

# Lutheran Observer.

Sales 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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## Poetry.

### TO THE CUCKOO.

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

O blithe newcomer! I have heard,  
I hear thee and rejoice:  
O cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,  
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass  
Thy two-fold shout I hear;  
From hill to hill it seems to pass,  
At once far off and near.

Though babbling only to the vale  
Of sunshine and of flowers,  
Thou bringest unto me a tale  
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!  
Even yet thou art to me  
No bird, but an invisible thing,  
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days  
I listened to, that cry  
Which made me look a thousand ways  
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove  
Through woods and on the green,  
And thou wert still a hope, a love,  
Still longed for, never seen!

And I can listen to thee yet;  
Can lie upon the plain  
And listen till I do beget  
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace  
Again appears to be  
An unsubstantial faery place,  
That is fit home for thee!

### THE BUTTERFLY

BY ALICE FREEMAN PALMER.

I hold you at last in my hand,  
Exquisite child of the air;  
Can I ever understand  
How you grew to be so fair?

You came to this linden tree  
To taste its delicious sweet,  
I sitting here in the shadow and shine  
Playing around its feet.

Now I hold you fast in my hand,  
You marvelous butterfly,  
Till you help me to understand  
The eternal mystery.

From that creeping thing in the dust  
To this shining bliss in the blue!  
God, give me courage to trust  
I can break my chrysalis too!

As three times to His saint He saith,  
He saith to me, He saith to thee,  
Breathing His grace-conferring breath,  
"Lovest thou me?"

Ah, Lord, I have such feeble faith,  
Such feeble hope to comfort me,  
But love it is, as strong as death,  
And I love thee. —Christina Rossetti.

## Contributions.

### THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS.

BY C. A. STORK, D. D.

The phrase is not a vague bit of sentiment, it is an expression of Scripture. Paul uses it when he speaks of giving up all for Christ, making a complete surrender of his inmost self; he says it is that he may know, among other things, "the fellowship of Christ's sufferings." That is, that in the sufferings he has to endure he may be made one with Christ. Not to suffer alone in sullen submission; not to suffer bravely even as a Stoic, wrapping himself in his pride of manhood, saying as so many do, "what must be, must be," but even in pain of body, in the pang of loneliness and bereavement, in the misery of disappointment and weakness, feeling a fellowship with his Savior, finding a sweetness in this that he shares his anguish with the great Sufferer, that together they are walking through the furnace, that in a strange, mysterious identity of sorrows, God is working through them towards his kingdom of righteousness. What a thought is that to light up the hour of anguish.

Now, there is a comfort in the simple sense of companionship in suffering. To find out that this strange, startling experience of pain, this aching loneliness of the heart fresh from the new grave of one we loved, this bitter pang of betrayal and abandonment, are the experience of others like ourselves, has a balm of solace in it. Strange solace, you say: what comfort is it to my sorrow to know that others sorrow too? Yes, man is a strange creature; he draws refreshment from many a source that no philosophy could have predicted. But is it not true? Has not many a bereaved mother, mingling her tears with sisters made lonely as she has been, found a softening of grief in that fellowship of suffering? Has not many a poverty-stricken man as he compared experiences with other sons of want found the edge of his poverty grow less keen? This is the meaning of that homely proverb, "Misery loves company." At first this seems but an ugly outburst of selfishness, a delight to pull down others to our level. That would be base, indeed, to mingle in the cup of anguish the hateful glee that others are no happier than we. But it is not so. It is not envy, it is not selfishness, it is the human craving for sympathy. It is the dim sense of comfort striking through pain, that we are not alone, we are not shut out from fellowship. Surely there was comfort without envy, without the baseness of selfishness, in the fellowship of the ten lepers that sat in company at the gate of the village.

