

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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Poetry.

IF I SHOULD DIE TO-NIGHT.

BY BELLE E. SMITH.

If I should die to-night,
My friends would look upon my quiet face
Before they laid it in its resting-place,
And deem that death had left it almost fair;
And, laying snow-white flowers against my hair,
Would smooth it down with tearful tenderness,
And fold my hands with lingering caress—
Poor hands, so empty and so cold to-night!

If I should die to-night,
My friends would call to mind, with loving thought,
Some kindly deed the icy hands had wrought;
Some gentle word the frozen lips had said;
Errands on which the willing feet had sped;
The memory of my selfishness and pride,
My hasty words, would all be put aside,
And so I should be loved and mourned to-night.

If I should die to-night,
Even hearts estranged would turn once more to me,
Recalling other days remorsefully;
The eyes that chill me with averted glance
Would look upon me as of yore, perchance,
And soften, in the old familiar way;
For who could war with dumb, unconscious clay?
So I might rest, forgiven of all, to-night.

Oh, friends, I pray to-night,
Keep not your kisses for my dead, cold brow—
The way is lonely; let me feel them now.
Think gently of me; I am travel-worn;
My faltering feet are pierced with many a thorn.
Forgive, oh, hearts estranged, forgive, I plead!
When dreamless is mine I shall not need
The tenderness for which I long to-night.

WORTH WHILE.

BY ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

It is easy enough to be pleasant
When life flows along like a song,
But the man worth while is the one who will smile
When everything goes dead wrong;
For the test of the heart is trouble,
And it always comes with the years,
And the smile that is worth the praises of earth
Is the smile that shines through tears.

It is easy enough to be prudent
When nothing tempts you to stray;
When without or within no voice of sin
Is luring your soul away;
But it's only a negative virtue
Until it is tried by fire,
And the life that is worth the honor of earth
Is the one that resists desire.

By the cynic, the sad, the fallen,
Who had no strength for the strife,
The world's highway is cumbered to-day;
They make up the item of life.
But the virtue that conquers passion,
And the sorrow that hides in a smile,
It is these that are worth the homage of earth,
For we find them but once in a while.

—The Christian Herald.

And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths;
Win us with honest trifles, to betray us
In deepest consequence. —Shakespeare.

Contributions.

THIS ONE THING.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

The men who have achieved the greatest results in this world have been those who were actuated by some master passion. Their souls were occupied by some "one thing," which subordinated everything else to itself. They were, in a certain sense, men of one idea. For, though their minds may have contained many ideas, yet a single purpose directed and animated them all. The master passion with Sir Isaac Newton was science. His days and nights were given to his diagrams, his mathematical tables and his telescopes. He often stopped, when half dressed in the morning, to solve some problem that was agitating his mind, and his servant was obliged to arouse him from his reveries in order to induce him to partake of his meals. An American vessel once halted on the coast of California to lay in a supply of hides, and when the first mate landed he found one of his countrymen roaming about alone on the sea beach. He was a Harvard University naturalist who was there searching for rare shells to adorn his cabinet. With Jay Gould the master passion was to make money; with Lloyd Garrison, to secure freedom for the slave; with Theobald Matthew and J. B. Gough, to rescue their fellowmen from the dominion of strong drink.

Now in every place where Newton put his love of science, and Garrison, Gough, Shaftesbury and other philanthropists put their love for their fellow-creatures, Paul put his love for his crucified Master. "This one thing I do," he exclaims, "I press toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He made the service of Jesus Christ to be the sovereign purpose of his soul. "Go a little deeper," said one of Napoleon's soldiers to the surgeon who was probing his left side for the bullet, "and you will find the Emperor." So Paul might have said, "Go deeper, go to the very core of my heart, and there you will find my Savior." Other affections lie on the surface, but this one lives in the innermost depths. Other feelings I am possessed of, but this one possesses me. *For me to live is Christ.*

There is a prodigious power in this singleness of heart, this enthroning of one ruling affection in the regenerated soul. Even a man or woman of ordinary talents and endowments becomes a leading character when Jesus Christ owns and controls him. Here is the secret of the power of that heroic old missionary, John G. Paton. He is a man of one idea; but it is an idea large enough to make a king out of a poor Scotch peasant boy. We often see in our churches a plain man of moderate education and social rank who attains to a commanding influence. It is not brain-power; it is not purse-power; it is pure heart-power. The man follows Jesus Christ so thoroughly, so projectively, that he carries other people with him by the sheer momentum of his godliness. So it comes about that godliness often outstrips genius in the pulpit; and the minister whose sole purpose is to glorify

his Master and to save souls, achieves a success that is denied to another man of higher culture and intellectual ability. Thorough-going, uncompromising, whole-souled piety is really the highest requisite in the pulpit, in the Sunday-school, and in every official position of the church; having that "one thing needful," then every increment of talent, money, culture, etc., is a positive addition to that person's usefulness.

But what was the "one thing" which Paul set before himself? He tells us that, "forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before," he pressed on toward the shining goal. The "things behind," his past experience since the day of his conversion, did not satisfy him. He was not willing to sit down contented with his present attainments, as so many professed Christians do in our day. Upward and onward was his motto. Every achievement was only a stimulus to further progress. Paul was no "perfectionist," that is very clear; but he had a holy ambition to reach the very highest mark possible this side of heaven.

