

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. 10.

LANCASTER AND PHILADELPHIA, FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 1901.

WHOLE NO. 3622.

Poetry.

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS.

BY OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

This is the ship of pearl, which poets feign
Sails the unshadowed main,—
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim, dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the fair tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed,—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message sent by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, folorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathed horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

FAITH AND HOPE.

BY REMBRANDT PEALE.

O, don't be sorrowful, darling!
Now, don't be sorrowful, pray;
For, taking the year together, my dear,
There isn't more night than day.
It's rainy weather, my loved one;
Time's wheels they heavily run;
But taking the year together, my dear,
There isn't more cloud than sun.

We're old folks now, companion,—
Our heads they are growing gray;
But taking the year all round, my dear,
You always will find the May.
We've had our May, my darling,
And our roses long ago;
And the time of the year is come, my dear,
For the long dark nights, and the snow.

But God is God, my faithful,
Of night as well as of day;
And we feel and know that we can go
Wherever he leads the way.
Ay, God of the night, my darling!
Of the night of death so grim;
And the gate that from life leads out, good wife,
Is the gate that leads to Him.

Contributions.

NO BROKEN THREADS.

BY PROF. W. H. WYNN, PH. D., D. D.

Historic epochs do not come and go with a bound, a sensible pause coming in between, as though the exhausted ages had halted for a time to get recruited for another advance. To the superficial student it seems so, at times, as, for example, when some bloody revolution has fallen flat, like a shattered billow on a rocky coast. As when witnessing a play, the curtain drops at the close of each act, we have a period of arrested attention, and however active the preparations are for the continuous unraveling of the plot, so far as the spectators are concerned, they are new adjustments for a new order of events, and they are made behind the scenes. There is a measurable pause in the play, a perceptible dead check to the broken wave, and this gross analogy is carried over to the grand march of the ages, as they successively pick up and relinquish the dominant idea of their time. This mischievous misconception of history is embodied in the term "epoch," which signifies a cycle of time preceded and followed by a pause.

But there are no pauses, no dropping of the threads, no bungling of the pattern, in the intricate weaving of the web of human life. History, to have any meaning at all, is a providential scheme. The divine eye, and the divine hand, are everywhere in it, or otherwise it were a jumble of accident that must come to an end in a day.

In looking to the new century, all thought of beginning *de novo* should be dismissed. There are zealous religious reforms going on around us, that contemplate as much—that go upon the assumption that the threads have broken in the hands of God, and the reformers are commissioned to pick them up. Christendom for them has gone into a state of collapse. There is utter and hopeless ruin all over the world. Death and decay are everywhere. There are not even the Apocalyptic "things that remain" on which to base a forward movement. It is time, therefore, for some new prophet to lift the world out of its spiritual wreckage by absolute, heroic heave. Here and there leaders arise, who conceive it their mission to wind up the machinery that has run down, to clothe these innumerable skeletons with flesh and blood, to call the sheeted multitudes from their sepulchres to throng again the utterly deserted streets of the heavenly city. Meantime there is no more distinct and unambiguous voice of history, than that the horologe of progress never runs down, or that the spiritually dead never pre-empt the whole area, nor even the larger part, of the territory that belongs to God. The affairs of the world are never in the hands of a bad majority, else, at that moment, our little star would go out in the heavens, and the harmony of the spheres would be jangled out of tune.

In this way it comes to pass that the spirit of reform exalts the human overmuch, and loses sight of the divine in cases where its presence and power are

to be specially recognized and defined. The great man, providentially at the center of events, becomes a hero, a demigod, in whose hands the fierce forces of a revolution were deposited, and who seemed to take the fate of the future in his embrace. He is canonized; he becomes in the popular mind a glowing myth. All because the historic accessories, antedating him, and running together to make his work possible and timely, have not been thrown into the scale, and he has been looked upon as shouldering the issues of his time by sheer, heroic, herculean strain.

To illustrate, our great Martin Luther, pre-eminently the reformer, in an epoch of revolution and general upheaval, more wide-spread and decisive than any other in European history thus far—this man is, doubtless, deserving of the highest eulogy the glowing pen of Mr. Carlyle could devise. But the kind of heroism, that Mr. Carlyle found in Luther, was very sensibly colored by his favorite metaphysical formula of Fichtean force. The hero is lifted out of his spiritual environment, and in the denser medium of the ideal world, grows to superhuman proportions, like the sun full-orbed in the autumn air. It is too much praise for any man. Mr. Carlyle set the type for "Luther-worship"—a kind of worship, which is all adopted by those who draw their ecclesiastical inheritance from him, and which the great reformer himself would have been the first to resent. It is altogether unhistoric, and therefore absurd. Luther was a personality of immense mould, but he did not lift up collapsed Christendom by absolute strain. Think of the reformatory currents flowing in ever-increasing volume his way—from the Albigenses, from John Wycliff and the Lollards, from the Hussites, and the reforming Councils and their long controversy with the Pope, from the Pragmatic Sanctions, in which princes took up the work of reform which the warring church authorities could not bring about. At the point where all these historic influences converged, Luther appeared. And then also contemporary complications between Charles V. and Francis I. threw a shield over the Reformer—a shield which the combined forces of the Pope and the Emperor could not pierce. Luther was none the less the providential man, with all these favoring historic currents coincident with his mission, but he is unduly magnified and glorified by being viewed apart from his historic setting, and in forgetfulness of the long-time brooding of the Spirit of God, which brought the willing centuries in joyous tribute to his feet.

