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Poetry.

"LIGHT IS SOWN."

BY S. R. LEWY.

With a far more lavish hand
Than is sown the teeming land,
Ever with a wondrous power
Falls the full, refreshing shower.

Clouds of sorrow flee apace
From the sunshine of His grace;
Basks my soul, in glory's noon,
In the light his love hath sown.

Yes, the darkness flees away,
Gladness thrills my heart each day;
Flooding is my soul with bliss,
Once o'erwhelmed in sin's abyss.

Every note I sing is praise,
Since I saw His gracious face;
Since my Saviour's precious blood,
"Poured o'er all my soul for good."

He has sown the light that thrills;
He with joy my bosom fills;
He has sown, and peace springs up,
Daily an increasing crop;—

He has sown, and, O, I reap
Mercy,—O, how strong! how deep!
Pardon, peace, salvation, Heaven,
All have to my soul been given.

Now I rise, exult, and sing,
Joyfully I homeward bring,
At thy feet the fruit cast down,
Shouting, "This thy love has sown."

Religious.

A writer in the *National Baptist*, in a half facetious style, gives some caustic and striking bits at things as they are, oft contrast with things as they should be, with telling effect. The following may be regarded as a good specimen of this redoubtable Dr. Dobbs:

THE OBSTACLES.

BY REV. LEVI PHILETUS DOBBS, D. D.

I cannot but speak in terms of commendation of the wisdom which pervades the arrangements of Providence. To one he has given wisdom; to another he gives a disposition to draw forth this wisdom by questions. I was led into this course of thought by receiving this morning a letter from a dear but perplexed young brother, who writes:

DEAR DR. DOBBS:—I cannot indeed fathom your learning, but I know your kindness of heart. Favor me from the overflow and drippings of your wisdom. Why isn't the world converted? We have no end of preachers; and every Sunday we have no end of sermons; and yet here we are, with the millennium not yet come, and apparently as far off as ever. Why is it? What is the obstacle?

This is not a new subject to me. For more than fifty years I have been studying upon it; and I am now prepared to reply.

The first obstacle to the coming of the millennium is INTRODUCTIONS. True, as my amiable but ignorant brother remarks, every Sunday we have sermons enough to convert a world of Tweeds and Butlers, let alone common sinners. But then, nine-tenths of the sermons, yes, ninety-nine-hundredths, have an introduction. Sometimes the introduction is only a negative drawback. A preacher launches off at the start with a story, or an illustration, or something or other that is called an introduction but that introduces nothing; and by the time he is through half or three-quarters of the time is gone.

Other introductions lead the minds of the people away from the subject, so that one needs to take as much time as the introduction consumed, to call them back.

Others again, weary the hearers, so that when the introduction is through, the people are tired enough to go home, or to go to bed.

Others still, not a few, are grounded in such ignorance of human nature that they raise insuperable obstacles in the way of achieving the object which

the preacher aims at. When a man in his introduction, says, either impliedly or in so many words: "I am now going to work on your feelings; I am going to awaken your compassion, your sympathy," or the like, he just defeats his own object. The feelings are put on their guard; and the doors are barred.

I have said nothing of what is, perhaps, the most offensive of all, the *apologizing* introduction. When a man begins his sermon with, "I shall not do as well as usual because I was up all last night," or "I was travelling all yesterday," or "I ate too much dinner," or "too little breakfast," pray, does he think that the audience cannot find out that he is incompetent? As to his reasons, who in the world cares whether he was up all night, or half the night!

If I were a voice, a persuasive voice, I would say to all our preachers: "For mercy's sake, let the introduction drop and go to work. Say what you have to say. A poor performance was never mended by an introduction; a good performance has often been marred by one. Nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of a thousand the introduction is a damage and a blunder."

The second great obstacle to the progress of the Gospel is—"One Thought More." The preacher is through; the subject is exhausted; so is the time; but the man is not satisfied; he must needs exhaust the audience. But he would hesitate to say either to them or to himself, "I am going to preach for half an hour longer." Oh no; Satan is far too subtle to approach him with any such unveiled atrocity. But the wily enemy suggests, "One Thought More," and always "One More" till all the good effect of the sermon is dissipated, its impressions effaced, every Christian grace banished and replaced by impatience, disgust and despair. When this point is reached then Satan is perfectly willing to have the doxology and the benediction.

A third obstacle to the coming of the Millennium is the pulpit. I don't mean the abstract pulpit, the pulpit as signifying the preachers, and the sermons, and the doctrines and all that. No; I mean the pulpit of walnut or mahogany, or what not, the real tangible pulpit. Just think of it; you take a man and put him up above the heads of the people; then you shut him up in a box, the more solid the better; you put him behind a board fence, and very likely you hem him in on every side; why, the angel Gabriel couldn't say a word. The arch enemy has hardly contrived any more effectual way for killing sympathy between speaker and hearer. Pray what do you want besides a desk just big enough to hold the Bible and Hymn Book? "Whatever is more than these, cometh of evil" by removing the minister from the level of the people, and putting a barrier between him and them.

If I might be permitted in my old age to see the pulpits banished, and to hear the preachers not begin till they begin, and then leave off when they get through, I should joyfully feel that the obstacles were removed, and I should begin to watch for the Millennium.

TESTAMENTARY ADDRESS TO THE NEW YORK CONFERENCE.

