

Correspondence.

THE FIRST MARTYRS OF THE REFORMATION.

FROM THE HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION IN THE NETHERLANDS.

BY N. M. S.

Luther was put under the ban of the empire in May, 1521. The magnanimous Elector, Frederick of Saxony, who might have been emperor in place of Charles, if he had cared for the honor, caused Luther to be seized and hurried away to a place of concealment and safety, where he remained two years. The Emperor followed up his decree with placards, describing Luther's errors, and warning all persons against harboring the man, reading his books or adopting his doctrines. In those placards, Luther is declared to be not a human creature, but a devil in the figure of a man and cloaked in the habit of a monk, to enable him the better and more easily to bring the race of mankind to everlasting death and destruction. Referring to the Pope's bull, he says that Luther is cut off as an obstinate and hardened schismatic and a notorious and open heretic, and therefore he expressly commands that no man hereafter shall be so bold and presumptuous as to receive, protect, support or encourage the said Luther, by word or deed, charging all people to seize and apprehend him and bring him to condign punishment as an obstinate heretic. He also most strictly orders that no person, of what state or condition, authority or dignity soever, do buy or sell, keep, read, write, print, or maintain and defend any of the books, writings or opinions of the said Luther, whether in Latin, Flemish or in any other modern language; not only those already condemned by the Pope, but others already composed or that may be composed hereafter by the said Luther, his disciples and followers; even though it should happen that in said books, there might be contained or interspersed some good and Christian doctrines, the better to impose on simple people. Our will, therefore, is, said Charles, that all the said books shall be accounted everywhere as universally forbidden, and as such burnt and entirely destroyed. From thenceforward, on the forfeiture of life and estate, no bookseller, printer, or any other person whatsoever, should presume to print, or cause to be printed, any book or writing in which mention was made of the Holy Scriptures, or any interpretation of it, however so little, without permission of the spiritual authorities and the approval of the faculty of the nearest university.

All offenders against these orders were to be counted guilty of high treason; every one was required to seize upon their bodies and goods, and put in execution against them all the penalties directed by civil and ecclesiastical law. It was accounted a feature of special injustice and evil omen, that those who had never been accused might be examined by the authorities on mere suspicion. All that was odious in the Inquisition seemed threatened in that single sentence. These placards were scattered throughout Germany, and when the Emperor learned that Luther's writings were spreading in Holland, he sent them into that country also, with orders to the local authorities to publish them there. They dared not refuse so mighty a ruler as Charles, although they saw in his command a glaring violation of those ancient privileges which their fathers had known in their childhood, and which Charles's ancestors, eighty years before, had begun to trample in the dust. In those days of ancient and honorable freedom, no count of Holland ever made a law of importance without consent of nobles and people; but Charles had sent forth this sweeping and pestilential edict on his own authority, with no word to the States of the land, except the command to publish it to the people.

On the heels of the edict came an inquisition. In the following year the Emperor empowered his counsellor in Brabant, Master Van der Hulst, to make strict inquiry into the opinions and belief of the people in religious matters throughout the Netherlands. This Van der Hulst is declared by Erasmus to be a wonderful enemy to learning, and he describes his associate as "a Carmelite monk, a madman with a sword put into his hand, who hates me worse than he does Luther." If Erasmus dreaded martyrdom, he was certainly consistent in hating all inquisitors and persecutors. And while the land of Erasmus furnished the first martyrs, it is remarkable that one of Erasmus's dear friends, a follower of literature like himself, a secretary of the city of Antwerp at the time, is the first person, so far as we know, who was molested by these book-hating inquisitors.

