

# THE LUTHERAN VISITOR.

Revs. Rude & Miller, Editors.

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## Communications.

For the Lutheran Visitor.  
"That Cometh to Me I will in no wise Cast Out."

Listen, dear friends, to this kind, this wonderful invitation. God speaks, and speaks to us and to everyone. The Father says, "Come;" the Son says, "Come;" the Holy Spirit says, "Come;" the ever-blessed angels echo the cry, "Come." Many have accepted the invitation, and call join their voices in the chorus, and say, "Come to Jesus." And when He himself was on this earth He looked compassionately on the multitude, and well knowing how many were their sins and their sorrows, said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

What He said then He says now. This invitation He gives us to-day. Are we not heavy laden with guilt? Why, then, linger? Why not accept this kind invitation? Oh, then, let us come to Him, and we shall find rest. Fear not; thy Saviour calls thee. It is the messenger of peace. We may at first, on seeing the darkness and troubled waters from whose banks no traveler returns, cry out, "The afflicted disciples." "It is a spirit," and be afraid. But a gentle voice will be heard above the roaring of the storm, "It is I; be not afraid;" and even the winds and seas shall obey when that omnipotent voice speaks. Be not afraid, but come; for all those that believe shall not be afraid, but receive everlasting life. Why, then, die? Oh, fellow-sinners, come, repent, and be saved; and after the victory, we may joyfully exclaim: "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. To die is gain." What unspeakable happiness shall we then enjoy?

Now, my christian friends, give this matter a careful consideration; for upon it hangs your doom. Do not reject the invitation before you, lest you be cast into outer darkness, and be, alas! forever lost. Jesus says, "Behold! I stand at the door and knock." The sound startles you; but if you do not rise and open the door immediately, that knocking will startle you less to-morrow, till at length you will not hear it at all. Perhaps you think it will be as easy to repent at any future time as to-day; but if you have ever lived near a noisy mill, a roaring fall, or the sea, you most undoubtedly have heard that the sound which at first disturbed you was afterwards scarcely noticed. Just so the truths of religion may deeply impress the mind; but if those impressions are not cherished at first, by acting in accordance with them, the truths will affect the mind less and less, till at last they are heard with total indifference. How many who once felt deeply about religion now feel nothing, and are quickly and quietly traveling down to hell!

On the narrow ledges of the steep cliffs of the Yorkshire coast, multitudes of sea-fowl lay their eggs, and, by gathering them, many persons obtain a perilous livelihood. It once happened that a man, having fixed his iron bar in the ground and lowered himself down by the rope which was fastened to it, found that, in consequence of the edge of the rock projecting beyond the part below, he could not reach the spot where the eggs were deposited. He therefore began to swing himself backward and forward, and by this means he at last placed his foot on the rock, but, in so doing, he lost hold of the rope. His situation was most dreadful. The sea roared, hundreds of feet below; a perpendicular rock, towering towards the skies, above. It was impossible for him to escape, either above or below. He must soon perish for want of food. No human aid could help him. The rope was his only escape. It was yet swinging to and fro. He perceived that at each vibration it swung farther off than before, and should it cease, then it would be out of his reach entirely. Every moment that he waited, his danger became more imminent.

Imagine, dear friends, the feelings and emotions of this man. He becomes dizzy, when he looks down, and sees the maddened waves dash themselves against the rocks. The idea of starvation terrifies him. His countenance is deadly white, his whole body trembles, and he sinks unconsciously upon the rocks. But

love for life arouses him and gives him strength. He sees that he must leap to reach the rope. It is yet swinging, and, should he wait until it stops, he would only miss it and be dashed to atoms on the rocks below. He resolves to jump; and the next time the rope swung towards him he sprang forward, seized the rope, climbed upwards, reached the top in safety, and was saved.