The new century may look to a new order of things; the law of progress is God's law; and we have been breathing the air of expectancy through a period of transition for now these many eventful years. But a sanguine individualism, with its ill-timed theory of a dead lift, and its strange infatuation for a short-cut across the slow-moving time-process of the providence of God, will not sooner lead to the consummation, and is destined, like the French Revolution, to fall away for the most part in spiritual waste. That noted event—even in its failure—was a "truth clad in hell-fire," but a truth as a warning message to the coming centuries, against the supreme impotency of individualism run mad, in its consuming passion to realize by fiat a new order of things. In all such movements there are two ways of leaving out God, by running over him, and by issuing an edict, that it has at last been discovered that he does not exist. The French Revolution did this last—threw out the flag of atheism, and through riotous spasms of blood-surfeiting and diablerie, thought to crush the past, and redeem society to the peace and equality of a new day. In a sense, therefore, Tennyson's arraignment of it as "the red fool fury of the Seine" was just. Meantime religious fanaticism presents the pitiable spectacle of loud-mouthed agitators pretending to carry God on

their backs, because, forsooth, his historic methods did not hurry on apace. Let us open history; it is God's highway through the willing centuries, onward and forever up.

From the New York Evangelist.

STARTING OUT FOR CHRIST.

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

A great deal depends upon making the right start in the Christian life. Some start, and then stop; they are satisfied with joining the Church, and make no progress afterward. Others start and soon retreat, either through discouragement or being decoyed back to the world. God's word has mottoes for beginners, as well as counsels and encouragements for every stage of the journey. There is one text that has the ring of a bugle in it, and I always urge young converts not only to mark it in their Bibles, but to inscribe it on their hearts. The words are in the fiftieth chapter of Isaiah, and they are these: "For the Lord God will help me. Therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed."

This passage will have a double power with an inexperienced beginner; it saves him from discouragement, and warns him against self-confidence. He would be a fool who should undertake to get on in business without anybody's help. The young physician must not only help his patients, but be helped by them. The merchant can do nothing without customers, or the lawyer without clients. If an attempted independence of everybody else would be fatal in all business pursuits, so an independence of divine help would be fatal in the religious life. Self-reliance is a very good thing in the right place; but self-reliance in the battles with the world, the flesh, and the devil means sure self-destruction. Some presumptuous young Christians set out with very sanguine courage; their idea is "I can do it, and I will do it." They have not yet measured swords with the enemy. Wise old John Bunyan, who knew human nature thoroughly, describes a "Mr. Presumption," who set out on a pilgrimage, but was soon found fast asleep by the roadside with a pair of iron fetters on his heels. Even "Christian," when he once undertook to show off before "Faithful" how fast he could run, caught a tumble, and lay flat on the ground until Faithful came to help him up. The secret of the failure of more than one young convert—yes, and of many a young minister, too—has been over-weening *self-confidence*. "He that trusteth his own heart, is a fool." To every beginner in the Christian life we would say, you cannot trust yourself too little, and you cannot trust Jesus Christ too much! In fact, the real conflict with you will be just this: "Shall I trust myself or my Lord and Savior?" Your soul has no self-lifting power, any more than your body has to lift itself by grasping at the straps of your boots. You can no more find your way to heaven without Christ, than you can find your way through the Mammoth Cave without a guide and a torch. Let poor Peter in Pilate's courtyard show you what a poor figure a boastful Christian cuts when he relies on his strength.

There is one thing that you may be sure of, and that is that if you seek Christ's help, you will always obtain it. He has said "In me is thy help," and he never breaks his promise. That loving assistance will come to you in many ways. Jesus Christ pours his grace into a believer's heart in secret and unseen ways, as streams of water steal in at the bottom of a well and fill it up. Christianity is a *supernatural* thing, and Christ will work on you in a supernatural way, if you ask him, and if you *do not hinder* him. He will put good thoughts into your heart. He will give you

courage for hard fights and dark hours. He will give you some sweet surprises. You will often find the lions chained when you come up close to them; you will sometimes find answers to prayer as startling as when Peter, delivered from the dungeon, stood before the door of the prayer-meeting in Jerusalem. Then, my friend, take that motto from Isaiah that I have quoted, and nail it up before your eyes. It will ensure to you three things:

(1) The first one is the *security* of all those who trust and follow Jesus. "The Lord will help me; therefore I shall not be confounded." The original word signifies I shall not be put to rout, or overthrown. He who has the Lord Jesus not only on his side, but *at* his side, can never be defeated. He has promised that no one shall pluck you out of his hands. While you are true to Christ and true to conscience, you are safe.

(2) The second thing named in this ringing motto, is *steadfastness*. A generation or two ago John Randolph coined the word "doughface," and applied it to certain truckling politicians. This text describes a fearless, unflinching follower of the Lord as a *flint-faced* man. He is not afraid of a laugh or a lash, of a scoff or a scourge. God will give you backbone. If he is on your side, what can man do unto you?