This was Cornelius Grapheus, a man of uncommon learning and a good poet, who was seized, not for any connection which he had with Luther, so far as appears, but for the preface which he had written to a book called "The Liberty of the Christian Religion," which had appeared several years before the Emperor's placard. So sharp was the scent of these heresy hunters, and so eager and unscrupulous were they for game. We should judge, from a letter of this Grapheus, dated Nov. 18, 1552, which has been preserved to us, and in which he deprecates most piteously the injustice done him by a long imprisonment and by a sentence forbidding him

to engage in his former pursuits, and in which he apologizes most humbly for the errors of the offending preface, that he was a man pretty much of the stamp of Erasmus, and that the Reformation was not greatly embarrassed by interfering with the liberty and the pursuits of such whining confessors as he.

Erasmus seems to have cherished an abiding sympathy for his unfortunate friend. He bequeathed him fifty gold florins and forty-seven Rhenish guilders, saying that he doubtless stood in need of them and deserved a better fate.

But the first true confessors of the doctrines of the Reformation in Holland, were not of the class of literary dilettanti who followed Erasmus. They were men whose souls drank in the grand announcements of Gospel truth and the fearless denunciations of the corruptions and errors of the Church, which they found in the proscribed writings of Luther. The Augustine monks, to whose order Luther and some of his early and godly friends and counsellors belonged, and among whom his writings had great acceptance and success, had an establishment in Antwerp. The prior himself, named Henry of Zutphen, and many of the monks, received with gladness the writings of their brother monk at Wittenberg. So general was the interest felt in this establishment that the whole society was suspected of Lutheranism. In the same year, 1522, the persecution ordered by Charles broke out against these monks. Some of them, as might have been expected, were alarmed and drew back. Some had never felt any deep, saving interest in the truth. When thrown into prison, they recanted. Others remained firm, and to them belongs the honor of leading the glorious blood-stained roll of the martyrs of the Reformation.

The prior, named Henry of Zutphen, was brought to Brussels and imprisoned. Luther, who followed these proceedings with the deepest interest, has left a letter dated Dec. 19, 1522, in which he tells a friend how the heroic women of the city, not fearing the great Charles, rose up and liberated the prior from his prison, only to be slain, however, two years afterward by a mob of peasants at Dittmarsch. It is from this letter we learn that the monks were driven from the monastery at Antwerp, that all the vessels of the monastery were sold, the sacrament carried away with much pomp as from a place desecrated by heretics, and the building ordered to be destroyed as if infected with the plague. This had been done in October, and it shows how deep was the hatred felt even for the stones and timbers, which had sheltered the monks, while reading for themselves the word of God, and receiving the truth in its purity into their souls.

On the 1st of July, 1523, two of the monks who remained faithful, named HENRY VOES and JOHN ESCH, were burned in Brussels sooner than deny Christ. They deserve to be written in capitals on every Protestant heart. They are the first who perished in the long and bloody and vain assault of the Pope upon Protestantism. They are the Stephens—the protomartyrs—of the Reformation. From them begin the darkest, saddest, shamefulest pages of history, teaching us the truth of the Bible doctrine of the total depravity of man; yet showing us not this alone, but also the wonderful power of Divine grace in sustaining his dear children under the sorest trials; in making the weakest and youngest of them greater heroes than the most famous conquerors of history, and in maintaining the knowledge of the truth in its purity, and in saving and handing down to our day, a pure, a strong, and an evangelical Church, a kingdom that cannot be moved, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail.

The manner in which these devoted men met death, made them worthy to lead this glorious roll. They went to the stake with all cheerfulness, exclaiming with a loud voice that they died as Christians. As the flames were gathering around them, they repeated the twelve articles of the creed in concert; then they sang the Church's grand anthem of praise, *Te Deum Laudamus*, verse by verse alternately, till the flames choking their voices here, released them to sing the Hallelujahs of heaven amid the choirs of angels. Great must have been the rapture of their spirits. It is said of one of them, that when the fire was kindled under his feet, he said, "It seems as if they strewed roses in my way!"