Now, my friends, you are standing on the brink of eternity; the thread of life will soon stop swinging, and all hope will be lost if you delay. Let not the things of this world hold you back, but make up your mind to spring forward and seize Christ ere it be too late. Remember, He is your only hope, and through Him alone you can be saved. Therefore grasp Him by faith! He invites you to lay hold on Him. You can not miss your hold, for He will hold you up. You may resolve to put off repentance till to-morrow; but on to-morrow you may stand before the judgment-seat of the Almighty, and then it will be too late. Christ knocks to-day; remember, death may knock to-morrow. While you are keeping your best friend outside, Death, who waits for no one, may burst in and hurry you away to the Judge.

Come, then, to Jesus to-day. He is willing to save to-day. Heaven's gates will open to you to-day. To-morrow may be too late. Then, come just as you are. "Come at once, for He will in no wise cast you out." Come to Jesus, for he knocks. Open the door quickly, and

"Admit Him ere his anger burn;  
His feet, departed, ne'er return.  
Admit Him, or the hour's at hand  
You'll at His door rejected stand."  
J. W. BENSCH.

## Selections.

### What God Blesses.

God blesses very slender things to the conversion of souls. It is very humbling, sometimes, to a preacher who thinks, "Well, I did preach a pretty fair sermon that time," to find God does not care a pin about him or his sermon, and that a stray remark he made in the street, which he hardly thought was of any value whatever, was what God had blessed; that when he had thought he succeeded best he had done nothing, and when he thought he had succeeded worst then God blessed him. Many a soul has had his eyes opened by an instrumentality which never dreamed of being so useful; and, indeed, the whole way of salvation is in itself extremely simple, so as to be well compared to the clay and spittle which the Saviour used.

I do not find many souls converted by bodies of divinity. We have received a great many into the church, but never received one who became converted by a profound theological discussion. We very seldom hear of any great number of conversions under very eloquent preachers—very seldom indeed. We appreciate eloquence, and have not a word to say against it by itself, but evidently it has no power spiritually to enlighten the understanding, neither does it please God to use the excellency of words for conversion. When Paul laid aside human wisdom, and said he would not use the excellency of speech, he only laid aside what would not have been of much service to him. When David put off Saul's armor, and took the sling and the stone, he slew the giant; and giants are not to be conquered to-day any more than they were then by champions arrayed in Saul's armor. We must keep to the simple things, to the plain Gospel, plainly preached.—*Spurgeon.*

In the ruins of Pompeii there was found a petrified woman, who, instead of trying to fly from the destroyed city, had spent her time in gathering up her jewels. There are multitudes making the same mistake. In trying to get earth and heaven they lose both. "Ye can not serve God and Mammon." Be one thing or the other.

When we read the Bible we must always remember that like the holy waters seen by Ezekiel, it is in some places up to the ankles; in others, up to the knees; in others, up to the loins; and in some, a river too deep to be fathomed, and that can not be passed over. There is light enough to guide the humble and teachable to heaven, and obscurity enough to confound the unbeliever.

## The Dying Monk.

A narrow cell, the only furniture of which is a rough table, on which are placed a crucifix and a human skull, on the brow of which is written, "Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return;" over the crucifix a picture of the Madonna, with the inscription, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace;" a few books on divinity and ecclesiastical history; a bedstead in the form of a coffin, and within it a straw pallet, on which lies a young monk, in the last stage of consumption—such is the picture presented to you.

The dying man was possessed of a noble intellect, naturally kind, frank, and straightforward, of gentle manners, of superior education, and, to the last, simple as a little child. Blameless in life, according to the standard of the convent, zealous as Paul, rigid in the practice of all austerities and penances, he was held up to the young clergy as a model of holiness. The people confided in him, and the learned divines saw in Father Egidio the promise of an eloquent propagator of their faith. He was but twenty-two years of age, but his last hour was rapidly approaching.

At noon of June 20th, 1846, the monk appointed by the superior of the convent to attend on the sick, called out hastily at the door of my cell, "Father Egidio is dying! Make haste, please, reverend father; you are just in time to give him the holy absolution."

