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Revs. Rude & Miller, Editors.

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Communications.

Translated for the Lutheran Visitor.
Evangelical Foundation of Faith.

[Continued.]

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION.

The seven last articles treat of the offices which the papacy had introduced, and which our Evangelical Lutheran Church has corrected.—These are: Art. 22, Of both kinds of the Lord's Supper—Matt. xxvi: 26; Art. 23, Of the Marriage of Priests—Tim. iii; Art. 24, Of the Canon and xi; Art. 25, Of the Distinction of Meats—Col. ii; Art. 27, Of Monastic Vows—Matt. xv; Art. 28, Of Ecclesiastical Power—John xx.

A simple-hearted christian ought accordingly to abide in the pure Evangelical Lutheran religion and doctrine, because it is established beyond contradiction that they are in every point based on the revealed word of God, they lead directly to Christ, they afford inexhaustible comfort and consolation in trials and afflictions, and they guarantee eternal life to every believer. Moreover,

no matter how strong, are successfully met and conquered by the use of the word of God. A pious, christian man, who lived long ago, has given this by his answers to the following questions:

1. How can I obtain comfort when I am persecuted on account of the Evangelical Lutheran doctrine?

Answer: Seek your comfort where David found it, when afflicted.—Ps. xlii: 6. Trust in the word of Jesus Christ, Matt. v: 10-12.—"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

2. But others dwell in safety and peace. What have I done, and why am I so severely persecuted because I am a Lutheran?

Answer: Do not look at others, but examine yourself and confess with Jeremiah xiv: 7-9:—"O Lord, though our iniquity testify against us, do thou let us for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; and we have sinned against thee. Yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not." Others are also subjected to similar trials and afflictions, and all must in this evil time daily expect persecution to overtake them; therefore do not feel aggrieved, but rejoice rather, and remember what James i: 2, 3—"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."

3. I admit willingly that it is better to be chastened of the Lord in this life than to be eternally punished in the next on account of our sins; but must I leave parents, wife, children, friends, money, and property and become a wanderer?

Answer: Bear what God commanded Abraham, Gen. xii: 1, 2—"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee." &c. Hear also what our blessed Lord says, Matt. x: 37, 38—"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

4. But if I depart with an empty purse, who will support me?

Answer: It is not a difficult thing for your Creator to provide for you. The patriarch, Jacob, declared, Gen. xxxii: 10: 41 am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant: for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now am I become two bands." And your Lord promises with an oath, Mark x: 29: "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left home, or brethren, or sister, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel, but he shall receive a hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life."

Selections.

Common Mistakes about Ministers.

1. It is a common mistake to suppose that ministers are always at liberty to converse with anybody who may call upon them. In my first pastoral settlement an old lady with a small competence said to me, "I have nothing to do, so I shall often call upon you." Truly my punishment was greater than I could bear. It did not occur to the old lady that probably I might have something to do. How would a banker, a surgeon, or an architect, have received such a proposition? Yet a minister, especially a young minister, has to appear pleased that any body should be so well disposed towards him. The mischief in his case is that most of his working hours are spent in his own house, hence unreflecting people soon come to suppose that when a man is at home he is of course prepared to receive his friends. The fact is the minister is not at home in the sense usually attached to these words—he is in the study, he is at work, and he ought to be no more interrupted than if he were in the bank or in the surgery. We learn, in sheer exasperation, to give short answers to persons who propose to occupy our time.

A sleek and rubicund man said to me in a very cheerful tone, "When can I have an hour with you?"

"Never!" said I, less cheerfully. Think of a man asking for a whole hour! He had better have asked for a ten pound note, for though the answer would have been just the same, one's estimate of his judgment would have been more favorable.

"Then," said he, "when can I see you?"

"This instant!" I replied. Of course the man had nothing to say. It was easy to see that there was nothing in him, and therefore it was very probable nothing would come out of him. I gave a careless answer to earnest inquiry, but shut the door very sharply upon all gossip and doses.

