

Lutheran Observer.

Unless with proofs of Holy Writ, or with manifest, clear and distinct principles and arguments, I am refuted and convinced, I can and will recant nothing.—Luther.

In Essentials, Unity; in Non-Essentials, Liberty; in all Things, Charity.

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WHOLE NO. 3653.

Poetry.

ALAS! HOW LIGHT A CAUSE MAY MOVE!

BY THOMAS MOORE.

Alas! how light a cause may move
Dissension between hearts that love!
Hearts that the world in vain has tried,
And sorrow but more closely tied;
That stood the storm when waves were rough,
Yet in a sunny hour fall off,
Like ships that have gone down at sea,
When heaven was all tranquillity!

A something light as air,—a look,
A word unkind or wrongly taken,—
O, love that tempests never shook.
A breath, a touch like this has shaken!
And ruder words will soon rush in
To spread the breach that words begin;
And eyes forget the gentle ray
They wore in courtship's smiling day;
And voices lose the tone that shed
A tenderness round all they said;
Till fast declining, one by one,
The sweetnesses of love are gone,
And hearts, so lately mingled, seem
Like broken clouds,—or like the stream,
That smiling left the mountain's brow,
As through its waters ne'er could sever,
Yet, ere it reach the plain below,
Breaks into floods that part forever.

O you, that have the charge of Love,
Keep him in rosy bondage bound,
As in the fields of Bliss above
He sits, with flowerets fettered round;—
Loose not a tie that round him clings,
Nor ever let him use his wings;
For even an hour, a minute's flight
Will rob the plumes of half their light.
Like that celestial bird,—whose nest
Is found beneath far Eastern skies,—
Whose wings, though radiant when at rest,
Lose all their glory when he flies!

MEMORY.

BY CHARLES H. LUDERS.

Out of my dooryard maple
A gilded leaflet fell,
Twinkling down on a sunbeam,
Like music from a bell.
Nor hand nor foot disturbed it,
And frolicsome gusts of air,
Whirling the wayside atoms,
Danced on, and left it there.
Slowly away it wasted
Till only a film remained—
A skeleton leaf, a shadow,
Lost wholly when it rained.
Yet lo! on the stained foot-way,
Etched where the gold had lain,
A delicate shape—a spirit—
Tarried in wind and rain.

God give us men! A time like this demands
Great hearts, strong minds, true faith and willing hands.
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor, men who will not lie.
—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Contributions.

A PRESCRIPTION FOR SICK CHRISTIANS.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

Dr. Horace Bushnell was an invalid during the last years of his noble and useful life; and when people in Hartford inquired of him, "How is your health?" he used to reply playfully, "I have not got any." This might be the honest answer of many a professed Christian in regard to their souls. Their spiritual pulse is feeble; their appetite for God's word is poor; they are more fit for the hospital than for service. They no more enjoy their religion than a fever patient would enjoy a slice of roast beef, or a plum-pudding.

Their sickness is their own fault, and it is their business and duty to get well as soon as possible. Since spiritual disease is the result of sin, and spiritual health is obligatory upon every Christian, how shall the invalids be restored? "I will restore health unto thee, saith the Lord." Christ is still the Great Physician. He works cures, not by miracles, but by means, and by medicines. One of these is the powerful purgative of *truth* faithfully administered. That pungent preacher, Charles G. Finney, understood how to apply this heroic treatment, and it would be well if all ministers could read his "Lectures on Revivals" once every year. But whether the truth comes to you from the pulpit or from your own reading of the word, or from any other quarter, it will do you no good, my sick friend, unless you swallow it and let it work. If it produces some sharp gripings of conscience, all the better.

Then, too, you are in sad need of exercise. Your Master has given you faculties and affections and capacities to serve him with. Yet for utter want of use, these limbs of the soul are as feeble as the bodily limbs of a man who has been on his back for a month with a typhoid fever. Never will you recover your appetite, never will the flush of spiritual joy mantle your countenance, until you get out of your hammock and *go to work*. You are dying from confinement and indolence. If you give at all, you do it grudgingly. There is but one cure for spiritual laziness, and that is work; but one cure for stinginess and selfishness, and that is sacrifice; but one cure for bashfulness, and that is to open your lips for Christ, or to plunge into some difficult duty before the shiver has time to come on. A thorough course of feeding on Bible-diet on Sunday, and of practicing Bible-duties during the week, will soon put you on your feet again. You can throw away your crutches and run without growing weary, and walk without becoming faint. How glad your minister will be to see you out again! How happy you will feel when your congestion of lungs and purse and heart is cured; and the sleep of the laboring man will be sweet.