We may be sure that Luther's great heart was moved from its depths, when he heard of these first martyrs. Fortunately, we have the outpourings of that heart, in a letter written to the Christians of Holland and Brabant soon after it occurred. In a wonderful and almost apostolic manner, he sorrows and rejoices, he congratulates and commiserates the believers in those countries upon their lot. "To you," he exclaims, "before all the world, it is given not merely to hear the Gospel and to know Christ, but to be the first to suffer shame and loss, pain and want, imprisonment and danger for Christ's sake; and to be so faithful and so strong as to bedew that Gospel with your blood and to invigorate it with new strength. With you it was, that those two precious jewels of Christ, Henry and John, at Brussels counted not their lives dear unto them, that Christ and his word might be exalted. O, how shamefully were those two souls executed; but in what glory and eternal joy will they return with Christ at his coming, and judge righteously those by whom they have been

unrighteously condemned. God be praised and blessed forever more, that we have lived to see righteous saints and real saints, after canonizing and worshipping so many false ones. For ourselves, we have not yet been counted worthy to be so dear and precious an offering for Christ, though many of our members have not escaped persecution. Therefore, dearly beloved, be confident and joyful in Christ, and let us be thankful for the great signs and wonders he has begun to work among us."

But even this ardent letter was not enough to tell his feelings. He composed one of his beautiful hymns in their honor, commencing with the words, "Ein neues Lied wir heben an." One of the verses is thus translated:—

Their ashes will not silent lie,  
But scattered far and near,  
Stream, dungeon, bolt and grave defy,  
Their foe man's shame and fear.  
Those whom, in life, the tyrant's wrongs  
To silence could subdue,  
In death shall chant their joyous songs,  
Which in all languages and tongues  
Shall fly the whole world through.

These executions had the result which almost invariably follows such deeds of wrong and cruelty. Erasmus says of them: "Two were burnt at Brussels, from which time Luther's doctrine began to be in request in that town." In fact, from all we can learn, persecution was the chief instrumentality used in public for spreading the doctrines of Luther in the Netherlands. Few, if any, preachers traversed the country; the churches were in possession of the priests; books could be circulated only in secret, under the most terrible penalties. It was persecution which aroused the curiosity of the people to know these doctrines, and which created sympathy with the Lutherans. If the churches had been thrown open and the doctrines of Luther allowed undisturbed dissemination, they could scarcely have spread more rapidly than now, when fire and sword sought to stop their progress.

FEMALE EDUCATION.

Report of the Examining Committee of Elmira College to the Synod of Geneva.

Elmira Female College stands the exponent of certain distinctive truths in female education.

1. The mission of woman demands the highest culture. Her sphere, duties and trials, call for the strength and self-reliance of a disciplined and liberalized mind. The mother is the legitimate teacher of every human being the first twelve years of life. She gives direction to all minds entering the career of time and eternity. Her sentiments and spirit are planted deeper in the soul, do more in its guidance and destiny than all other human influences. Woman is not a mere toy, "a fair defect." Home is her throne; domestic influence and social life her domain—her sceptre, mightiest of the mighty. Her duties demand the highest culture.

2. The female mind, though different, is not inferior to that of the other sex. It can receive, it invites discipline, finish, polish. Severe, protracted study will strengthen, sharpen and adorn the one as well as the other. The intellect of woman needs the same symmetry and thoroughness of education. The young man who proposes a liberal education, begins his Latin, his Mathematics, and pursues a well-defined course till he is fit for college. He enters, draws on from one study to another, strengthening, developing each faculty in the right order and proportion, till one complete and rounded impression is left upon his matured powers. He has gained a vantage ground for life.

Now, why should the education of a young woman be fragmentary and haphazard—a little study in one place and a little in another; now Botany, then a term in French, another in Latin; three months in Music, all liberally sandwiched with frivolity and rag literature? Such snatches are termed fashionable education, a proficiency in the fine arts. It is a burlesque, a sham.