Just what the great apostle aimed at ought to be the aim of every Christian who reads these lines. God have mercy on the Christian who is satisfied with his present attainments! How little any of us know in regard to our Bible or in regard to ourselves, in comparison with what we might know! We are right by an exhaustless ocean, and too seldom put down our tiny vessels for a draft. How little we know of the wants and the woes of the dying world! There are thousands of Christians who spend more time over the paltry gossip of the town in which they dwell than they spend in studying their Bible, or in watching for opportunities for service for their Master, or even in trying to save immortal souls. The red-hot zeal of Wall Street and the Produce Exchange ought to shame our coldness. The accumulations that men are making in scientific knowledge, in art and in wealth, ought to make us blush that we are not striving to become richer in faith and good works.

The place for us to put in the probe is in the core of our own hearts. The wounded French soldier on the battlefield found his Emperor there; do we find our Lord and Master there? Are we giving him the central throne there, and on all doubtful questions giving to him the casting vote? Are we fighting resolutely with the sins that easily beset us? Are our lusts relaxing their hold, instead of binding us to a closer bondage? Do we grow more self-denying, more humble, more fearless for the truth, more patient under crosses, more thoughtful of other people and less of our own comfort, and more ready to put self under our feet that we may exalt Jesus? Is our faith getting stronger, our hope becoming brighter, and our love becoming more pure, more ardent and more ready to "bear the burdens of others and so fulfill the law of Christ?" Are we catching more of the spirit of heaven as we draw nearer to it?

Such questions as these are crucial tests, to be applied to ourselves in order that we may know whether we are really advancing toward the shining goal set before us. Oh, for the spirit of him who first rang out the clarion call to "press forward for that mark of the prize!" On our own responsibility must we push forward, but not in our own strength. They that wait on the Lord shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. When we are weak in the humility of self-knowledge, then are we strong. When we fling off the incumbering weights, we can skim the surface like the roe. Fix your eye, brother, on the beckoning Jesus and the flashing crown; and resolve before God—"This one thing will I do; I will reach forth toward the prize of my calling in Christ Jesus!"

FORMATION AND ADOPTION OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION.

BY REV. G. C. H. HASSKARL, PH. D.

At no time since the memorable Diet at Worms, 1521, had Germany been so deeply and so universally agitated, as it was at the hour when Emperor Charles V., who was soon to return to Germany after an absence of nine years, and then "passing some months at Bologna, in company with Pope Clement VII., under date of January 21st, 1530, published an imperial order for a Diet of the German Empire to convene at Augsburg on April 8th," for two objects: First the defence of Christendom against the Turk; secondly, and mainly, the settlement of the religious question.

When this summons reached the Elector John of Saxony on the 11th of March at Torgau, he at once issued an order to the theologians of Wittenberg to draw up a summary of the Evangelical faith. It was meant to set forth concisely the main doctrines which the Evangelicals held, and the points in which they differed from Rome. Luther, Melancthon, Jonas, and Bugenhagen jointly undertook the task. Their labors were embodied in Articles which were delivered to the Elector at Torgau, and hence their name; the "Torgau Articles."

Thus, opportunely, when the Elector, with his cavaliers in scarlet cloaks, embroidered with gold, and his theologians, all set out for Augsburg on Judica Sunday, April 3d, were the Saxon divines furnished not only with the doctrinal articles presented at Schwabach, October 16th, 1529, which formed the basis of the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession; but also with the newly prepared Torgau Articles, which formed the basis of the articles on abuses of the Augsburg Confession.

The Elector and his suite arrived at Coburg "in time for the Easter festival, April 17th." The news of the postponement of the Diet to the 1st of May, and the slow progress of the Emperor, gave Melancthon an opportunity of laboring upon the Confession for five or six days at Coburg, and time afterward at Augsburg to enlarge and remodel it; and also to perfect its admirable order, its clearness of statement, and its beauty of style.

Luther, over whom there still hung the anathema of the Pope and the ban of the Empire, remained at Coburg. The castle there on the banks of the river Itz, which was more than five hundred feet above the town, and so well fortified by nature and art, that Wallenstein besieged it in vain during the Thirty Years' War, was assigned to him for his residence.

When Augsburg was reached on the 2d of May, Melancthon soon discovered new charges made against the Evangelical theologians; especially, as circulated in the four hundred and four "gravamina" of the irrepressible controversialist, John Eck, who, besides charging the Evangelical theologians with many of the heresies of former days, even with misrepresenting the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity, maintained that the adherents of the Evangelical doctrine were worse than the Turks. To meet these charges, the Saxon theologians were constrained to furnish a fuller and a more complete summary of the doctrine as held by the Evangelical church, demonstrating, that it not only harmonized with the creeds of the ancient church, but that it also declared the doctrines of the Church Catholic.

Thus had the imperial summons, under the leadings of God's providence, become the means of producing a document which grew from a desired "apology" into an irrefutable confession, vindicating the position which the Evangelicals assumed, the faith which they cherished and the usages which they practiced.

It was finally on the 15th of June—Corpus Christi