I ran hastily into the cell of my young fellow-monk. I was not his confessor, and was surprised to learn that he wished for me. So soon as he saw me, he said eagerly, "Please shut the door." I did so. He asked if all was secured. I replied, "Yes, my brother, fear not; no one listens to us but God, the Searcher of all hearts." "Oh! dear Father Ferrero! my only friend on earth," he exclaimed, "not for me are such precautions. I have nothing now to fear from man, but I feel anxious for your security. Oh! tell me again of that sweet comfort, that peace with God, of which you spoke three days ago, when I asked you why you read the Bible so often. Tell me frankly, before God, are we saved by our own works, or by grace only? Have all my prayers, fastings and penances been rather self-destructive than a meritorious sacrifice? Oh! I see that all my boasted works on the balance of the sanctuary weigh less than nothing. There is no salvation there. Unless grace take the place of His terrible justice, I am damned. Oh! help me, Father Ferrero. I fear His holy countenance. If Thou, Lord shouldst mark iniquities, who shall stand?"

"No one, my dear Egidio," I replied. "But let me read the Psalm from which you quote. 'There is forgiveness with God; there is mercy with the Lord, and with him is plenteous redemption.'"

"Yes, yes," he exclaimed, "I want God's mercy, God's forgiveness." Then, looking at the crucifix, he continued, "That blood, the blood of Jesus, of which you told me—speak, Ferrero, speak again."

He would have said more, but exhaustion closed his faltering lips. Yet, with his eyes fixed on mine, he waited anxiously for a word of peace. "By grace ye are saved," I said, "through faith"—faith in what Jesus has done for sinners on the cross. Oh! how have we been deceived, foolishly trusting in our works, when God has said, 'By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' It is not written that our fasting or prayers, or abstinence, penances, or rites and sacraments, can save us from wrath or cleanse us from our sins. No, no—most solemnly, no! Only the precious blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth for all sin. My dear Egidio, you are convinced that you are a sinner; then be convinced that what this Book says is true indeed. Only believe God's word. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; rest in the value of Christ's perfect sacrifice, in that precious blood, to which God is no stranger, and in a few moments more you will be with Christ in paradise."

As the thirsty one drinks from the spring suddenly discovered in the desert, so my most beloved fellow-monk drank joyfully of the living water. Though now speechless, yet strong in apprehension, he gave me one glance from his dark, intelligent eye, so sweet and smiling, that it

told me more than words could have done.

At this moment there was a knock at the door. I opened, and the superior, accompanied by the physician, entered. Seeing the sweat of death upon the patient, the superior at once hastened to summon the monks to the bed of their agonized fellow to pray according to the ritual. The superior asked me whether I had confessed him. I answered, No. Then, supposing that the sudden agony prevented confession, he gave him the papal absolution, and sprinkled him with holy water. Father Egidio mean while, with his cold fingers clasping the Bible, which lay on his knees, shook his head. And so, when extreme unction was administered to him, he seemed to protest against the ceremony, with hands and eyes manifesting that he had no fellowship in it. At last, collecting all his strength, he cried out with distinct voice, his countenance mean while beaming with heavenly peace, "Bene Jesu! valens fas meritis mea. Si, si, meo, Jesu!"—"Precious Jesus! Thy wounds are my merits. Yes, yes, mine O! Jesus!" And with arms across each other, and eyes uplifted to heaven, he forth with fell asleep. Such was the dying confession of Father Egidio.

The action and utterance of his dying moments were attributed to delirium, and a circular was sent to the other convents announcing his death, and commending his holy life. A few days after, I was sent to another convent, and was placed under the vigilance of a very rigid superior. There for six long and painful years I remained, as Nicodemus, knowing Christ, and even knowing by faith the value of his precious blood, but as yet too cowardly to confess him openly.