There must be order and continuity in profitable study. Mathematics and the study of the languages discipline to consecutive thought, elegance and discrimination in writing and conversation. Discipline is before ornament. The steel must be forged and hardened before it is polished. What worker in silver would begin to burnish first? Silver, well hammered, has not only firmness and elasticity for service, but will take on the highest lustre. It is the purpose of Elmira Female College so to proportion, harmonize, and pack the studies of the course, that every faculty shall be met, and strength and beauty be stamped upon every mind, just as the clear, full imprint of the die stands out upon the gold eagle that drops new from the Mint.

3. It is a basis truth of this Institution that *God has joined together religion and education*—that Christ is the master of the school as well as of the Church. The cord of union between them, like that of the Siamese twins, is vital to both. The intellect is closely allied to the heart and conscience. They serve each other. The development of the one, to the neglect of the other, is a deformity. To the question, "is a teacher less prepared to instruct the people in letters, because, to the learning of the schools and the wisdom of men, he adds divine teaching and the word of God?" we answer frankly, No. We build the college for Christ and the Church. We inaugurate the Bible. We invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit to pour light upon the understanding, to breathe through the daily devotions, to

fill every room and inspire every heart with prayer and praise. By the charter, this Institution is under Christian patronage and control. Though averse to sectarianism, it is not so liberal as to expel vital piety. The divorcing of religion from education, has been signally rebuked. Girard College and the University of Virginia shut out Christ from their halls, but without religious restraint they failed to govern reckless and depraved minds. As a silent police in their government, they were obliged to invite back the influences they had contemned. Is not all truth connected? Do not all her lines centre in God? The truth as it is in Jesus, is the warp and woof of all truth. To tear it out is to leave the fabric in shreds. To separate religion from education is as unphilosophical as it is profane.

4. This Institution pleads that higher education may be made accessible to every mind having the ability to receive, and the desire to obtain it. The common school is open to all. By this primary culture, the gifted minds of every community are stimulated to a thirst for further acquisition. Often the choicest pearl is found in the roughest shell. How shall jewels of the mind be brought up, cut and polished? As the common schools open up to intellectual day, so should the academy and college afford the steps to further advancement. Indigent young men, if gifted and determined, can push their way into our best universities. Heretofore, female learning has been too costly for the poor. Institutions of real merit, the expense of which shall not exclude the indigent girl whose talents are adequate, and whose soul cries out for knowledge as for hidden treasures—such institutions are as yet a desideratum. Poor, but intellectual and meritorious young women should have access to the college or higher seminary as they now have to the common school.

France makes the education of her soldiers a gratuity. England has her endowed centres, where she may educate her royalty and her aristocracy. Modern Rome provides schools for her priesthood. In all this there is no respect to the elevation of the individual. The soldier, the aristocrat, the priest, are a State necessity, essential to the governments they severally represent. But the free Protestant Church in Democratic America, should have respect to the capacities and wants of the soul. Our doctrine is that governments are made for man, not man for governments. The primary end of education, as of the Gospel, is to elevate man. Says the great Milton, "The end of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love Him, to imitate Him, to be like Him." A wiser than Milton has said, "That the soul be without knowledge is not good." The body must have food, the lungs air, the eye light. So there is truth for the intellect, beauty for the imagination, duty for the conscience, virtue for the heart, and all this irrespective of earthly rank.

Now to the Church is committed the work of educating and elevating mind. She is God's great educational machine. It is the command of her risen Lord, "Feed my lambs." The Church is to see to it, that education is so popularized, that every mind eager for truth, expansion, discipline, shall be helped to them. The intellect, moral nature, influence and destiny of the poor, call for these higher opportunities no less than though they had the wealth to command them. As in Christianity, so in education, there is a divine Democracy.

