

# 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.

VOL. LXIX. NO. 39

LANCASTER AND PHILADELPHIA, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1901.

WHOLE NO. 3651.

## Poetry.

### THE MEMORY OF THE DEAD.

BY FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER.

Dear dead! they have become  
Like guardian angels to us;  
And distant heaven, like home,  
Through them begins to woo us;  
Love that was earthly, wings  
Its flight to holier places;  
The dead are sacred things  
That multiply our graces.  
They whom we loved on earth  
Attract us now to heaven;  
Who shared our grief and mirth  
Back to us now are given.  
They move with noiseless foot  
Gravely and sweetly round us,  
And their soft touch hath cut  
Full many a chain that bound us.

### SUBSTITUTION.

BY ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

When some beloved voice that was to you  
Both sound and sweetness, faileth suddenly,  
And silence against which you dare not cry,  
Aches round you like a strong disease and new,  
What hope? what help? what music will undo  
That silence to your sense? Not friendship's sigh—  
Not reason's subtle count, not melody  
Of viols, nor pipes that Fanus blew,—  
Nor songs of poets, nor of nightingales,  
Whose hearts leap upward through the cypress trees  
To the clear moon; nor yet the spheric laws  
Self-chanted, nor the angel's sweet All hails,  
Met in the smile of God. Nay, none of these,  
Speak *Thou*, availing Christ! and fill this pause.

### FROM "BITTER-SWEET."

BY J. G. HOLLAND.

I ask  
What He would have this evil do for me?  
What is its missions? what its ministry?  
What golden fruit lies hidden in its husk?  
How shall it nurse my virtue, nerve my will,  
Chasten my passions, purify my love,  
And make me in some goodly sense like Him  
Who bore the cross of evil while He lived,  
Who hung and bled upon it when He died,  
And now, in glory, wears the victor's crown?

### THE LASTING CURE.

BY REV. ISAAC OGDEN RANKIN.

When I forget Thee, Lord, forget not me!  
Stoop in Thy love to guard my heedlessness  
With pitying care. For I have none but Thee  
To hold and guide and bless.  
Nor this alone, my Father! let me grow  
More like my Lord in holier living yet.  
Come and abide! and let me love Thee so  
That I shall not forget. —Christian End. World.

No one could tell me where my soul might be,  
I searched for God, but God eluded me,  
I sought my brother out, and found all three.  
—Ernest Crosby.

## Contributions.

### CHRIST'S WORKMANSHIP.

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

The first time I saw Cologne Cathedral—nearly half a century ago—it presented a stumpy appearance, for the towers had not yet been built. The next time I saw it, the scaffoldings on which the builders were busy were rather a disfigurement. But a few years since, when I beheld the completed towers, lifting their snow-white splendors into the sunlight, I felt that the old historic Rhine saw no such magnificent object in all its course from the Alpine mountains to the sea.

This is a bit of a parable of the way in which the Master constructs a Christian. The Bible describes true Christians as "Christ's workmanship created anew unto good works." If any sharp critic should look over a company of church-members gathered at a communion-table, he might say, "Well, if these are Christ's workmanship, they are very imperfect specimens, as I can testify from personal acquaintance with some of them." Very true, but if that same critic wished to select a piano he would not go into a manufactory where its different parts were being put together; he would go into the salesroom and see the finished instruments. This world is only a workshop for the fashioning of Christian character. "Ye are Christ's building," said the great apostle; the towers were not up yet. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect," was that same apostle's honest confession; the scaffoldings were still standing, and the Master's work on that heart and life was still incomplete.

When sharp criticisms are leveled at any company of sincere Christians, the critic must consider what materials the Master had to work on, in poor, fallen human nature, disfigured and defaced by sin. He would have to take into account the especial weaknesses and wickednesses to which many of that company were naturally inclined. One had bad hereditary infirmities. Another had, from his cradle, a violent temper, which requires, even yet, the constant drenchings of divine grace to put out its angry flames. "Before I was converted," said a distinguished minister to me, "I wonder how any one could live in the same house with me." Brother A— was plagued with unruly sensual passions; Sister B— with envy and censoriousness; Deacon C— had to contend with natural indolence, and Elder D— with a constitutional covetousness made worse by a stingy parentage. Every one of these had to encounter the evil atmosphere of a "world lying in the Wicked One." Yet out of such materials Christ Jesus has had to rear what shall become in due time a temple of the Lord! Verily, my dear friends, you and I had better confess that the best part of us is what our patient Master has already made, and the worst part of us is what remaining selfishness and unbelief would not let him make.

Christian character-building is like cathedral-build-

ing—a gradual process: “First the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear.” The first act of saving faith joins the new convert to Jesus, and then to that foundation must be added the courage, the meekness, the patience and the godliness which are the evidences of growth in grace. Let no new beginner be discouraged. Oaks do not grow like asparagus. A strong and solid godly character is not finished in a year. Some poor pumice-stone has to be thrown out, and bad timber be rejected. It required the Master-workman sixty years to complete such a character as the heroic missionary Livingstone, and more than three score and ten to finish the fruitful fullness of such a life as the late William E. Dodge, or that of the eminent Christian jurist, the late Justice Strong. Every year in a true Christian’s life—be it long or short—ought to witness positive advance in “good works.” “Am I growing?” is the question for every one of us to ask. How do I look in the eye of a watchful world? If the scaffolding is up, is there any genuine building work going on behind it? Do not imagine that what you call faults and small sins are of no account. Nothing is small that makes or mars the character which the world is watching here, and which we must present on the great searching Day of Judgment. Nothing must be scrimped or slighted; we are often great sinners in what we wrongly think to be but little things.