Dear reader, Father Egidio was a martyr of penances and austerities. Before men he was spotless as an angel. But all his religion gave no rest to his soul, no peace, no power. At last he found all that he had done to gain the favor of God—all His own righteousness—to be as filthy rags; and then he found pardon, peace, eternal life, by faith in the precious blood of Christ. In what are you trusting?—*The Witness.*

## Dr. Guthrie's Early Ministry.

Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, said, "There are moments that are worth more than years. We can not help it; there is no proportion between spaces of time in importance nor in value. A stray unthought-of five minutes may contain the event of a life. And this all-important moment, this moment disproportionate to all other moments, who can tell when it will be upon us?"

We are seldom conscious of the vital importance of these critical moments, which make or unmake us. Yet all human biographies and all national histories are full of them. A striking instance occurs to us in the life of the late Rev. Dr. Guthrie. For more than two years after his theological studies were finished he was unable to obtain a call to any church. Discouraged, he went to the continent and studied medicine for a time. Then he came home and entered his father's banking-house. His biographer says that at this time "he had not the knack of making friends neither in or out of the pulpit." After one of his trial discourses, one of his critics called him "a buller's blockhead"—the word "buller's" being probably a coarse synonym for "bellowing," for he always gave full play to his great voice in preaching. Something, whatever it was, kept him from reaching the popular ear and heart.

At last, Lord Panmure presented him the living of the little church of Arbriot. Things went on smoothly enough among his quiet farmers, but he made little impression either by thundering the laws or piping peace. So it went on until one day he observed that an anecdote which he ventured to tell in his racy way woke up his sleepy hearers, kept them awake to the close of his sermon. From that moment he changed his style of preaching, giving full play to his wonderful genius for splendid illustration. After ten years in the country, he removed to Edinburgh, where for thirty years more he preached the gospel with a popularity that never waned and to crowds that never failed to throng his church. The turning point in his ministry was that brief pulpit experiment upon his country audience.

## The Precious Blood of Christ.

"Blood has a voice to pierce the skies—  
Venomous, the blood of Abel cries!  
But the dear stream when Christ was slain  
Speaks peace as loud from every vein."

Some years ago, two soldiers belonging to one of the regiments of the British army stationed at Gibraltar were one evening placed as sentries at the opposite ends of a saltpit, or long passage, leading from the rock of Gibraltar to the Spanish territory. Though living on this secluded spot, and with few opportunities of hearing the glad tidings of the glorious gospel, they had been led to read the Sacred Scriptures together, and the still small voice of God, speaking in his own blessed word, was brought home to the heart of one of these men, who was enabled to rejoice in the pardoning love of God, and in the peace-speaking blood of Jesus.

On the evening alluded to, one of the officers, who had been out dining, was returning to the garrison at a late hour, and coming up to the sentry on the outside of the saltpit, who was the soldier recently converted, he asked as usual for the watch-word. The man, absorbed in meditation on the glorious things that had recently been unfolded to him, and filled with devout gratitude and love, on being roused from his midnight reverie, replied to the officer's challenge with the words, "The precious blood of Christ." He soon, however, received his self-possession, and gave the watch-word.

His comrade, who was anxiously seeking the Lord, and who was stationed as sentry at the other or inner end of the saltpit, a passage specially adapted for the conveyance of sound, heard the words, "The precious blood of Christ," borne upon the breeze at the solemn hour of midnight. The words came home to his heart as a voice from heaven; the load of guilt was removed, and the precious blood of Christ spoke peace to the soul of the sin-burdened soldier.

The remainder of his life was spent in India, devoted to the service of his Lord and Master; and ere he was called to his rest, the converted soldier became acquainted with no less than thirteen languages.

Dear reader, are you, like the soldier on the rock of Gibraltar, in anxiety about your soul's eternal peace and safety? Then remember the words which the midnight breeze wafted to his ear, "The precious blood of Christ." Yes, it is indeed precious, for it is the blood of God's own dear Son. It is not the blood of a mere man, but of the God-man, of "God manifest in the flesh," and therefore possessed of infinite value and unceasing efficacy.