(3) The third blessing wrapped up in this precious passage, is *serenity* of soul. You will "never be ashamed." Paul was a wonderfully calm and composed man in the hardest storms of assault. He never turned purple in the lips; he never apologized for his boldness of speech; he let his own grand life explain itself. Set out with the determination that your "colors" shall always be at the masthead, and that Christ be ever in your eye.

What a triple coat of mail this text is; it assures you of security, steadfastness, and serene peace of soul. This is the motto for every young convert, for every recruit in Christ's army, for every one who undertakes a word for the master. It is a capital text for the walls of a prayer-room. Bind it on your brow as a frontlet, write it on the palms of your hands, carve it on your heart. And then, my dear brother, you will not only *start* on the Christian race, but win the crown and come off more than conqueror.

A HISTORY LESSON WHICH IT IS NOT WISE TO FORGET.

BY REV. C. F. SANDERS.

Martin Luther, the peerless hero of Protestantism, is often blamed for the exceeding coarseness of his expression, when declaiming against the friends of the Papacy, whom he regarded the avowed enemies of the Church of Christ. His language was violent. His sarcasm cut to the quick. But we cease to wonder when we consider the provocation under which he wrote. The Papacy had placed a cruel yoke on the people's necks and refused to remove it. They stubbornly resisted truth and sound reason, and practiced a contemptuous disregard of the natural rights of every individual Christian. All the world knew how the Papacy was determined to maintain its private interests regardless of truth, consistency, or the fundamental principles of divine revelation. The latter, in fact, it absolutely ignored.

Huss, Jerome of Prague, Savonarola, Wycliff and others, found the truth, and made an effort to purify the Church. It is to be presumed that the Church saw it, but saw it to be fatal to their policy, and, therefore, it could not be admitted. But whether it saw it or not, the practical consequences are the same. It is certain they saw that these men with their evidences in such condemning contradiction to the arbitrary hierarchal policy, were dangerous to that policy. They would

arouse the people against the Papacy. There were two apparently logical methods to preserve the peace of the Church and maintain the continuity of its policy. All of these men were capable of weighing evidences. They plead only for the evidences. The alternatives were: either for the Church to prove their error, on which condition they were willing to withdraw their charges, or to exercise its assumed prerogative of passing sentence of death. The Church chose the latter.

It is not immaterial to the student of Church History why the Church chose the latter alternative rather than the former. We have not the space here to present the arguments. But to-day the whole of Protestantism is of one mind in its opinion that the reason why the Church accepted the latter alternative with all the dreadfulness of its consequences, was because the former it could not do. It is sound historical sense, then, to conclude that a policy of suppression is inspired by, and is an acknowledgment of, inability to defend the deeds in the interest of which the policy is advocated. Pure Christianity can never profit by such a policy. Christianity has the support of the Almighty, the Truth, and it has none to fear. To act as if it had cause to fear some person or statement which is so dangerous to the truth that he or it must needs be silenced, is to have unnecessary fear for the Ark of God. God's truth needs not the intervention of human decrees on behalf of its safety. There is nothing in the history of Protestant Christianity anywhere so much to its everlasting shame as Calvin's burning of Servetus, the Lutheran persecution of the Anabaptists, the Puritan banishment of Roger Williams.

It was this stubborn persistence in error, absolutely refusing light of any kind, that so provoked Luther, and it is the sufficient explanation of his violent language. When he gave expression to that oft-quoted remark, "I will go to Worms if there are as many devils there as tiles on the roofs of the houses," it was with a keen recollection of the fate of Huss and the Emperor Sigismund's violation of the pledge of a safe conduct. Does any one wonder that Luther called his enemies devils and a list of names that sound harsh, when he recalls how the great reformer was contending for the truth, and yet had to confront a powerful foe who had before mocked at truth and put its defenders to death, and who gave no reason to expect he would receive better treatment?

"God doesn't pay at the end of every week, but he pays." "Though the mills of God grind slowly, they grind." "Truth crushed to earth will rise again." God's time had come. Luther was God's commissioned ambassador. The Church is God's even though Rome claimed it. Luther did his work by publishing God's message to God's people. The Papacy called him a lunatic and such like. When that had no effect they summoned him to a diet and bade him recant and commit his writings to the flames. He agreed to their proposition on condition that they prove his error from Scripture and "sound reason." At this they made no attempt. The Church then, true to its policy, issued the ban. We all very well know why they did not attempt to prove him in error. The ban was their confession. But Luther was protected against the ban and his work continued and grew. It grew by publication which challenged contradiction. Verily God's time had come. The time-worn policy of suppression had met its doom. The people, and they are the Church, learned the proof of what they had always believed, viz., that the truth needs not to fear assault, and that suppression is not its comely weapon.

The lessons which the Church has learned by the historic facts here reviewed are: the self-sufficiency of the truth, the error of suppression and coercion, that the correct method of suppression is by rational conviction, that the tide will go with the facts no matter how stubbornly resisted, that to resist facts is to in-