2. It is a common mistake to suppose the pastoral work can only be done through the medium of domestic visitation. We often hear such words as these:—"Our minister is an excellent preacher, but he is no pastor." Stop! What do you mean by being an excellent preacher? Please to understand that there is such a thing as pastoral preaching as well as pastoral visitation. If your minister preach merely beautiful sentiments in beautiful sentences—if he palaver about orbs and pearls, meandering streams and crystal battlements—then truly he is neither a preacher nor a pastor. On the other hand, if your minister grapple with the main difficulties of life—if he breathe the consolations of Christ into hearts that are drained by grief, if he speak immediately to your engagements, your disappointments, your hopes and your fears—then truly, though he never cross your threshold, he is a pastor after Christ's own heart. Very few men are qualified to undertake the domestic pastorate. It requires faithfulness keener than the sharpest sword to speak of personal or family sins, and a judgment not surpassed even by Solomon's to apply christian precepts and denounce christian judgments as to do good without spoiling it by bitterness or conceit. Some men are manifestly called of God to minister in holy things within the household circle; they can speak with prudence so considerate and with tenderness so healing that their service becomes invaluable to the church. There are other men who are as manifestly called of God to preach to crowds, and to direct the thinking and the energy of whole congregations; they can not visit; they can not speak to individuals; they are mighty men in the presence of a throng, but bashful and silent in private. Do you undervalue an express train because it does not set you down at your own door? Do you speak slightly of the public clock because you can not carry it in your pocket? Every man must keep to his own order within his own sphere he may be unequalled, yet just outside of it he may be but a shorn Samson.

3. It is a common mistake to suppose that because a minister does not succeed in one position it is impossible that he can succeed in another. It has been practically shown in many instances that there is all the difference in the world between

being called to the ministry and being suited to one particular pulpit. In one place Jesus Christ himself could do no mighty works because of the unbelief of the people. Questions of culture, of physical ability, of surrounding conditions, of personal endowments, have to be taken into account in wisely judging the call of any man to a given charge. Some men can succeed in almost any place for a little while, but they must take care to time their departure to a nicety. To whatever denomination they may belong, they are emphatically "traveling preachers." They see a little way into truth very clearly, and when they have described that little sufficiency, they must move on to describe it elsewhere.

Other men are teachers. They have wide liberty in the great fields of truth, and that liberty they use throughout a lifetime for the advantage of the country or the world. Both classes of men may be divinely called to the ministry with equal distinctness, and therefore no word of unkind criticism should pass between them. I am more and more assured that every man gets, in the long run, just about the fame, the honor, the influence, and the dignity which he ought to have. In the long run! Mind that! Alas, some men have to die before they can wield all the influence that belongs to them, so that they live more truly in a spiritual resurrection than they ever lived in the body. So completely is this the case, that to such men it may well seem that death is not their last enemy, but their first friend.

4. It is a common mistake to suppose that preaching is the easiest work in the world. It seems easy, does it not? Only to talk! The most conclusive answer I can make to any man who asks him to preach for me. It seems very easy to play the organ, does it not? Try it, and the audience will vanish in a fright. The fact is that preaching is but the result of a process which can never be explained. Where the preacher is an honest steward, his sermon is the upgathering of thought, research, labor, and prayer, which can not be represented in words, just as a flower in full bloom is according to its capacity the upgathering of all the elements suited to its order. There is, of course, a very easy kind of preaching, a fluent gabble, uncharged with a single thought and unsuited to a solitary heart. I recall the admission, though, because it is not preaching—for preaching strains the thought and exhausts the feeling of every zealous minister of the cross. It is impossible for some people to realize that there can be anything like hard work in intellectual processes. They think of hard work altogether in connection with muscular exercise. To them a man who is swinging a hammer eight hours a day is working hard; but how a man who is silencing a bridge, writing a poem, planning an oratorio, or studying the Bible, can be working hard is more than they can understand. We have no time to trifle with such people. In a sense they can not appreciate, it is verily anything but easy to preach to such hearers.

5. It is a common mistake to suppose that the ministry is unsuccessful because great numbers are not added yearly to the list of church members. Is success a statistical quantity? Truly not! Hear how a man of accurate statistical mind can talk about his pastor's work: "As a church we are clearly going down; the year before last fifty members were added; last year sixty-eight persons joined us, and this year we have but a single addition to the church! The sun of our prosperity has set!" The complaint seems to have reason on his side. But stop! We must particularize a little. Who was the solitary individual added to the church in the year of supposed desolation? Name him! ROBERT MOFFATT! So the sun of your prosperity has set, has it? Why, sir, when Robert Moffatt was added to your church, Africa was added, a world was added. One man may be a crowd. So beware how you sneer at small numbers. The hydraunt does wonders with a single drop of water; and with a little one God puts a thousand enemies to flight!

Notwithstanding all the mistakes (like these samples given) that are made about ministers, there is no work entrusted to men so glorious, so painful, so joyous, so disappointing, yet so gratifying, as the work of

preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. It fills our eyes with tears; it drives away sleep from our pillow; yet it fills our heart with rapture, and satisfies us with an unspeakable peace. In no department of life do I see the sovereignty of God more clearly manifested than in calling men to the ministry. It is not for us to pick out our favorites and invest them with ministerial office; we have another work to do. Some times we must simply stand out of the road, that the arm of the Lord may not be hindered. One thing is settled beyond all change, and that is the oath of the Lord that his Son shall make the whole earth his empire and temple.—Congregationalist.