Remember that in the blood is the life, and Jesus, in giving his blood, gave his life, as the redemption price of all his people; "for we are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Pet. i: 18, 19.) Think of the dignity of Him who suffered as the victim, and will you not say that his blood is precious? Remember that in the blood only is safety. Read Exodus 12, and you will see that when the angel of death was marching through the land of Egypt, every Israelite was safe; but his safety was secured by the blood sprinkled on the lintels. So with all the Israel of God. They shall be safe in the day of the Lord's vengeance; but it will be because Christ their Passover has been sacrificed for them, and the blood of that precious Passover Lamb has been applied to each heart and conscience.

THE REAPER'S WAGES.—A part of his wages comes through the thought that he is with God. This strengthens him wonderfully, and it glorifies all his life. If a man is an agent for a noble and powerful business house it makes him confident. The representative of a strong government feels the power of the realm, and is made strong by that. Can a man look upward—ay, send his thought above the trees, and clouds, and stars, up to the very throne of God, and as he goes on in his work feel that Christ has said to all who win souls to him that they are workers with God, and not be inspired?

Here is the secret of the joy of the church! We are not working for ourselves, but God; not for the few years of time, but for God's eternal years! It was this confidence that

sent out Moffatt when a young man, to a heathen tribe, where his life was in danger, to teach and preach, and civilize and work for God, till now he comes back an old man, having won a tribe to Jesus.—*S. S. Journal.*

## Singular Christian Duties.

1. Heartily to love them that slight us, and to wish and seek the good of those that hate and seek to hurt us.
2. To swim against the stream of the multitude.
3. To take most care of that which is most out of sight—our heart and hope.
4. To be merciful to the failings of others, and very severe to our own.
5. Still to suffer rather than sin.
6. To rejoice in losses for Christ, and to glory in the cross.
7. To do good when we are evil spoken of for our labor.
8. Cheerfully to strike in with the interests of God's cause, when it is in low condition.
9. To be most cruel to the sin that is naturally most dear.
10. To live upon the diving promises when others live on their profession.
11. Most to love and soonest to choose that which crosses the flesh most—self-denial.
12. To be most hot in that where self is least concerned.
13. To make a true conscience of the least sin, but the most conscience of the greatest.
14. To allow ourselves in the neglect of no duty, but to be most zealous for matters of the greatest weight.
15. To love those who faithfully reprove us.
16. Readily to subject all our worldly interest to our Maker's glory, and to perform holy duties with holy ends.
17. While others do their best actions with carnal aims, to do our common and civil actions with heavenly aims.

## Only Two.

Only two ways—one broad, the other narrow. One leads to destruction, the other to life; many go by the one, few by the other. Which is your way?

Only two sorts of people. Many sorts in men's opinion; only two in God's sight—the righteous and the wicked, the wheat and the chaff, the living and the dead. Which are you?

Only two deaths—the death of the righteous and the death of the wicked. Which do you think you will die? Which would it be if you were to die this moment?

Only two sides at the day of judgment—the right hand and the left. Only these two. Those on the right hand will be blest: "Come, ye blessed of my father." Those on the left will be cursed: "Depart, ye cursed." All must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive the things done in the body, whether good or bad. What words will be spoken to you?

Only two places after death—heaven and hell. The one happy, the other miserable. In the one will be heard forever songs of joy and praise; in the other, weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. God will be in the one, and angels and saints, and all the redeemed of the Lord; in the other, none but devils and lost souls. Which of these two will be your place? Which, if you were to die now?

CHRIST, FAITH AND THE GOSPEL.—Christ, as a physician, is precious to sin-sick souls. The malady must be felt before physic will be taken or sought for. The blood of Christ, which satisfied the justice of God, may well satisfy the conscience of an awakened sinner. Christ's blood is the soul's ransom; Christ's spirit is the soul's comforter; Christ's word is the soul's food; Christ's supper is the soul's feast; Christ's day is the soul's market-day. If we would stand, Christ must be our foundation; if we would be safe, Christ would be our sanctuary. The imperfections of a believer's sanctification make him continually depend on Christ for justification.