How shall Elmira Female College open her doors to every daughter of Western and Central New York, rich or poor, who has the mind to spring to such privileges? God has deposited the money for this purpose, in the coffers of his people. He has executed a just and equitable draft upon them. Will they honor it? Let the poor from their penury, and the rich from their abundance, cast into the treasury. Let them endow this God-honored institution, and it will become a commanding light, sending its rays to the cottage and the mansion. It will develop obscured talent and desponding worth. It will bring up jewels which, cut and polished, will shine as instructors in our primary schools, and shed a mild radiance over future homes. It will evolve genius in music, painting and writing. It will raise up authors who will furnish souls and literature for our Sabbath-schools and periodicals. It will send missionaries to teach the freedmen of the South, to plant the Rose of Sharon on the slopes of the Rocky Mountains, to scatter the darkness of heathen lands, and to reconstruct and bless the world. Let the money of the Church be turned into educated minds and devoted hearts—purses emptied into brains. The exchange will pay. Let the means of education be enlarged and adjusted to the wants of the people, the whole people; and it will no longer be sung of depressed and discouraged genius.

"But knowledge, to their eyes, her ample page,  
Rich with the spoils of Time, did ne'er unroll,  
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of the soul.

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The dark, unadorned caves of ocean bear;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

Elmira Female College was chartered in 1855, with all the powers and privileges granted to other colleges in the State. It extends to woman opportunities of the highest culture. The building, two hundred and thirty feet long and four stories high, stands on a slight

elevation, central to the valley, but a little north of the city of Elmira, and looking out upon a beautiful landscape, encircled by distant hills. The faculty consists of a President and twelve other teachers associated with him. The principles and purposes of this institution should elicit the prayers, patronage and benefactions of those who value thorough female education. One individual has bestowed \$50,000. How would the surplus wealth of good men and women set this college a counterpart to Yale, where the rich and the poor can meet and drink together at the same fountain of science and religion.

MINISTERIAL PIETY TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

HOW TO RECEIVE A CALL.

"Having preached on the Sabbath, I gave myself on Monday to fasting and prayer, to seek of the Lord a right way in regard to a call I had received. Three things were suggested to me which prompted me to seek for light.

"1. Unless I be sure of my call to be from the Lord, how will I stand against the discouragements I will meet with there?"

"2. How can I think of profiting them if the Lord do not send me to them?"

"3. How will I stand with them before the tribunal of God, if I attempt to preach to them without a call from Himself?"

"4. Having read Ezra ix. and x., I went to prayer, and poured out my soul before the Lord. Thereafter, I read the written confession of sin which I had previously prepared, and also made an additional one in writing. Which done I thought on my sins and *heart-monsters*, till my soul was more humbled in me. After that, wanting to renew the covenant with God, and subscribe it with my hand, I drew it up in writing. Which done, I prayed, the Spirit blowing on me, and I was greatly helped to resoluteness for *Christ*, resolving, if I perished, I should die at his door."

AFTER PREACHING.

"In the evening, while I sat musing on what I had been preaching, viz: 'That the soul that has got a true discovery of Christ, will be satisfied with him alone,' I proposed the question to myself, Art thou content with Christ alone? Wouldst thou be satisfied with Christ as thy portion though there were no hell to be saved from? And my soul answered *yes*. I asked myself further, wouldst thou be content with Him though thou shouldst lose credit and reputation, and meet with trouble for his sake? My soul answered *yes*. Such is my hatred of sin and love of Christ."

BEFORE COMMUNION.

"Two or three days before the communion, I endeavored to examine myself thus:—They that have a sincere desire of union and communion with Christ, have true faith, (Matt. v. 6; 2 Cor. viii. 12,) and such are those who,

"1. Choose and desire Christ without any desire to retain sin.

"2. Who desire a whole Christ, as well for sanctification as justification.

"3. Who esteem Christ above all.

"4. Who make suitable endeavors after Christ.

"But I, as God is my judge, have such a desire. For,

"1. I desire Christ without exception of any sin or the cross.

"2. I desire a whole Christ, and would as fain have sin subdued and mortified, as guilt taken away.

"3. I esteem Christ above all. Give me Christ and take from me what thou wilt.

"4. Sin is a burden to me." E. H. N.

wake this dreamless army with its rosy fires. Never more shall trumpet rouse them, till the last trump shall sound, and the dead, small and great, shall come forth to stand in the presence of God.