All the above-mentioned prescriptions must be honestly taken; but remember that Jesus Christ is the great physician and health-giver. No permanent cure

without him. Jesus not only gives life, but can give it more abundantly, when "the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with *healing* in his wings." There is hygienic power in physical sunshine for sick plants and sick people. It would bring speedy recovery to many a diseased and enfeebled soul to come back into the warm light of Christ's countenance. A great deal of spiritual sickness arises from bad atmosphere. The heavenly winds of the Divine Spirit alone can sweep away the malaria. "My Spirit I will give unto you," is Christ's promise; and with that powerful breath from above will come a new and purifying and bracing atmosphere. I was once addressing a crowded audience in a small room on a wintry night, and the air became so foul that the candles went almost out. As soon as the door was opened, and the oxygen of the wintry air rushed in, every candle flamed up immediately. Your lamp is going out, brother! You need fresh air. O what a glorious oxygen would pour into our hearts and into our prayer-meetings, our Sunday-schools and our churches, if the Holy Spirit should come like a mighty rushing wind, purifying, arousing, and quickening souls unto the very life of God! That would be a *revival*—a living-again from dead works and decay into the glow and gladness of vigorous health.

Such discovery cannot be reached by a wholesale process. God says to each individual Christian who has been made sick by sin, "Return unto me, and I will heal thy backslidings." The lepers who came to Jesus were not afraid to show him their loathsome disease. You must not be gingerly in your confessions, or seek to hide your sins, or cover them with plasters of apology. Let your honest prayer be, "Wash me *thoroughly* from mine iniquities." This prayer means—as Dr. Maclaren truly says—"Wash me, beat me, hammer me with mallets, rub me with caustic nitre, do anything with me, if only those foul spots melt away from the texture of my soul!"

Such penitence, such prayer, will bring pardon for the past. Not only pardon, but peace and purity and power. You will be restored to health. Reconverted yourself, you will be able—like restored Peter—"to strengthen the brethren." Healed yourself, you will be ready to labor for the healing of others. O what a revival it would be in all our churches, if the backsliders, and the fever-patients, and the lean dyspeptics, and the sin-sick professors, would come trooping out of the hospital and report themselves for duty! Of such a church the Master might say once more, "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy *healing* shall spring forth speedily."

FAVORITE HYMNS OF CONSOLATION.

BY W. W. DAVIS.

For a week the whole world was singing "Nearer, my God, to Thee," and "Lead, Kindly Light." No other two hymns ever burst into so universal popularity. But the hymn-book is a treasure house of inspiration, and almost every lyric has had for some sad heart its own peculiar joy and encouragement.

"Rock of Ages" is the great heart hymn of the church. Gladstone translated it into Latin, Greek, and Italian. Gen. Stuart, cavalry leader of the Confederacy, sang it as his life was ebbing away from wounds received in battles before Richmond.

Thomas Lacy, an English Methodist, repeated Charles Wesley's

"Christ, the Lord, is risen to-day,"

on Easter morning shortly before his death, and passed away in peace.

Matthew Arnold was never tired of humming Dr. Watts'

"When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of glory died."

E. P. Hammond attributes his conversion at seventeen in Connecticut to

"Alas! and did my Savior bleed?"

Rev. Thomas H. Stockton, Philadelphia, waked from a sleep just before his departure, and his first words were—

"And are we yet alive,
And see each others' face?"

This is the regular conference hymn of the Methodists in opening their sessions on both sides of the sea.

Dr. Doddridge, conversing one day with his pupils at Northampton on the various ways in which Christians met death, said: "I wish that my last words may be those lines of Watts:

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Thy kind arms I fall."

In his last illness, Nettleton, evangelist of last generation, often repeated Wesley's

"Come, let us join our friends above."

When Wilberforce was contesting a seat in Parliament, he remained cool in the midst of the excitement, and was heard day after day as he returned home repeating—

"Far from the world, O Lord, I flee,
From strife and tumult far."

While Dr. Mason Good was dying, he frequently quoted Cowper's hymn—

"There is a fountain filled with blood."

For Dr. Dwight, the early president of Yale, Perronet's

"All hail the power of Jesus' name,"

had a peculiar charm, and for Henry Ward Beecher, Charles Wesley's

"Love divine, all love excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down!"

"I'll praise my Maker with my breath."

With the opening lines of this hymn, John Wesley at 88, rose for his last day on earth. But his voice failed, and he could only utter "I'll praise, I'll praise!"

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly!"

How many hearts this glorious lyric of Charles Wesley has filled with joy. A favorite with Lyman Beecher, and Henry Ward Beecher, alluding to his father's love for the hymn, said it will go on singing till the last trump. Charles Finney, famous evangelist and president of Oberlin, in his last day on earth, joined in the strains as they floated through the window of a distant church.

One morning while John Summerfield was suffering great pain, he exclaimed in the lines of Pope:

"Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife,
Let me languish into life!"

Alfred Cookman's last Sunday on earth was a delightful day. As the window was opened, and the bright sunshine came in, he asked friends to sing—

"Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore"—

and said "That grand old hymn! Yes, I am weak and wounded, sick and sore."

Before his death in 1862, Dr. Bethune gave explicit directions about his funeral: "Put on me my pulpit gown, with my pocket Bible in my right hand; bury we with my mother, my father, and my grandmother, and sing my hymn:

"Jesus, thou Prince of life!
Thy chosen cannot die;
Like Thee, they conquer in the strife,
To reign with Thee on high."