

**LYRA GERMANICA:
SECOND SERIES:
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649640812

Lyra Germanica: Second Series: The Christian Life by Catherine Winkworth

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Cover @ 2017

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CATHERINE WINKWORTH

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY

CATHERINE WINKWORTH.



LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS,
AND ROBERTS.

1858.

TO MAIL
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BV 355
G 3W62



PREFACE.

THOSE who are best acquainted with the rich stores of German hymnology will feel the least surprise at the appearance of a second series of Translations from the same source. Many excellent and classical compositions were necessarily excluded from the plan of the former volume, which it was felt would still be no less acceptable than those already translated, to English Christians. In this series therefore hymns are admitted of a more personal and individual character than in the former, hymns adapted to particular circumstances or periods of life, and to peculiar states of feeling. At the same time many will be found of sufficiently comprehensive import to be suited for congregational singing, and will be recognized by those familiar with the services of the German

Church as constantly used there in public worship, especially those on pages 145, 146, 170, and 68. The first of these indeed holds in Germany, with its fine old tune, much the same place as the Old Hundredth with us. The second is remarkable as being, as far as we know, the only hymn of its author, a man of consideration and wealth in Frankfort. It was published without his name, and as it immediately became popular it was ascribed at first to Hugo Grotius, and other celebrated authors. The third is one of the well-known hymns of Joachim Neander, the most important hymn-writer of the German Reformed Church, whose productions are marked by great depth and tenderness of feeling.

Most of the hymns under the last two divisions of this series are popular in Protestant Germany in the truest sense of the word, to be found in the well-worn hymn-books of every cottage home, or heard as the village funeral passes on to the "court of peace." It will be observed that one of the hymns for the burial of the dead bears the name of Michael Weifs, and that some others are designated as belonging to the Bohemian Brethren. These are productions of that ancient Church which

existed in Bohemia from the first introduction of Christianity into that country by two Greek monks of the eighth century. In the eleventh century it formed itself into a separate community, distinguished from the Roman Church in Bohemia, among other things, by the celebration of public worship according to the native ritual and in the vulgar tongue. After suffering bitter persecutions under various Popes, in one of which John Hus was burnt in 1415, in 1453 its remaining members, including men of all classes, withdrew to a district assigned to them on the borders of Silesia and Moravia, where we find them, fifty years later, numbering about two hundred congregations, under the name of Brethren or United Brethren. But here too fierce persecutions followed them; their countrymen were incited from the pulpits to hunt them down like wild beasts; and in 1508, despairing of peace at home, they sent out four messengers to search whether anywhere a Christian people might be found, serving Christ truly, into whose communion they might ask admission. One of these brethren went to Russia, one to Greece, one to Bulgaria, and one to Palestine and Egypt; but they all returned unsuccessful, no such Christian people had they found. Two more

were then sent to the Waldenses in France and Italy, but they too brought back nothing but admonitions to patience and steadfastness. The Brethren therefore remained in their own country, and occupied themselves in printing the Bible, no fewer than three editions having been published in Bohemian before the Reformation. The dawn of that great event filled them with joy, and in 1522 they sent two messengers to Luther to greet him and ask his advice, one of whom was Michael Weifs. In 1531 Michael Weifs published the hymns of the Bohemian Brethren translated into German, with the addition of several of his own. They passed through many editions, and some of them were introduced into Luther's hymn-book. They have great warmth of feeling, and directness of expression, often with intricate metres, and are marked by frequent pathetic reference to the troubles of this Church, and by a strong sense of the living union of Christians with each other and their Head. The subsequent settlement of the small remnant of this Church on Count Zinzendorf's estates in Saxony, and its rapid growth and spread into other countries are well known. That the spirit of Christian poetry still lives among them in modern times is proved

by the names of Zinzendorf, Christian Gregor, L. von Hayn, Spangenberg, and Albertini.*

As the object of this work is chiefly devotional, the hymns are arranged according to their subjects, not in chronological order, and have been selected for their warmth of feeling and depth of Christian experience, rather than as specimens of a particular master or school. Still it is believed that these two series afford on the whole fair examples of most of the principal writers, not of course without omissions, since only about two hundred and twenty hymns are given from a literature containing several thousands. Of Luther none are given in this series, (unless that hymn known as "Queen Maria of Hungary's song" were written by him for that princess,) for those productions of his which no collection of German hymns could omit, had been already inserted in the previous volume, and there seemed the less necessity for introducing any of minor importance, as all his hymns are accessible to the English reader in the excellent translation of Mr. Massie.†

* See Bunfen's larger *Gefangbuch*, and *Sketch of the History of the Church of the United Brethren* by James Montgomery.

† *Spiritual Songs of Luther*, translated by R. Massie, Esq.