

# THE LUTHERAN VISITOR.

Revs. Rude & Miller, Editors.

NEW SERIES, VOL. 6--NO. 15.

"ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM"—EPHESIANS IV: 5.

COLUMBIA, S. C., FRIDAY, JANUARY 2, 1874.

Terms: \$2.00 a Year.

OLD SERIES, VOL. 6--NO. 275.

## Communications.

For the Lutheran Visitor.  
"The Little Mother" of the Students of Wittenberg.

A historical sketch by Arnold Wellmer, in "Dukeim" for 1870.)

TRANSLATED BY D. H. B.

(Continued.)

Dr. Martin lived and died a poor man. He who had the charge and management of so many church benefices, who had so many wealthy princes for his friends, died a poor man. In his poverty and humility, he ever refused the rich presents tendered to him by the electors, by saying: "As a preacher, it does not become me to have superfluities." The Elector, John, once presented him a brown and black coat, which he reluctantly accepted, because they seemed to him almost too costly to wear. Notwithstanding his limited salary of 100 florins, he refused exemption from the heavy tax, imposed for the war against the Turks. All profits of his sermons, so richly earned by his writings and academic lectures, he declined in the most positive manner. To the poor he gave profusely, and his house was the most hospitable in the city. Even the electors were entertained by him. Being advised by a friend to save a little and invest it in favor of his wife and children, to secure them against want in case of his death, the strong man of faith answered with a smile: "That I can not do, lest they should depend upon gold instead of God and their own hands."

Thanks to Catharine's industry, economy and management, there remained still a small amount at the death of her husband, namely, Zeulendorf, worth 950 florins, the "House Dress," and in cups, rings, chains and presents in money about 1,000 florins, together with Wachendorf and an orchard and hop-field left to the children. The whole yielded an income of 180 florins. Catharine, however, found 450 florins debt. As there was no money in hand, she immediately mortgaged the "House Dress" for 400 florins, and the elector presented her with 100 guilders and the Countess of Mansfeld, in grateful remembrance, that Luther died in her service, promised her 200 florins.

In his will, Luther left his dear Katie free to contract a second marriage, provided she saw proper to do so; but her faithfulness extended beyond the grave. In his will he further says: "I hold that the mother is the best guardian for the children. The children should be dependent on the mother and not the mother on the children."

A more trusty guardian for his children than his Katie, Luther could not have found. The "Doctress" lived in quiet retirement, wholly devoted to the christian training of her children in the spirit of her sainted husband. But this peaceful retirement was destined to be of short duration. In a wonderfully prophetic spirit, Luther, on his 62d birthday, wrote to his friends: "During my life time, by God's will, there need be no danger apprehended for Germany, and peace will prevail. But after my death—then pray. Prayer will then be needed, and our children will be necessitated to arm for war, for matters will be sadly disturbed throughout Germany." Shortly had the Reformer closed his eyes in death, before the flames of the unholy war in Smalkald were kindled. The confederate princes of Smalkald, disregarding the summons of Charles V., refused to appear at the imperial diet convened at Ratisbon, for which mark of contempt, the Emperor proceeded to punish them, by placing them all under the ban. The princes presumptuously and hastily took up arms against the Emperor without military supplies. On the Sunday, Misericordias Dominic, of 1547, the noble Elector, John Frederick, the magnanimous, was severely wounded in the face during the unfortunate battle at Muhlberg, and was taken prisoner. For many years he was held in captivity. The Emperor, with his wild Spaniards, was approaching Wittenberg. All the friends of Luther, whose doctrines were the occasion of this war, advised his widow to immediate flight. Under the care of Professor George Major, Catharine, with her children, fled to the city of Mansfeld, where she awaited her here. Under the