And this sense of fellowship in suffering may rise to a height of nobleness, when we fall in with sufferers that are bearing their anguish with patience, with meekness, with cheerfulness, and for a great cause. How, when we were all suffering in our great Civil War, some with anxieties for the State, some for brothers and fathers, imperiled in the field, did it quell the repining and soften the sting of sacrifice, to

remember the patient men that a century ago bloodied the grass of Valley Forge with their wounded feet, to think of the great leader stung with calumnies, crushed with unspeakable burdens, silently sitting in his tent, waiting, enduring. And still deeper goes the comfort of this fellowship in suffering when those that suffer, we see, bear it in the name of God. At Lambeth, the palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury in London, is a grim old tower, built before Columbus sailed for America. It is called the Lollards' tower because there were imprisoned those faithful servants of God, the Lollards, the first Reformers in England. You go up the narrow, winding stair of stone all worn with the footsteps of prisoners that have lain here, and come to a low, dark cell with narrow slits for windows. What suffering has been here! What weary months of imprisonment, silence, cold, hunger, pain! How many have watched the light come through those narrow windows for the last time, on the day that they were to endure the fire for Christ's sake! How light our sorrows and pains seem by theirs! To go and stand in the cell and think of those patient sufferers for Jesus' sake, is to have a fellowship of sorrow that is more than comforting. It helps us to bear our burden, to be patient under it, to feel it less.

And what shall we say then of the fellowship of pain we have with our Savior! He, the Highest, has bowed himself to pass under the yoke of our sorrows! "It behoved him to be made like unto his brethren in all things:" yes, in suffering even, that he might be able to succor them that are tried. Not by compulsion, not for himself, but freely and for us, that we might have the fellowship of God in anguish and agony. "He tasted death" with us and for us. When the apostle Peter comforts the sufferers in the churches, he reminds them, as if it would bring a balm, that "Christ also hath suffered, the just for the unjust;" he bids them find reason for joy when they are in distress, by remembering that they "are partakers of Christ's sufferings." And it is a comfort, it is a joy to know this. If you have not felt it, be assured you have not sounded the depths of God's comfort. You know not all the meaning of the cross. But you may know it. It is for you. Go, then, with your pain of heart, and seek this suffering Savior; seek his cross; lay your sorrow by his; learn what it is to know "the fellowship of his sufferings;" learn how the heart-ache lessens and loses its pang at the cross.

There is another meaning to this expression "the fellowship of his sufferings." Christ's sufferings are an explanation of our sufferings. To feel that we suffer with him is to a certain extent to have a clearing-up of the mystery of suffering. I do not say it explains it entirely. What can? There is a mystery about pain before which all philosophy is dumb. To look at a little child, that has never known good or ill, to see it toss in agony, to hear it moan, to see it look at its mother with the dumb entreaty for relief, with the wonder in it that she will not help—who has known this and not felt himself out on a shoreless sea of mystery! And one sting of suffering, one of its keenest stings, is the darkness that gathers round it. "Why, oh why?" goes up the wail of the stricken mother by the new-made grave—and there is no answer. In the chambers where the sick lie for years on a ceaseless rack of pain we stand by, and we cry out to ourselves and God—"Why, O God, why?" We lay the young minister full of promise and fire, just putting in his sickle to reap in the white harvest of souls,—we lay him, suddenly stricken down to the grief and terror of the churches, under the sod, and as we turn away, bewildered, the pain of loss is doubled because it is all so dark. Now we are to seek for explanation at the cross. We read there that this law of suffering is a vast and high law. Pain is not an

accident; a mischievous intruder breaking over the wall in this province of God's kingdom and wreaking its malice on poor, weak, insignificant creatures here and there. No, it is for all. This law reaches from the Creator on his throne to the worm that writhes in the dust. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now." Even he, "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person," "learned obedience by the things which he suffered." Wonderful revelation of the universality of suffering! Its dark stain and shroud of mystery rests upon and encompasses even the throne of the Highest. Not even in Heaven is the memorial of it lost. John tells us that when he looked through the open door into Heaven and saw there the throne set, "lo, in the midst of the thorne stood a Lamb as it had been slain." Yes, the image of suffering is enthroned in the midst of the adoring elders, the midst of bright seraphim and cherubim. And this is, as far as it goes, an explanation of suffering. I do not pronounce it a full explanation: it only moves the mystery a little farther off. But it is an explanation, just as all the discoveries of science are explanations of natural facts. Men for ages saw apples fall to the ground; nobody knew why. Newton came and made it clear. How? By saying it was the law of gravitation that made all apples fall, that is, that all bodies have a tendency to come together. And then we face mystery again; why do all bodies tend to come together? When we say that suffering is a vast, wide law—a law of the universe—we still leave a mystery, but it is the mystery of the universe, the mystery of being. The fellowship of our suffering, then, is with the greatest, the highest of sufferers, with the Head of the universe. In suffering with Christ we suffer under a vast, all-comprehending law. And when we see this, when we come into this august companionship of suffering—is it not easier to say "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight?"