"The Lord is Thy Keeper."

Is "the Lord which made heaven and earth"—the Almighty One—is He indeed my "keeper," so that he preserveth me and provideth for me as carefully as if I was the sole object of his care? Yes, my son, this is true if you are one of his people, having been "born again"—having been "baptized into Christ." "Cast all your care upon him; for he careth for you." "The Lord knoweth them that are his."

Yes, "the Lord knoweth," but how may I know if I am one of "them that are his"? How shall I climb to this great height, to this comfortable assurance, whereby I shall be able to enjoy at once great peace and tranquility, being able to "rejoice in spirit" daily, even in tribulation and suffering, because I know the Lord Jesus reigns—that he does all his pleasure in the armies of heaven and amongst the inhabitants of the earth—and that "this same Jesus" is indeed my "keeper." The way is easy; and if you be so minded, the way is plain. Try to make your calling and election sure. Strive to become assured that you are of God's chosen people—that you are one of "them that are his." He saith, "I know my sheep, and they follow me." Are you following Jesus? If so really and truly, then you are one of "them that are his." Not all who call themselves followers, are true followers. "If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." That is all. Nay, it is not all; he deceiveth himself. Are we warranted by the Scriptures in believing that there be many who, in that day, will find that they have deceived themselves? "Watch ye, therefore." Examine your own heart. Take nothing for granted. Scrutinize its depths; and so deal fairly with yourself. Betake yourself humbly unto the Lord—cry aloud unto him, and he will show your heart unto you.

Are you still beset with troubles? Have you followed Jesus so little, that you are at a loss to know if you have indeed been following him at all? Are you so weak "in the grace which is in Christ Jesus," and so entangled with the things of "this present world," that it is with difficulty you can determine where your heart is most "fixed," or to what it is most inclined?

Strive then, O my son, "strive to make your calling and election sure." Let these words live before you, and burn in the eyes of your mind. For you are occupying a fearful place. Happy are ye if ye shall so consider it, and feel alarm. Tarry not in this place of uncertainty. Stay not in all this plain of spiritual unrest and worldly anxiety. For the grace of God is hindered by the love of earthly things, and even by an anxious care about "what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink." If you could feel more anxiety for a while about eternal things, you would soon emerge into a place where you would have little anxiety about temporal things. For if you could but catch a glimpse of your own dying hour and of the tremendous realities of eternity, which you are so surely and so rapidly approaching, I think you would be found "looking steadfastly up into heaven," even amid your diligence in providing the necessary things of this life. And you would then be able to receive the saying, "The Lord is thy keeper," in its fullness; for then would your trust more fully be fixed on him. It is only when you have learned the depth of these precious words, "THE LORD IS THY KEEPER," that you will be able fully to "put your trust in the Lord."

"Strive to enter in"—into this place. "Be much with God in secret, be not too much dependent

upon society. Value the whole world as of no account; set the enjoyment of God's presence before all earthly things. For indeed you can not delight in him, and at the same time have your heart set upon the things which must pass away. Even those you love may be hindrances to you, if they too much engross the heart. And so the Apostle Peter beseeches christians that they would live as "strangers and pilgrims in the world."

But the mind does not naturally love to be weaned from the world. Therefore strive. Strive against the world—the world within, the world without. "For to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

"If a man really desires to become spiritually minded, he must be more on his guard against himself than against anything else. Hold fast this short and wise saying: *For sake all, and you will find all; forsake covetousness and you will find rest.* Consider this well, and when you have learned to act upon it, you will understand all things. Blessed is he who does not despair when the way of perfection is shown him, but who sighs for these things with earnest desire, and who strives to fit himself more and more by daily exercise to receive heavenly mysteries. For this is not the work of one day. But it is by striving in this way—the way of self-denial and prayer, that you will shortly find your whole life full of joy and peace, "the Spirit bearing witness with your spirit that you are" one of "them that are his," and that the Lord is your "keeper" in a sense more complete than ever you have perceived before. And this sense of his most particular providence over you will bring you a very near to you in your daily walk. This sense of his nearness, as your keeper, in whose hand are all your times, will dwell with you, enabling you to submit yourself to him more and more, and to humbly acknowledge his sovereignty over you. —as your "keeper," who ordereth "all things" of your life—the small things and the great things, the trying things and the comforting things, all things—"for your profit," for your advancement in the divine life, will dwell in you. And thus Christ himself shall be in you. And it will come to pass that thus living, by his grace, you will be able truly to "rejoice in the Lord always."—Central Presbyterian.