conduct of Melancthon, she and her children hasted on, and weary, poor, utterly disheartened, they arrived at Helmstadt. In grateful remembrance of Luther, the Town Council here furnished her the means to pursue her journey to Brunswick, where all the fugitives from Wittenberg, professors and students, had found a safe retreat. But Catharine wished to go farther, even to Deumark, to place herself under the protection of the king, who so highly prized the doctrine of her sainted husband, that he furnished assistance to the Smalkald Confederation, and had even granted an annual pension of fifty dollars each to Luther, Melancthon, Bagenhagen and Justus Jonas. He even sent this sum to Luther's widow for the first year of her widowhood. Duke Moritz, of Saxony, who, for his aid to the Emperor, had been rewarded with his Dukedom, issued a proclamation, granting a safe return to all fugitives who should desire to come home. Catharine therefore returned to Wittenberg with her children. But here began sorrow and want for Luther's widow and orphans. Both her landed possessions had been laid waste by the war, and were laid burdened with heavy, unpaid taxes. Under the conduct of Melancthon, Catharine went to Leipzig in order to seek exemption from the war taxes, but in vain. The earnest appeal of Melancthon and Bagenhagen together with the repeated personal applications of Catharine herself, to the King of Denmark for aid, were equally in vain. The appeal was "for the sake of that great man, *Patris Lutheri*, to whom we are indebted in these last times for our knowledge of Jesus Christ." The annuity granted to Luther was even withheld from his widow and orphans after the first year. Above all, Catharine was swindled out of her little all, by designing, wicked men; so that under the most pressing necessity, she was compelled to mortgage Zeulendorf to Master Knaus to obtain 400 florins, and she pawned her sainted husband's silver cups for 600 more.

Wearily and patiently Luther's widow labored and struggled with poverty to educate her sons. She rented the rooms in the old monastery to worthy students and boarded them at her table for (four groschen) about ten cents each per week. John Strome, afterwards the distinguished professor of law at Jena, was one of the first of her boarders in the convent. Philip Melancthon, her most faithful friend, in his capacity of "Inspector Morum et Studiorum," rendered her all the assistance in his power. The "convent-fellows," (*klosterburschen*), as her boarders were immediately called throughout the city and at the University, loved their "matricula," their "Little Mother," dearly, and were ever ready to interpret every look and anticipate every wish, in order to assist and gratify her. The hearty affection, as well as the constant, youthful joyousness, and the fun and frolic of her boarders, beguiled many anxious and sorrowful hours for their Little Mother. But even this meagre support, and this happy domestic arrangement was sadly interrupted. Ah! Hark! How dreadfully the solemn toll of the evening bells fall upon the ear! Another victim of the fearful plague is borne to the silent cemetery where lie Elisabeth and Lesnic. To-morrow the entire University will set out for Torgau. To-morrow the students will leave the rooms and board of their Little Mother! But who knows for how long! To-morrow—to-morrow Catharine Luther must flee from hearth and home, a poor widow, forsaken by all the world, and then! and then! "O my God, into Thy hands I commit all!" The hands were clasped in prayer, and the hot, scalding tears were coursing each other over her pale cheeks.

"Mother of my heart! You weep, and I never was so happy in my life!" said a sweet maiden voice, whilst a soft arm gently encircled the neck of Catharine.

The Doctress was startled from her sad reverie, and hastily brushed the tears from her eyes. There was a gloomy twilight in the large room. Near the settee by the window leaned a lovely maiden. Her long golden hair flowed in rich profusion over her shoulders. On her head was placed a chaplet of red and white flowers, and from beneath the crown of flowers sparkled two large blue eyes, expressive of maiden innocence and almost speaking the happiness that filled the heart. Her left hand

rested in that of a handsome youth, one of the most successful students at the University, whose eyes sparkled with happiness. "Dear Margaret, I was thinking of the past—and of to-morrow—when we must flee from our peaceful poverty into a strange place. I thought of my poor, improvident children, and O, how my poor heart ached! But, child, what means all this?" "Mother of my heart, this is George von Kurheim. A while ago I was sitting in the garden engaged in gathering a farewell wreath of my beloved flowers, when suddenly came up George, and taking the wreath he placed it upon my head and kissed me on my lips, and said that he loved me above all the world. For a long time I have loved him with my whole heart—ever since he came to board with us. I can not express how much I love him," and in much confusion the maiden hid her blushing face in the bosom of her mother.

