

THE LUTHERAN VISITOR.

Rev. Rude & Miller, Editors.

"ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM"—EPHESIANS IV: 6.

Terms: \$2.00 a Year.

NEW SERIES, VOL. 6--NO. 9.

COLUMBIA, S. C., FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1873.

OLD SERIES, VOL. 6--NO. 269.

Communications.

For the Lutheran Visitor.
Rev. W. W. Bowers.

The subject of this notice was born in Montgomery county, Pa., a few miles from Philadelphia, April 10th, 1827, and died October 17, 1873. His age was 46 years, 6 months and 1 day.

As an early age he was dedicated to God in the holy ordinance of baptism. In youth he was surrounded by Christian influences, his parents being his earliest and best teachers. His earliest efforts to love and practice of all that was good, and endeavoring by example to bring his up to the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This excellent training was his inheritance from his father.

When he was twenty years old he was moved by the time-honored ties of consanguinity to take membership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church, then pastor of White Marsh, Pa. He was sincere in his profession of faith in the blessed doctrine, and deeply impressed with the duty of devoting himself and his talents entirely to the service of God, and to qualify himself for the work of the gospel ministry. For this purpose he entered Pennsylvania College, Gettysburg, Pa., prosecuted his classical studies for some time in Latin, Greek, and French, and then went to Georgetown, Md., to study Theology under his former pastor, Dr. Auspach, whom he ever regarded as his spiritual father, and for whom he cherished a very strong affection.

He finished his course in three years. In the fall of 1855, it was mistaken not, he was licensed by the Maryland Synod to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments, and soon after application being made by the Lutheran churches in Nova Scotia an English minister, he received the appointment, and without delay proceeded to this remote field of labor. When his arrival at Halifax became known, the elders of the Lutheran church in Germania passed a resolution to send a committee of five or six to meet him and convey him to his new home. His reception was most cordial. Great numbers of people had gathered at Lunenburg from twenty and thirty miles around to see the first English Lutheran minister that had ever set foot on the soil of Nova Scotia, and to extend to him a suitable welcome.

The work which he was called upon to perform in this field was of missionary character, but it was the kind of work he preferred, and he entered upon it with a willing mind and heart, resolved to do his whole duty in the service of his divine Master. Prior to his arrival, Rev. Gossman served this field, consisting of Lunenburg, Bridgewater, and other points, in the German language. From this time it was cultivated by the Rev. Gossman in the German, and by the deceased in the English, the arrangement being to preach alternately in each of the churches under their care. In the course of a few years it became necessary to call another English Lutheran minister, and the deceased located at Lunenburg, where he continued to reside and labor until he accepted a call to become the pastor of the Concord charge, N. C. He resigned the field in Nova Scotia some time in August last, and entered upon his pastoral relation the first September morning. He labored in this charge about six weeks when death claimed him as a victim, and he was removed from the church militant to the church triumphant. Though permitted by Providence to serve this charge so short a time, yet he had accomplished much already by his prudence, energy and efficiency for its prosperity. He had secured the confidence of the membership and the respect of all who formed his acquaintance to an extent that rarely happens to any minister in so few weeks. His untimely death was greatly lamented.

The disease from which he died was pronounced by the attending physician Typhoid Pneumonia. It was brought on by exposure. He had taken his son, a youth of fourteen years, to Mt. Pleasant, and on his return he drove through a cold rain. Having provided nothing to protect him against the inclemency of the weather, he was wet through

Selections.

The Power of Faith.

There is no other religious principle so fundamental, no one so connected with every phase of religious experience, no one on which the religious life and its results so much depend, as faith. It is present and effective at the beginning of this life, it is present and operative in its progress from grace to grace, and so in its translation from grace to glory.

The first step toward a true religious life is that man see and feel himself a sinner, guilty and polluted, unfit for fellowship with God, and exposed to death. Without this, he will never concern himself about a remedy, or way of escape from sin. He will be content to enjoy its pleasures, with no care or thought of the consequences. "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Faith in God, and this alone, will lead man as a sinner to a true apprehension of his character and condition. God is holy, and a recognition of his holiness can not fail to reveal to man his own depravity. God's will is as to the ordering of man's life is also holy, just, and good; and this no one can in any degree appreciate, without being convicted of guilt. This awakens fear, and leads to an inquiry for a way of escape. "What must I do to be saved?" is always the result of a degree of faith in God—a belief that He is a being which makes even devils tremble.