#### CHRISTIAN GROWTH—LIKE THE LILIES.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

On the northwestern shores of the Lake of Galilee, and beside the waters of Merom, may still be seen a gorgeous flower of luxuriant softness, with three inner petals, which is known as the Huleh lily. There is a strong probability that in the time of our Lord, when the soil of Palestine was under high cultivation, this brilliant flower abounded, and many may have been in sight when he said to his auditors in the Sermon on the Mount, "Consider the lilies of the field, *how they grow*." If they were an object lesson to his hearers then, they are equally so to all Christians in these days. No subject can be more thoroughly practical than growth in grace; it is finely illustrated by the growth of the lily.

The first lesson to be learned is that the flower to which Jesus pointed grew by the action of the vital principle within it. A bit of white marble is the same thing to-day that it was a century ago; it has no life. But there is a subtle, mysterious principle in the lily which slowly lifts it from the ground and expands it into an exquisite cup of white and gold. Life, in the natural world, is never self-produced. The first lily was the creation of God; all the rest have been its propagated successors. Spiritual life is never self-originated. It is born of the Holy Spirit. It begins with the entrance of the Lord Jesus into a converted soul; that is regeneration. He that hath the Son of God *hath life*. The Apostle Paul meant just this when he said, "I live, yet not I; it is Christ that liveth in me."

This is a profound mystery; but there is not a genuine Christian on the round globe but has a cer-

tain measure of his divine master in his inmost soul. Our only anxiety need be whether we were truly converted and whether we really have Christ within us; if we are sure of that, then we may dismiss anxiety just as the lilies do, and grow just as they grow without any worry. Some good people distress themselves needlessly.

We are not required to furnish the growing principle or agent; the Spirit of Christ furnishes that. The mariner is not required to provide the wind; he has but to set his sails to the breeze and his ship floats onward. Saving faith is receiving the Christ-life into the soul; while that divine life is there, growth may go forward. Precisely this did the Master teach when he said, "if ye abide in me, and I in you, ye shall bear much fruit." Heart-union to him is the only source of the Christian life.

A true servant of Jesus draws his motives of action from his deep loyalty, his deep heart-love to his Redeemer. These are his roots. Up from these hidden roots spring his daily obedience and devotion to those things which are pure and honest and holy and of good report. These are the motives which keep him self-denying and steadfast. They hold him firm in times of sudden temptation as stout roots hold a tree against the assaults of a gale. The reason why Paul never fell from grace is that he was rooted and grounded in Christ. Jesus held him and Jesus fed his strength. That is the double office of a root; it holds and it feeds. Here is the test question with all my readers who profess and call themselves Christians. Are our hearts in all their motives, desires and affections so united to Jesus Christ that we *draw him up* into our daily lives? Do we keep the connection close by secret prayer? Is Jesus actually in us? Is his law our law, are his interests our interests, do we give conscience the casting vote, and always say honestly to our Savior "What wilt thou have me to do?"

There is a second fact about the growth of the lily that must not be lost sight of by the person who desires to grow in grace. The lily grows not only by its inward principle of life, but by the help of its surroundings. Put a lily into an exhausted receiver, and it dies for want of air. Put it into a dark cellar and it perishes for want of light; send it off to Greenland and it dies for want of warmth; stick it into a dry sand-bed, and it dies for want of moisture. Air, light, warmth and moisture are indispensable. When these conditions are fulfilled, observe how busily the flower assimilates into itself the required particles out of the atmosphere, out of the soil, out of the sunshine, and out of the rain-drops.