With reverent frankness the student said, "Yes, Matricula, I love your Margaret with a true and honest heart. I loved her from the first moment I saw her, and from that time my love has increased every hour, so that I was compelled to declare it. I could not help it. Little mother, you know the great veneration I have for the dear, now sainted, Doctor Martin. This induced me to prosecute my studies at Wittenberg, and this brought me to your house. I hope my dear Little Mother knows me and my circumstances well enough to entrust to me her daughter for a wife. I call God to witness my sincerity, when I declare that I will love and take care of Margaret as though she were part of myself. Although I am now a student, yet still I can provide your daughter a respectable home and outfit, and then, Little Mother, you shall live with us. I am heir to two estates in Prussia, and the magistracy of Bartenstein is promised to me by my uncle, Margrave Albert, provided I acquit myself in the study of law, and make myself proficient in the Latin language, here at Wittenberg. My good uncle insists upon my becoming a Latin scholar; because in his intercourse with Poland, he requires persons, every day, who can read, write and speak Latin. This he told me expressly, when I parted from him. Please entrust to me your daughter, and you shall never have reason to regret it."

"But to-day! George—in this fearful time, when death may knock at our heart, any moment?"

"For this very reason, when the very atmosphere is loaded with death. Sooner to-day than to-morrow. At such a time, Little Mother, you and your Margaret need a true heart, all the more—a strong arm—and why should I hesitate to say it! A penny in need. I offer all to you as an obedient son. Give us your blessing to-day—even in this good hour. The marriage can wait for more fortunate days." Saying this, the student flung his arm around Margaret, and conducted her towards the settee, and both knelt at the feet of the mother.

Deeply affected, Catharine gently placed her hands upon the kneeling pair, and, with tears of joy, said, "Yes, you are right, George. The present only is ours. God alone knows what to-morrow will bring. Then as you desire. The Lord God bestow upon you his richest blessings, my dear children! The spirit of my sainted Doctor be with you forever."

Without in the garden, the Convent-fellows were singing a harvest song, that Luther often sang with his choristers:

"There is a Reaper, Death his name,  
Commissioned from on high, he came.  
He whets his scythe, so keen, to-day,  
That he may all the sinner slay.  
How soon he may begin to mow!  
And we among the rest lie low!  
Take care, pretty little flower!"

Catharine smiled very strangely; for a longing for her dear husband fell upon her heart, with a heavenly mildness, such as she had never experienced. Silently her lips moved in prayer for George and Margaret, and then she said aloud, "Yes, Lord God, if it were Thy will to take me to my sainted husband, even now, how thankfully would I obey Thy summons. Margaret is entrusted to safe hands, and for the other children Thou wilt also provide!"

Early the next morning, a large wagon drew up before the old Monastery at Wittenberg. A heavy rain had fallen during the night. The sky was still overcast with clouds, and the air was raw and chilly. The students were carrying strapped

trunks and other movables out of the convent. Tenderly they assisted their Little Mother into the wagon. George helped his Margaret to a seat, and the young student, Paul Lutner, a frolicsome, hoarty youth, handed in Elizabeth Cruciger, Casper Cruciger's orphan daughter. She was betrothed to Hans Luther, who was at present in Konigsberg, reading law under Sabina, during which time his Elizabeth found a hearty welcome in his mother's house. As the wagon moved off, Catharine cast a long, lingering look upon the dear old convent where she had spent her happiest years, until the wagon had turned the corner and hid her home from view. Had Catharine a presentiment that this was her farewell look?

After the wagon which contained their Little Mother, followed all the convent-fellows, on foot, singing Luther's

"Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott."  
On the procession moved, through the deserted and desolate streets of Wittenberg, towards the gate issuing in the way to Torgau. The students had in charge "Lippus," Melancthon's son, and "Joh," Justus Jonas' son. From childhood, these boys were inseparable playmates with Luther's sons. Martin Luther, now 21 years of age, drove the horses. He alone of Luther's sons studied theology, but more to gratify his mother's wishes than from any conscious impulse. He occasioned his father frequent sorrow. Troubled about him, his father wrote, "My Martin is a wild bird. May God grant that he devote himself to the study of law." Because he was the youngest son, his father was often apprehensive lest he should be spoiled. He writes, "The lives of parents' ever descends from the elder to the last-born children; and the more they need the care and protection of the parents, the dearer do they become. This is the case with my dear little Martin, my dearest treasure, because he claims my care and attention most." Martin was delicate in body and weak in mind.