The next step toward spiritual life is "hope in God." This is reached by the faith that not only recognizes the fact that God is, but also "that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Thus believing, man is forgiven and renewed, and at the same time translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son—the kingdom of His grace. He is made a new creature—he is born again. He lives a new life, the true spiritual life. It is, however, but a beginning. This new spiritual life is to be maintained and developed, and its responsibilities discharged. And this is to be done under circumstances of peculiar exposure. Will this newly converted man be able to stand and successfully accomplish his life task? Certainly not in his own strength or by his own wisdom.

But here faith again brings the needed help. It both furnishes incentives to action, and secures power to purpose and execute. It unites Divine agency with human freedom, Divine efficiency with human endeavor. It moves both God and man, and makes them co-workers in man's life struggle for deliverance from sin into the purity of a restored holiness, as well as in all the labor of love by which God is glorified and man benefited. It makes the "feeble as David, and the house of David as God, as the angel of the Lord before them," inciting and encouraging to deeds of pliancy valor and holy daring, of self-denial and brotherly love. It touches every spring of action, stirs every dormant power, awakens aspiration, kindles a holy enthusiasm, lifts the soul up into fellowship with the Divine, bears it onward as in a chariot of fire, makes it more than conqueror over all its foes, and brings it at last purified and triumphant in the gates of heaven. How mightily it wrought, even in the saints of old, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong." And yet these, though they "obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us," under the fuller dispensation of His grace, "that they without us should not be made perfect." Thus though the child of God be in himself ignorant and weak, though his responsibilities be great and his work difficult, "Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees, And looks to that alone—Laughs at impossibilities, And cries, It shall be done."

And so, to the believer, death is a conquered foe; for him the grave has no terrors. With an apostle, he can triumphantly sing: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Without faith in God, what is man's what his purposes? what his hopes?

The Aim of Life.

The apostle has given the true idea of the Christian life. He says, "To me to live is Christ." How very different, it must be observed, was the apostle's aim from that of many who profess, in modern times, to take much of their direction, in faith and practice, from his writings. To live for Christ is the undoubted meaning of his words in this instance.

With many professors of religion their particular church name becomes a synonym of Christianity. They live, to all intents and purposes, for their particular church. So well confirmed are they in the opinion that their particular method of serving God is the method that their effort to churchize sinners is equivalent to christianizing and evangelizing them. To win to their church is to win to Christ.

There are no words of condemnation for the church, but "subordinate love" takes the range of bigotry, and pronounces always and everywhere for "our church," "our religion," "our converts," "our everything," then I think it time to throw in the words of the apostle as a Christian protest.

The reader will pardon me if I just give a specimen of first-class denominational pride, in the case of a first-class (I) preacher. At a ministerial gathering of some note this brother preached; and, after a happy effort of an evangelical kind, he finally reached the peroration which, in this case, became the summit of denominational glory; and from this altitude he surveyed the vast plains beneath him, aiming, as was most natural in this and all similar cases, at the conclusion that "we are the people that must take this world."

There is no use of talking, we must take the lead. We have the lead. Oh, it's true that other churches have a few conversions at some of their revival meetings—say ten or fifteen—but we number our converts by hundreds—some hundred and forty and fifty in some places. And, then, we are the realitist church."

Another one added, at another place, and I shall add it here, it is so opposite, "We are the best people."

The above is, substantially, what was said, only it is abbreviated here for modesty's sake. If anything more should be demanded upon this point by way of enlargement, we would only have to travel back towards the natal period and listen to the songs of good old church mothers, and take a view of the old denominational cradle in which embryo church members were rocked to sleep, in order to have our most craving desires satiated.

The fundamental idea that underlies all Christian endeavor is that it is for Christ. To serve his divine purpose should be, with us, the highest aim of life. Anything or any church that stands in the way of this should be rejected; and everything that will aid in securing the triumph of Christ's kingdom and hastening the coming glory of the Redeemer in a ransomed world should be accepted.

To live for Christ is to live unselfishly. It is to view all lands as subject to his conquests, all races of people as the purchase of his blood, and all true believers as members of his family. It is to look upon all evangelical churches as plantings of his hand, and all the enterprises of these churches as objects of his regard. And whatever Christ regards with pleasure may not be lightly esteemed by his people. To regard with disdain what, to human seeing, may seem weakness, may be to scorn the arm of Omnipotence.—Christ is working with the few. It is through human frailty that the glory is secured to Christ. He has chosen weak and foolish things to accomplish vondrous works. God has always been jealous of his glory, and will not let frail man pluck the crown from his brow.