The Unseen Inheritance.

An aged christian man was on his death-bed, and was happy in the prospect of soon entering into the joy of his Lord. He had a brother who had made the world the great object of his life, and who, of course, was very poor towards God, and with all his worldly shrewdness was so short-sighted as to have made no provision for the world to come, and had no idea of enjoying an inheritance beyond the grave.

His dying brother had given greater attention to the acquirement of true riches than to the realization of worldly wealth; and in his infirmities and sickness he required that christian friends should minister to his necessities, as the holy women ministered of their substance to the Lord.

When his rich brother came to see him he upbraided him for giving so much attention to the things of God, and giving away so much of his substance for religious purposes, and subjecting himself to poverty, when, if he had followed his advice and example, he might now have been in the enjoyment of plenty, instead of being, as he termed it, a burden to his friends.

With great calmness and earnestness the dying saint replied—waving his wasted hand toward his poor, self-deceived brother—"Quiet! Quiet! Whist, whist, Tom! I have a kingdom no begun upon, and an inheritance that I have not yet seen."

Who was the richer of the two brothers? The one who had his good things here in this perishing world, or the one who was begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and who knew that he was heir to an inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven?

Dear reader, while you provide for things honest in the sight of man, let your chief care be, not to be rich in the world's estimation, but to be rich in the estimation of God—to have a good hope through grace of enjoying the everlasting inherit-

tance which is laid up in heaven for all believers.

God's Work Goes On.

It is not optional with you, my friend, whether you shall live on a redeemed earth, and in times on which the ends of the age are come; it is only optional with you how you shall live here. It can not be with you as if your Saviour had not sanctified the world with his feet, and sweetened its air with his charity, and judged it by his cross. These supernatural facts are a part of the estate you occupy. Neither your ingratitude nor your caprice can root them out, or clear you of the accountability they bind upon you. Your indifference may blind your eyes or paralyze your limbs; it does not slide you out of the range of the Mediatorial ministry, or of the reckoning that must follow it. In any case, therefore, the scale of your choice does not hang evenly balanced. Your right decision is already weighted with the coming of the Son of man. The way of life has his light upon it. Choose you this day whether you will serve, in joy, the Master of the house, or turn your back upon it and upon him! If you have wandered some distance away, turn you, for your place is kept for you, and you are yet within the borders of the King's country! If you have fallen into a slumber of unconcern, awake and arise, and Christ shall give you light!—Bishop Huntington.

Christian Cheerfulness.

There are many christians who think that christianity consists in being in a state of sorrow and sadness; that christians should shun all appearances of cheerfulness. How false that idea of religion is which makes it consist in an austere manner and a sad countenance, we know from our blessed Saviour's words;

and it becomes the disciples to rejoice, because through that sorrow they are made partakers of eternal joy; or as the Apostle Peter has it: "We are begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away." This is one reason why we should be cheerful. Besides this, we are commanded to be cheerful. "Rejoice always, and again I say rejoice." Not with noisy mirth, but in holy serenity of mind that brings praise to the lips and light to the eye and elasticity to the movements of the frame.

True religion possesses the elements of cheerfulness. The gospel is "good news." "Light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart." The good and holy may have their seasons of sorrow in a world where sin and suffering exist, and where trial is a part of the discipline of life; but though "weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning." We are not to go clothed in black, with bowed heads, with long countenances, singing penitential psalms, because sin has reigned unto death in this world; but we are to remember that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound;" that the curse of the law is removed, and that death will shortly be swallowed up in victory. There is a happy medium between sadness which is usually called melancholy and fanatical joy; and this is what the religion of Jesus demands. It is a solemn but not a sad thing to live, and true Christianity elevates and purifies the spring of joy and cheerfulness, by removing all that is low and trifling and furnishing the highest motives to rational and healthful pleasure. It transforms the sorrows which work death in the unholy into means of sanctification, so that afflictions are counted light in view of the "eternal weight of glory" which they work out, and the peaceable fruits of righteousness which they produce in the heart and the life of the christian.

Let the followers of Jesus consider it both their privilege and their duty to maintain a spirit of cheerfulness, and to manifest the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, and cheerfulness. Thus they will honor their Master, recommend religion, brighten their own lives and the lives of others, and diffuse elements of love, joy, peace, and cheerfulness wherever they go. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things." May the Lord help us to be cheerful.—Religious Telescope.