George von Kurheim stepped along vigorously by the side of his Margaret. He declined to provide himself with a riding-horse, as many other wealthy students had done. He was unwilling to let the poor convent-fellows, and so many poor professors, who modestly walked with the wagons containing the women and children, outdo him. It produced a motley picture—the University on the highway towards Torgau, all fugitives from the death-kiss of the pestilence.

The highway was softened and washed by the severe rains of the night before. Great pools of water were collected in the road. The water trenches on each side of the way were filled to the brim. Wearily and slowly the procession moved along.

What a commotion suddenly in the wagon train! What a confusion among the students! Anxious cries rang through the procession. "Halt! Halt! Save our Little Mother! O God, the wagon will upset!" All rushed forward to give their help, and thus increased the confusion. Too late!

An old willow log lying by the wayside frightened the horses of the wagon in which Catharine sat. In vain Martin Luther put forth all his strength to hold them. A sudden jerk wrenched the lines from his feeble hands. Wildly the frightened horses rushed forward. In vain George von Kurheim endeavored to seize the reins. In his effort his foot slipped and he fell. The maddened horses were nearing the deep water-ditch by the side of the road. Margaret and Elizabeth screamed with fear. "In God's name!" said mother Catharine, and resolutely leaped from the wagon. The rescue of her children—were at stake. Already had she seized the lines, but her arm was too weak. A sudden start and Catharine lay in the water-trench. But her sacrifice was not in vain. The horses changed their course, and George von Kurheim was by their side, and became the rescuer of his Margaret.

The Convent-fellows were immediately about their Little Mother. Deadly pale and shivering in all her limbs, the mother lay in the arms of Paul. Her teeth chattered and severe chills ensued. In vain the students directed themselves of their cloaks with which to furnish her a comfortable bed and covering in the wagon. Fright and the drenching in the cold water, proved too much for her feeble

body. They moved on slowly and silently as a funeral procession. Finally a halt was called, before a certain house, in Castle Street, in Torgau. This had been engaged by Melancthon, who had gone in advance of the procession for the purpose. In spite of all the tender nursing of Margaret, and the medicines prescribed by the physicians, the fever continued unbroken. From day to day, Catharine grew more emaciated, and the mild face grew paler and more transparent. The eyes became wonderfully brilliant and seemed to grow larger and larger. The fever assumed a deadly, consuming, wasting type. Conscious of her situation and suffering intensely, she would whisper to her children, with a bright and cheerful countenance, "As God will!" In her emaciated hands, bleached like wax, she constantly clasped two objects, that seemed her greatest comfort. These were the Bible and the little silver signet of her sainted Doctor. If this signet there was represented, in exquisite art, a white rose in full bloom, a red heart just over the rose, and over both a black cross, with the inscription underneath the whole:

"The Christian heart rests on a rose,  
When 'neath the Cross it seeks repose."

With great patience Catharine Luther suffered for three long, weary months—her last on earth. Heartily and constantly she prayed for her children and for the whole christian church. She prayed to God most earnestly to preserve the pure truth, taught by her beloved husband, from error and corruption, in all future time. On the 20th of December, 1552, the patient sufferer was taken home, in the 53d year of her age.

Strengthened by the prayers and blessing of the most faithful mother, there knelt at her death bed: John Luther, now Chancellor of John William, second son of the Elector, John Frederick. Between these two young men there existed the purest friendship, formed in their student days. By the side of John was Elizabeth Cruciger, his betrothed. Next were Margaret and George von Kurheim, then Paul Luther and his betrothed, Anna von Warbeck, and Martin Luther. In a subdued and saddened strain, as though from a distance, was heard the song of the students. It was the last verse of the harvest song:

"Now Death come on! I have no dread,  
Though I should see thee near my bed.  
For should this arrow pierce my heart,  
Tis but to bid the soul depart!  
In gardens fair, in Heaven above  
Are many waiting, whom I love.  
Rejoice! pretty little flower!"

