christians—babes, and not strong men in Christ Jesus. But such is the wonderful condescension and sympathy of the Lord Jesus Christ that to even such Christians he gives precious promises. He will not break the bruised reed and quench the smoking flax. That is where-ever he finds a spark of grace, he will watch over it with care.

Indeed, he knows that it is the weak, feeble Christian that specially needs his help. The father cares more tenderly for the feeble infant than for the strong, robust one. If it can not walk alone, he extends his hand and gently leads it. So it is with the Saviour—he carries his lambs in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young. Paul was in great trouble; he had a thorn in the flesh, which made him feel very weak, and he prayed to God for help, and the answer came, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And such was his experience of the strengthening grace of the Saviour that he said, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me, for when I am weak then am I strong."

While feeble Christians should seek strength, and all should desire to become strong men and women in Christ Jesus, yet there is no room for despondency on the part of the weakest saint. There are many things a weak Christian can not do. He may not be able, like Great-heart, to kill the Giant Despair, but he can live in the fear of the Lord, and so claim the promise, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." The father pities and helps the weak, suffering child. So our Heavenly Father will pity and help his weak, feeble child, even though it is fitly compared to a bruised reed and smoking flax. Listen to his cheering words: "Fear not thou worm Jacob." You are

weak and feeble, it is true, but "thou shalt thresh mountains. My strength shall be perfected in your weakness.

Advice to a Nephew.

The following excellent letter was written by the late Dr. J. A. Alexander to a nephew on his birthday. It executes the difficult task of presenting to a child the great duties of religion in a way so simple, forcible, and yet attractive, that we copy it for the benefit of our youthful readers:

AUGUST 2d, 1860.

MY DEAR JONAH: I trust that you have not forgotten, in the devotions of this day, that it completes your fifteenth year; I hope that the year upon which you are now entering will, by the grace of God, be better than the fifteen which have preceded it. This is a very favorable time to form good resolutions and correct bad habits. Resolve that in your sixteenth year, you will endeavor to obtain a more complete command over your temper than you ever had before. Resolve to be more punctual and diligent in study. If you have begun to be remiss in your religious duties—I mean in prayer and in the reading of the Scriptures—now, retreat your steps. If you have begun, like many others of your age, to feel ashamed of what is good, and to dislike all thought on serious subjects, now is the time to seek such feelings while they are yet weak.

If you have begun to feel a secret longing after objects which you have been accustomed to honor, to look upon as sinful and unworthy of a man, now is a good time to renounce all such desires, and resolve that you will set to the last upon the principles in which you have been educated. Let your character be formed before your studies are completed; let it be formed upon true Christian principles, and then, I trust in God, that you will be able to vanquish the temptations of the world hereafter.

If I may venture to express another wish, it is that before your sixteenth year is completed, you may be disposed to make a profession of religion; which is nothing more than agreeing to act in accordance with the truths which you profess to believe. If you can join sincerely in the prayers of the church, and really desire what you ask for in those prayers, I see no reason why you should not openly avow yourself a follower of Christ. Is it because it would debar you from pleasures which you wish to enjoy? You can do without them; you will be happier without them; and a young man who enters into life with a religious character has this advantage, that he escapes a thousand solicitations and temptations to which otherwise he would have been exposed. Besides, he is always more respected; let the irreligious say what they will.

Teach Lovingly.

The man who never smiles has no divine call to the Sabbath school ministry. The half hour on the Lord's day is not the only time we teach. A kind word, a loving look, a shake of the hand teaches. Never pass your scholar without. Don't call Jim Peter, when everybody calls him Jim. Ask names and use them. Seek out homes, and visit them. Learn ages, companions' names, as well as those of the parents. If you are interested in your scholars, they will be in you. If you treat them well, they will you. Your manifest love will make them study at home, bring them early to school, and keep them in order while there. A look from you will often be better than dismissal. If you are not well, they will be attentive out of sympathy. If the questions are hard they will listen to the explanations out of respect. If you are absent, little hands will pull the door bell on Monday. Thus before you commence the lesson, their hearts are in your hands. They have given you what the Master wants, and you as his servant can easily direct them to him. Be in earnest; love always is. Aim at their hearts; love always does. Be personal, because you love one another personally. Speak in tender tones. You may find a tear on your hand. Good! That mirrors your love, and is more convincing than language. The child who sees that will say in her heart, "My teacher loves me." Teach lovingly, and when the bell rings more hearts than yours will be sure to hear it.