Let us bear in mind that if we are Christ’s workmanship, we must let our all-wise and loving Master have his own way. The disciple must not dictate to his Lord. We must allow him to use his own tools. How much cutting and chiseling we often need! How keen and sharp also is the chisel which he sometimes uses! The sound of his hammer is constantly heard in his spiritual workshop; and with it are often heard the wondering cries of some sufferers who exclaim, “Why art thou applying to me the file, the saw or the hammer?” Be still, and know that whom he loveth he chasteneth. If such creatures as you and I are ever to become jewels in his crown, we must not draw back or murmur at the polishing. If we are his building, then let him fashion us according to his divine ideal of beauty, at whatever cost to selfishness or pride or indolence or vainglory. We must co-operate with our Lord and Savior. Christ working at us and on us—and we working with him and for him—that is the process that produces such structures as he will present at last before his Father and the holy angels. Let us keep our eye on the pattern which the Bible presents to us; and the following lines, which I met with some time ago, are full of help and encouragement:

“It is better to weave the pattern of life  
With a bright and a golden filling;  
To do Christ’s work with a ready hand  
And a heart that’s always willing;

“Than to snap the frail and delicate thread  
Of our Christian lives asunder,  
And then blame heaven for the tangled web,  
And sit and grieve and wonder.

“Better to weave the warp and the woof  
With the pattern of Christ’s own choosing,  
Winning the palm and the tuneful harp  
And the crown, with no fear of losing.  
Then alike in the shade and in the sun  
Let the shuttles of life fly fleetly;  
And the Master’s words, ‘Well, faithfully done,’  
Will fall on us daily and sweetly.”

Finally, let no Christian, who is striving after the Bible-pattern, fear that he is seeking his salvation by good works. “By grace are ye saved,” is the divine side of the process. “Every man shall be judged according to his work,” is our side. There is a beautiful harmony between what Jesus does in us and by us, and what we do for him and through his spirit. For we are his workmanship, created anew (by converting grace) unto good works; and to him be all the glory!

## “THE FORMATIVE PRINCIPLE OF PROTESTANTISM.”

### No. II.

BY PROFESSOR J. W. RICHARD, D. D.

Thoughts such as we quoted in our former article, at the close, dwell continually in Luther’s consciousness during his formative period (1512–1520), and constitute the *central* theme of his preaching and teaching, so that his sermons, discussions and commentaries are little else than one prolonged magnifying of the objective righteousness of God and of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. Indeed, we might read for hours in his works of this period without discovering the barest intimation of Predestination. But, on the contrary, it is characteristic to read: “The more we do, work, strive, we only increase the unrest of the soul which we are seeking to quell. That unrest can be effectively stilled only by the knowledge of God’s grace and mercy freely manifested in Christ, and of the merits of Christ imputed to us. The law having been fulfilled by Christ, it is no longer needful that we should fulfil it. All that is required is that we should cling to the fulfiller of the law, and become like him, for Christ is righteousness, sanctification and redemption.” This is in no sense the language of one whose *central* thought, whose life-experience, is *Predestination*. It is the language of one who sees *Christ at the centre*, and sees *God in Christ*, and not in the secret operations of his absolute will. And as further evidence of this, namely, that he bases the assurance of salvation, not on *Predestination*, but on justification, or on the objective righteousness of Christ, we quote a passage written in 1516: “The righteousness of believers is wholly of God’s imputation, as we read in the 32d Psalm, ‘Blessed is the man to whom God imputeth not iniquity.’ Hence every saint, as we see from Col. iii. 3, 4, is consciously a sinner—but unconsciously righteous: sinner in actuality, but righteous in hope; in himself a sinner, but righteous by the imputation of the merciful God.”

And as still further evidence that justification is Luther’s all-absorbing theme, his “central doctrine,” we point to his *Commentary on Galatians* (1519), where this doctrine is the apple of gold in the picture of silver; and for the full application and the knowledge of the practical value of this doctrine, we turn to the tractate, *On Christian Liberty*, which nowhere sings the praises of Predestination, but sends forth pæan after pæan to the praise of the blessed fruits of justification by faith.

And as the climax to our contention that *Justification by faith* is Luther’s “central doctrine,” that is, the “formative principle” of all his theological thinking, the very life of his spiritual life, we quote from his *Explanation of the Seven Penitential Psalms*: “Some one might say to me, Why are you forever speaking of the righteousness and grace of God, and are harping on one string, and are singing only one little song? I answer: Each one for himself. I confess for my part that whenever in the Scriptures I find less than Christ I am not satisfied; but whenever I have found more than Christ I am not made the poorer. Hence I think that God the Holy Spirit knows and means to know only Christ, as the latter says of him: He will glorify me, for he will not speak of himself, but will take of mine and show it unto you. Christ is God’s grace, mercy, righteousness, truth, wisdom, strength, consolation and salvation, given to us of God without any merits of our own—not as some say, *causaliter*, does he impart righteousness, and remain away himself, for that would be a dead righteousness, yea, it would never be given if Christ were not there himself, as the rays