Beware of evil thoughts. They have done great mischief in the world. Bad words follow, and bad deeds finish the progress. Watch against them, strive against them, pray against them. They prepare the way for the enemy of souls.

## Dr. J. W. Alexander on Preaching.

A young minister, in reporting an interview with this eminent preacher and christian, says:

He had a special fondness for writing and chatting on sermons and sermonizing. On no theme was his talk more racy or suggestive. While he lived in Chambers street, New York, we spent a morning with him in his study; and he re-arranging his library and overhauling old letters, while he sat laughing and enjoying his riot of mirth and reminiscence, surrounded by piles of books and manuscripts. The turning up of letters from such men as Sumnerfield, Nevins, Kirk, and Breckenridge, set him upon pleasant sketches of these "men of renown;" and in one of Sumnerfield's letters occurs the expression, "I leave the selection of my language till I get into the pulpit; for the best word always comes to me in the heat of the moment." Dr. Alexander then broke out into a diatribe against dull essay reading in the pulpit. Taking up three or four huge packages of sermons, and pitching them into a corner, he said, "There goes the labor of my life; and now, after twenty years of experience, I caudally say that if I could live my life over again, I never would take one of these manuscripts into the pulpit. I would try to take them into my head, not on paper. We are sacrificing preaching to essay reading. Yet I would have thorough preparation, and then an unhampered delivery with enthusiasm. My young friend, aim at a high degree of passion, especially when you are preaching on doctrine. Argument made red-hot is what pleases people, and interests them. Argument admits of great vehemence and fire. No man can be a great preacher without great feeling. Aim at a high, noisy enthusiasm. The old Greek tragedies used to stir people up, and keep open the fountains of rage and tears. Many ministers are enthusiastic about other things, such as art, poetry, authorship, or politics. Their week day conversation is full of entertainment, but their Sabbath sermon is like a sponge, from which all the moisture is squeezed out. Life for your sermon; live in your sermon. Get some startling to cry sermon, sermon, sermon. The best discourses are the efflux of a man's best thoughts and feelings during the week. It is manifestly so with Melville and Chalmers.

"If you would preach well, pray. Even aesthetically considered, one hour of prayer is better preparation than a day of study. Keep your mind in a glow. Write when you are in a glow. Our young preachers have too uniform a method of *fraying all the sections out of a sermon over a lamp*. Read as much as you can, but write your sermons with as total a forgetfulness of the language of books as possible. I am growing jealous of even looking at a book *inter scribendum*. The Bible is, after all, the one book of the preacher. Make the Bible your book of prayer; cut off all superfluous studies and come back to your Bible. Make Scripture the interpreter of Scripture. When I write my best discourses I have nothing by me but my Bible and my Concordance."

## Abiding in Christ.

The branches of a tree are much more showy than the roots. Their growth is more perceptible. But they never attain to independence. If they were to separate from the tree they would die. The tree might retain its vigor, but the branches would wither. It is so with the christian. Christ is our life. He is the root. We are the branches. United to him we live and grow. But if we get big and set up for ourselves we die. This is the reason why so many who were once sturdy christians have lost their vitality. They did not grow up into Christ; they grew out of Christ. They perhaps retain the name and form of christians, but they do not bring forth any of the fruits of the Spirit. A proud independence has taken the place of true humility. The christian simplicity which once characterized them has given place to artificial tones and affected manners.

"As ye have, therefore, received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." (Col. ii: 6.) It is as necessary to abide in Christ as it is to receive Christ. The same spirit of joy and love and true humility, which characterized the young convert, should, in a great degree, characterize the mature christian. We get out of Christ when we lose the spirit of Christ. Then, whatever may be the position of one in the church, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered.—*Earnest Christian.*