Most appropriately the Government has selected this spot as a National Cemetery. From the vast extent of ground, where our men fought and marched, and died, their remains are being gathered and brought here for honorable sepulture. A Burial Corps has been engaged since September 1st, in the work of removal and interment, and already 4761 bodies have been laid to rest in the graves. Buried hastily where they fell, by the wayside, or in the red field of strife, many of the poor fellows have left no trace, and over such, and there are hundreds, this brief epitaph is inscribed, "Unknown U. S. Soldiers, from — farm or fort," etc. To us, this seemed most touching. Over many graves are placed the name and regiment of the deceased, and these of course can be removed, if friends desire, to graves among their kindred. Nearly 3000 more soldiers will be laid here before the work is completed.

As we rode back to Petersburg from the little church and the great congregation, the light of the setting sun slanted down on the October landscape. All was quiet, but in broken fences, and bare fields and ruins, where had once been stately homes, we realized that here had been the harsh hand of war. Still more did we realize it, when the next morning, standing in the crater where the mine explosion occurred, we were told that from beneath our feet, nine hundred mutilated bodies had been taken, and, lo! as we looked among the remains of cantens, haversacks, boots, etc., we beheld two ghastly skulls, that seemed to stare in our faces. Sadly we turned away, thankful that we still have a country, but lamenting that the flower of the land had fallen in the strife.

M. E. M.

LETTER FROM IOWA.

"Young Folks"—Need of Christianity—Went of Ministers—Some of the Causes—Reasons for Cheerful Perseverance—The State University—Education in the West.

MR. EDMOND.—One of the observable features of the West is absence of "white locks." It is a "young America,"—all the more need of sending abroad the principles of Christianity.

There seems, however, to be a great "want of men" and of "means" to carry on the work.

Many causes, no doubt, as secondary contribute to this result. As respects the home field in the West, one of these causes is the multiplication of churches, in the same field, and even in the same denomination. The fact of denominations is a striking feature of Christianity at the present day. We do not regard it, however, as essentially evil that there should be many phases of the outward form—for they all have more or less of truth—and most of them, it is to be hoped, the vital truth. They are furthermore incident to a free government, free thought and discussion. It is the formative period of our great country, and of the Church in her outward structure. But as there may be such a thing as too much church authority, (witness the Middle Ages,) so there may be danger of too great diffusiveness and scattering of our forces in our Christian warfare.

This evil is seen in the western towns, where each denomination, and sometimes each phase of the same denomination, seeks to "lay the foundations for all coming time."

There are, to my certain knowledge, many villages demanding no more than one or two churches, which have six or eight, and many of them aided by home missionary funds. To some extent this is unavoidable, but not to every extent. By reason of this undue competition, none of these churches very soon become strong—some of them die out—none make that impression they otherwise would as spiritual powers in the communities, while other destitute fields are suffering for want of men.

But the Church should not be discouraged. Christianity is a great movement. There is no resisting *medium* in the divine movement of which Christ is the centre; nothing that can constantly or regularly retard or finally arrest the divine arrangement; nothing more than certain perturbations producing inconsiderable oscillations, for Christ is amid it all, "the way, the truth and the life."

Young men are turning their attention to business in these days. Education is now more and more regarded by young men as a means to make money.

The spirit of speculation, not in metaphysics, is rife. It will not last always. The time of more earnest thought will come. This leads me to say a word of the State University, located in this place. There are now about five hundred students, of both sexes, in attendance. The new chapel room, beautifully finished with frescoes, and stained windows, and capable of holding seven hundred or more, has just been completed, and dedicated. I was "too near the speaker" to judge of the dedicatory address. The building cost thirty-five thousand dollars. A fine laboratory and other rooms are on the first floor. This, with three other large buildings, (one of them the former capitol, of Iowa marble,) situated in the midst of oaks and maples, together with an able corps of professors and teachers, renders this an important and pleasant institution of learning. G. D. A. H.

Iowa City, Nov. 1, 1866.