Faith in God.

It may be worth while to consider whether our religion is not too much conditioned, or mixed with the selfish, after all. I may run in this way: I know and feel that I am a guilty sinner, therefore I will repent. I know and feel that I will believe in Christ and come to his name lest God will not save me; I will worship and serve him, lest God will not reward me. It may be we go even further than this and conclude in this way: I need to be religious that I may be good or happy, or successful, or useful; I need it in order to receive the confidence or love of men; in short, I need it in every way, in order to serve myself. There is something of truth and right in all this form of conceiving of the virtue of religion; but who must not see that mere selfishness, after all, acts the prominent part and becomes the principal motive? This is wrong. It makes our religion a selfish matter instead of an honor to God. Besides, it fills it with a regard and care for self rather than for God, and makes it a religion of slavish fear. God, and not self, should be the motive of our religion; the well-being of ourselves the result and not the cause. We should

do it for his own sake, and let the result be to us what may seem to him good. To please God should be the primary aim of our religion. We may here see the adaptedness and office of faith, without which, we are told, it is "impossible to please him."

Faith at once sets self in the background. Men discover in themselves noble faculties and powers. These are God's own gifts. They are capable of training and culture to a high degree. They can accomplish wonders and be a blessing to the noblest purposes. Many think these endowments are sufficient, and to use them as they think rightly is what is needed to please God. Then there is morality, the character which man is able to acquire and exercise to regulate his conduct toward his fellows on the principles of right and justice. This is appreciated and honored by men generally. It makes the honest, truthful and sober man, David as God, as the angel of the Lord before them," inciting and encouraging to deeds of pliancy valor and holy daring, of self-denial and brotherly love. It touches every spring of action, stirs every dormant power, awakens aspiration, kindles a holy enthusiasm, lifts the soul up into fellowship with the Divine, bears it onward as in a chariot of fire, makes it more than conqueror over all its foes, and brings it at last purified and triumphant in the gates of heaven. How mightily it wrought, even in the saints of old, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong." And yet these, though they "obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us," under the fuller dispensation of His grace, "that they without us should not be made perfect." Thus though the child of God be in himself ignorant and weak, though his responsibilities be great and his work difficult, "Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees, And looks to that alone—Laughs at impossibilities, And cries, It shall be done."

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The Danger of Prosperity.

It requires more grace to bear prosperity in a right spirit than adversity; one is apt to ensnare, the other humbles us, and teaches us self-knowledge. In prosperity we often slide into a spirit of conformity to the world almost imperceptibly.

Many a Christian who has stood his ground boldly against the frowns and persecutions of the world, and passed through deep affliction in safety, has been won by its smiles in the time of prosperity, and brought either to deny his Lord, or has sunk into a state of deadness and lukewarmness of soul.

Peter, who zealously stood up for Christ in the garden of Gethsemane in the face of the Roman soldiers, denied him while sitting at ease by the fire in the palace of the high priest.

How pure and unblemished was the character of David during the days when he watched his father's sheep, and when he suffered from the bitter persecution of Saul! But when he was exalted to the throne of Israel, he exchanged the shepherd's staff for the scepter of a prince, he fell into those sins which caused him to water his couch with tears, and the remembrance of which embittered his future days. Oh! how much mercy there is in the fallings of the saints being recorded! If they were set forth as perfect characters, we might indeed be discouraged, and almost ready to despair, when we feel our corruption strong and our enemies so numerous and powerful. If we read that the father of the faithful had, that the man after God's own heart became an adulterer and murderer, that the bold apostle, who was so ready to go with his Master to prison and to death, yet so shamefully denied Him, what lessons of humility and watchfulness should it teach us! What tenderness toward our backsliding brethren! when we remember that we are liable to the same temptations, and that it is by grace we stand, and by grace alone that any are kept through faith unto salvation.

Who Are to Examine Themselves?

They who think themselves Christians. If they are right in so thinking, self-questioning will confirm them. If they are wrong in their conclusions, they will be undeceived; and the sooner they are so the better. Those men who have no doubt as to their being Christians are just the very persons to examine themselves, that they may see how far their life corresponds to their profession. But as to those who are full of doubts and fears, for what end are they to examine themselves? Is it in order to discover something in themselves that will tend to remove these doubts, and prove them to be Christians? Such never can be the result. For such persons it is an examination of Christ that is needful, not of themselves. If the result of self-examination is the removal of doubts, the likelihood is that there is self-righteousness at work, and the doubts have fled because the individual has become satisfied with himself. Nothing can be more dangerous than this. True self-examination must produce dissatisfaction with self; and it is just in this state that we learn to be satisfied with Jesus. Satisfaction with Him is the great dispeller of doubt. The remedy for the doubter is not self-examination, but looking unto Jesus. "He must increase, but we must decrease."