O what a heavenly smile rested on the still, pale face of Catharine!

The next morning the students stood sorrowfully before the bulletin-board of the City church, reading, amidst sobs and tears, a placard in beautiful Latin, written by Melancthon, in the name of the Vice-Rector, Paul Eber, inviting all the students to pay their last respects to their Little Mother.

The entire University attended the weary body of the Doctress to her last resting place. In St. Mary's Church in Torgau—far from the last repose of her beloved husband, is the quiet bed of the sufferer.

A few weeks after this, the students placed upon her tomb, a slab, upon which lay, in life size, the image of their dear Little Mother, chiseled by Steinmetz. She is represented in a shroud and the open Bible lying on her breast. On her right side is Luther's coat of arms, and on her left, her own. Around the edge of the slab are the following words: "Anno 1552, the 20th of December, here in Torgau, fell asleep in Jesus, Catharine von Bora, the widow of Doctor Martin Luther."

THOROUGH.—Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing thoroughly. A slack hand never prospers, whole-hearted christians are favorites of heaven. The Lord delights in earnest souls and zealous service. Through christians grow rich in grace and find the yoke of Christ easy and his burden light. There is great joy and sweetness in such a life. Everything seems to conspire to help the earnest, and the soul grows strong by effort and joyous by success. It pays to be thorough christians.

A complaint was once made to Martin Luther: "Dear Herr Docteur, things are issuing and happening nowhere as we would have them." "Well," he said, "that is precisely right. Have you not given up your will to our Lord God, praying every day, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven?'"

## Selections.

### Pastoral Bankrupt.

Dr. Christlieb, in the course of his address on "Modern Infidelity," before the Evangelical Alliance, used the striking expression which constitutes the title of article. "The rationalistic clergymen of Germany," he said "when called upon to minister to the sick and wounded and dying, found that they had no spiritual comfort or help to give—they were pastoral bankrupts."

Does there not lie in this trenchant expression the explanation of the failure of many—when they do fail—even of those who are counted in the ranks of orthodoxy? Is not the fact that so little is given owing to the further and deeper fact that there is so little to give?

That minister will be a "pastoral bankrupt" who does not teach the Word of God. The ministry is to be a ministry of the Word. "Preach the Word" is the injunction, no less to ministers to-day than it was in Paul's time, when he gave his stirring charge to Timothy. Bring to your preaching everything of human learning, and poetry, and charm of eloquence, if you will. But still "preach the Word." Learning, poetry, eloquence—these can not give comfort to the aching heart, nor shed light upon the great questions of destiny and duty. These are not the gospel, the glad tidings of salvation to the sinner. The preacher who has only these is a "pastoral bankrupt."

It is easily evident, then, in what ranks they stand who proclaim that they dignify by the sounding title—as if a name would cover up a great lack—of "the gospel of humanity." They differ diametrically from Paul, in that they preach themselves, not Christ Jesus the Lord. In so doing they proclaim themselves "pastoral bankrupts"—they have nothing to give to humanity to comfort the mourner.

That minister, again, will be a "pastoral bankrupt" who does not seek for power by prayer. What Luther said in relation to study—"to pray well is to study well"—has vastly more force in regard to ministerial work.

To pray well is to preach well, because then poor human words become as the very power of God, for the Divine Spirit, in answer to believing prayer, carries them to the heart and conscience of those that hear. "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Human experience over and over again corroborates these words. It is not the eloquent man in human estimation, not the learned, not the one gifted with subtle insight and penetration, who in all cases or even in the majority of cases, is the instrument of doing the most good. It is rather he with whom is "the secret of the Lord," and who has unlocked that secret by intimate communion with God. Such a one is affluent to benefit others, for he has the command of infinite spiritual resources.

But it seems to us that the suggestion of this striking epithet does not end here. It has pertinent references also to private christians; for every child of God is called upon to minister spiritual good to his fellow-men. And in the end the world is to be brought into allegiance to God, largely through the spiritual power put forth by all christians, not simply by the incumbents of the sacred office, but by the rank and file of the church militant as well.