A similar provision is made for us that we may develop our Christian character, and enlarge our Christian lives. God's holy word is our light; we must open our souls and let it in; "The entrance of thy Word giveth light," said the old-time Psalmist.

God's Book is soul-food also; the strongest Christians are hungry feeders on the Bible, and the want of it accounts for the emaciated skeletons in the church. Christ's love is "shed abroad" in the hearts of his loyal followers—as sunshine is shed abroad in a garden—and that supplies warmth. The gift of the Holy Spirit, which cometh down like the dew and the rain, supplies the moisture. And so God giveth the increase. But if we neglect God's Word, steep our hearts in the frigid atmosphere of worldliness, and quench the vital fire of the Holy Spirit, we are cast out and withered. If growth doesn't kill sin, sin will kill growth! Brethren and sisters, if you are declining in godliness, if you are losing the joy, the sweetness, the strength and the fragrance of a fruitful life, it is entirely your own fault. It is not possible for us to create spiritual life, but it is awfully possible for us to produce spiritual death!

Those lilies which spring up among the marshes of Lake Huleh (the ancient Merom) grow from the mud, and yet they grow *clean*. Pure as a lily is a proverb. We inherit a foul, depraved nature and live in a very dirty world, but Jesus Christ can give us purity of heart. Thence comes purity of living. There must have been a rare loveliness in the flowers which our Lord described as surpassing the royal attire of Solomon.

Before all of us Christ sets an ideal which we are to aim after; it is the "beauty of holiness." Our prayer must constantly be that the beauty of the Lord our God may be upon us. Jesus enjoined upon all his disciples to study him, to learn of him, to keep his commandments and to seek his spirit. A Christian is the representative of Christ; how all-important that we make our religion winsome!

The lives of such men as Spurgeon and Moody are the most eloquent sermons in behalf of the Bible they fed upon. No group of lilies in the gardens of Bermuda show fairer in the sunshine than Florence Nightingale and Clara Barton in the hospital of suffering, or Mary Lyon training her pupils to "go for Jesus Christ and perishing souls where nobody else was willing to go." All the solid piety is not as *attractive* as it might be. There are thousands of sincere Christians who would be wonderfully improved if they would add a little more of the beauty and fragrance of the lily to their characters. An attractive Christian is the one who hits the golden mean between a too liberal laxity and a sanctimonious severity. He is strict, but not censorious—sound in heart, yet mellow as one who dwells in the sunshine of love. He understands how to do right in the right way.

Look at the lilies! said the Master. Our neighbors will look at us, and with sharp eyes too. They expect to discover moral beauty in the conduct of those who profess to be followers of the divine Jesus. A follower of him ought to be worth looking at. Short-lived at best is any human life; as a flower of the field so it flourisheth. Death is but a transplanting to a higher clime. "My Beloved is gone down into his garden to gather his liles."

Brooklyn, N. Y.

#### OUR BEST HELPS.

Our hindrances are often our best helps. The very routine of our daily work may be a salutary spiritual discipline. That is not the purest soul which is sheltered from all exposure to temptation, but the one that is continually braced in an attitude of resistance to the manifold forms of evil about it. Inward peace is not the result of quiet hours of lonely brooding, but of the coming of a divine life into the heart with power to bring all of its affections into perfect harmony with the divine will. We do not find the noblest type of piety among those races which have their home where every prospect pleases the eye and where the means of existence are to be had without effort, but among those active peoples who have conquered adverse natural conditions and are constantly stimulated to endeavor by the difficulties that they have to overcome.

Spiritual beauty is to be greatly desired, but it is loveliest when it is the crown of strength. The best illustration of a Christian life is not a carefully tended exotic in a conservatory; better far is it represented by the rose that blooms amid the Alpine cliffs and at the edge of the glacier, or by the vine whose fruitfulness results from frequent pruning by the husbandman, or the oak that wrestles with the tempest and grows the tougher and more glorious by the conflict. Strength becomes beauty when love consecrates it to service.—Dr. J. E. C. Sawyer, in Northwestern.