SPIRITUAL COURAGE.—Christian valor and spiritual courage is a needful grace. David had in him this holy valor and courage when he went against Goliath, and Paul when he was going to Jerusalem. But most valorous and strong did Christ, our Captain, show himself when he was going up to Jerusalem to suffer. The Evangelist saith, he steadfastly set his face, he settled himself fully to go; though it were to drink a most bitter cup, but he would not be drawn from it, and because Peter labored to dissuade him he sharply rebuked him, and called him Satan.—William Gouge.

CHRIST'S TRUTH.—I know that the Word of Christ from the beginning of the world hath been of such a sort that he who would maintain it must, with the apostle, forsake and renounce all things; and stand waiting for death every hour. If it were not so it would not be the word of Christ. It was preached with death, it was promulgated with death, it hath been maintained with death, and must be so hereafter.—Luther.

It is of little use to learn anything unless we remember it, or retain it in the mind.

Do You Attend the Prayer Meeting?

How came it to pass that three thousand were converted on the day of Pentecost? Had not the meeting for prayer of which mention is made in Acts 1: 14, when it is said, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication," a close and influential connection with the gloriously results of that day? Undoubtedly! "What was there in twenty disciples to exert so much—and to the conversion of three thousand individuals? Whence had it that power? It was a prayer meeting, professedly a prayer meeting, a meeting of Christians to express their dependence on God; unitedly to call on him for his blessing; to plead his promise and to wait for the fulfillment of it. These are the efficient meetings in which Christians meet and agree to ask of God. "I wonder they do not value them more. To the prayer meeting, Christians come to exercise the high privilege of intercession for others; to do good and to communicate to act the more "blessed part" whereas to meetings of another kind they go for the purpose of receiving good. Yet Christians value no meetings so little as prayer meetings. But the influence of that meeting of an hundred and twenty was not owing entirely to its being a prayer meeting. There was much by which it was distinguished from ordinary prayer meetings. The mere mention of these peculiarities may be of service. It may provoke imitation in some churches.

1. All the church attended that prayer meeting. "These all continued," etc. There were but one hundred and twenty disciples, and they were all present. How different is it now! They who meet may agree among themselves to ask for an outpouring of the Spirit, but this after all but the agreement of a minority of the church. The majority, by their absence, dissent from the request.

2. As all attended, of course the men attended as well as the women. Yes, every male member of the church was present; they did not leave it to the women to sustain the prayer meeting. The prayer meeting had not the aspect of many a modern prayer meeting, in which almost all are of the weaker sex.

3. The most distinguished members of the church attended, as well as the most obscure. There were all the apostles, and "Mary the mother of Jesus," and "his brethren." None of them felt above being at a prayer meeting. How is it now?

4. They were all agreed—"of one accord," as it is said. Not merely agreed as touching what they should ask, namely, the fulfillment of "the promise of the Father," but of one mind generally—aye, and of one heart. They thought and felt alike. They all loved one another. Such cordial union among Christians has great power with God. It does not always exist in our prayer meetings.

5. They persevered in prayer.—"These all continued in prayer." First they stirred themselves up to take hold on God, and then said, "We will not let thee go except thou bless us." They met often for prayer, and all met, and they lingered long at the throne of grace. But how long did they continue asking? Until they obtained; and then they did but pass from the note of prayer to that of praise. They sought the Lord until he came. It is time we all should do it. They were together holding meeting when the Spirit descended. I think if all our church members would habitually attend the prayer meetings they would not wait in vain for the promise of the Father. How often we hear it said, "It is nothing but a prayer meeting. Nothing but—I should like to know what surpasses a prayer meeting."—Nevins.

It is of little use to learn anything unless we remember it, or retain it in the mind.

It is safer to be humble with one talent, than proud with ten; yes, better to be a humble worm than a proud angel.

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Worship.

of the Ev. Luth. ch. in America.

Services, 8 a.m. in the church, in this way part of the church.

Arabeque, S. C. Ten p.m. in the church, in this way part of the church.

Boonville, S. C. Ten p.m. in the church, in this way part of the church.

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