But what, fellow christian, if in this shepherding of others, which it is your duty and should be your joy to exercise, you are a "pastoral bankrupt?" What if you have only grace enough just to crawl into the kingdom of heaven, but no affluent power to benefit others—nothing to give because you have nothing? You have nothing because you do not seek from Him who is ready to bestow "every good and perfect gift," that which may supply your need.

Here is a christian parent, but his children, as they grow up, do not come out on the Lord's side. Perhaps they turn out badly, running off into courses of sin. Why? In large degree because the parent is a "pastoral bankrupt;" he has no spiritual store from which to communicate to his children's needs. He feeds them, clothes them, educates them, but he can give them nothing for their souls' good, because he himself has nothing.

Here is a Sabbath-school teacher, who is excellent as far as what may

be called the outside of the lesson is concerned. He can discourse on Scriptural geography and antiquities and Oriental usages, and make the lesson interesting—a good thing in its way. But he does not get at the spiritual meaning contained in the sacred text; he does not convey a spiritual lesson to the scholar. And why? Because he is a "pastoral bankrupt." Sent to communicate "the truth as it is in Jesus" to those whom he instructs, when the outside of the lesson has been gone over, he sits before his class mute, for he is a "pastoral bankrupt," and can not give what he does not possess.

Ah, how many "pastoral bankrupts" there are in our church, not in the pulpits only, but in the pews. What a shame it is to christians that when they might have so much of spiritual power to bestow, drawing supplies from Him "who giveth liberally and upbraideth not," they yet have nothing.

Reader, whether you stand in the pulpit or sit in the pew, are you a "pastoral bankrupt?"

### Dying Testimony.

The name of Edward Payson is held in fond remembrance by those who knew him, and who were in sympathy with his teachings, as a devoted and successful minister of the Gospel.

Many of his thoughts, in addition to his published sermons, and the record of his biography, have from time to time been printed. Among his unpublished sayings I am reminded, by a paper before me, and which is dated September 28th, 1827, of his strong expression of joyful confidence of his entrance upon the heavenly inheritance.

Dr. Payson, as is well known to those familiar with his preaching and his writings, was wont to illustrate truth by similitudes. It was during a season of deep religious interest in Portland, that Dr. Payson

ings, slept in Jesus. The writer, then a young convert, was entering, or had recently entered, upon the christian life. It was his privilege, in company with a few of his companions, to visit for a few minutes the chamber of this dying saint. A placid smile irradiated his countenance, although his body was racked with pain. And seemingly he could rejoice in his sufferings for Christ, if thereby he could bear more efficient testimony to the love of Christ.

He said to us, "The young christian feels something of happiness at the commencement of his course, but it is not to be compared to the pleasing anticipations he will feel at the end of his pilgrimage—and this we understood as expressive of his own experience—'he can no more realize it than a child of four years can understand the value of the deeds which convey to him a great estate; he may be pleased with the pretty seal, but the intrinsic value is unknown to him.'"

In answer to the remark, that it was a great satisfaction that his views were so clear, and his mind so calm, as giving value to his dying testimony, he said, "I am kept here for some wise purpose;" and added that the satisfaction he enjoyed was enough to repay him for an age of suffering; that he talked all day, and lay in spasms all night, etc. And yet to all his visitors, and at all times, he was calm and cheerful.

At another time he said, "When we all are prepared for a journey, with our trunk packed, and expecting the stage every moment to call, we feel anxious to go. Our friends do not feel that they can do anything for us, and we know not what to do for ourselves."

Thus, on the verge of heaven, he waited till the summons came. His cloud of doubt were all gone. He could see the gates of the celestial city, and with Stephen could say, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

1. We may learn from this testimony the blessedness of christian hope as seen in its sustaining power in view of eternity, and under intense and protracted physical suffering.

2. We have an evidence in the clearness of the spiritual vision as death approaches, that the spirit does not, with the body, pass into an unconscious state between its separation from, and the resurrection of, the body at the second coming of our Lord.—*Christian Banner*.

There are no more impressive witnesses and preachers for the rising generation than pious old men.