BY THE LATE MELLE D'AUBIGNE, D. D., OF GENEVA.

[The following address was prepared by D'Aubigne for the General Conference of the Evangelical Alliance which was appointed to be held in New York in 1870. His widow put it in the hands of Dr. Schaff, as a proof of the great interest which the historian of the Reformation felt in the Conference and in his brethren of the United States.]

DEAR AND HONORED BRETHREN IN CHRIST: There are many reasons which would have made me wish to be

among you at present. The assembly which brings together at New-York, in the Western Hemisphere, Christians of the Old and New World, is unique of its kind in the history of Protestantism. Also, when your zealous deputy, the Rev. Dr. Schaff, invited me in your name to take part in it, I would willingly have answered, yes; but my age was an obstacle altogether insurmountable. I desire, however, to address you a few words in writing:

CRITICAL NATURE OF THE TIMES.

If the meeting for which you are assembled is an important one the period at which it is held is equally so, not only on account of the great things which God is accomplishing in the world, but also by reason of the great evils which the Spirit of Darkness is spreading throughout Christendom. The despotic and arrogant pretensions of Rome have reached in our days their highest pitch, and we are consequently more than ever called upon to contend against that power which dares to usurp the divine attributes. But that is not all. While superstition has increased, unbelief has done so still more. Until now, the eighteenth century—the age of Voltaire—was regarded as the epoch of most decided infidelity, but how far does the present time surpass it in this respect? Voltaire himself protested against the philosophy which he called atheistic and said, "God is necessarily the Great, the Only, the Eternal Artificer of all nature." (Dialogues, XXV.) But the pretended philosophers of our day leave such ideas far behind, and regard them as antiquated superstitions. Materialism and atheism have, in many minds, taken the place of the true God. Science, which was Christian, in the finest intellects of former days, in those to whom we owe the greatest discoveries, has become atheistic among men who now talk the loudest. They imagine that, by means of general laws which govern the physical world, they can do without Him from whom those laws proceed. Some remains of animism found in ancient strata of our globe make them reject the creation of which the Bible inaugurates the account by these solemn words: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

Eminent literary men continually put forward in their writings what is called Positivism, rejecting everything that goes beyond the limit of the senses, and disdaining all that is supernatural. These evils, which had formerly only reached the upper ranks of society, have now spread to the working ing classes, and some among them may be heard to say, "When man is dead, all is dead." But there is a still sadder feature of our times. Unbelief has reached even the ministry of the Word. Pastors belonging to Protestant churches in France, Switzerland, Germany, and other Continental countries, not only reject the fundamental doctrines of the faith, but also deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and see in him nothing more than a man who, according to many among them, was even subject to errors and faults. A Synod of the Reformed Church in Holland has lately decreed that when a minister baptizes, he need not do it in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. A journal when relating this fact, adds, "Will they then baptize in the God Abyss?" At an important assembly held lately in German Switzerland, at which were present many men of position, both in the Church and State, the basis of the new religion was laid down. "No doctrines," was the watchword on that occasion. "No new doctrines, whatever they may be, in place of the old: Liberty alone." Which means liberty to overthrow everything; and too truly some of those ministers believe neither in a personal God nor in the immortality of the soul. For a portion of the European population there is no other Gospel than that of Spinoza, and often much less even than that.

Gentlemen, ought all this to make us lose courage? By no means. "Fear not little flock," says our Lord,

"for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. The Church is built on an immovable rock, which is Christ, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The Word of the Lord endureth forever." (Matthew xvi. 18; I. Peter i. 25.) Yes, brethren and dear sirs, whatever may be the shouts of triumph of the champions of infidelity, there will always be on earth thousands who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal; but we must defend the kingdom of God against its enemies and extend it over all the globe. Seeing a great assembly from both hemispheres about to be gathered at New York in such critical times as the present, a thought has presented itself to my mind, and I would desire to communicate it to you. Ought not your meeting to be above all things (excuse the expression that I employ) like a council of war, in which to determine the plan of the great campaign which is approaching, or rather which has already begun. You are not merely an academy summoned to hear eloquent essays. You are rather an assembly called to deliberate upon the public affairs of Christianity. I cannot banish from my mind the thought that such has been the object of the Divine Head of the Church in bringing together this Christian Congress. At all times and among all nations, whenever great dangers have threatened the Fatherland, recourse has been had to the wisdom of the most enlightened, in order to determine what are the best means to adopt for its safety. The adversaries of Christianity are now in many places taking able counsel with one another, or holding tumultuous meetings for the purpose of planning its destruction. Shall we not also unite to consider the best means of saving it? Or shall it be true that "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." (Luke xvi. 8.) The great question for every individual is always this: "What must I do to be saved?" The great question for the Church at this time is: What must be done to save the Church? He who saves is Christ, "Neither is there salvation in any other." (Acts iv. 12.) But, as says the apostle: "We are laborers together with God." (I Corinthians iii. 9.) A crisis has arrived, perilous, decisive, which reminds me of those words of one of our French poets, the great Corneille:

Et je puis dire en fin, que jamais potentat, N'eut à délibérer d'un si grand coup d'état.

You have to deliberate upon the triumph of the Gospel in Christendom. If you seek your wisdom from "Him who giveth to all men liberally" (James i. 5), there will without doubt, result from your meeting unexpected light—effective, powerful means for remedying the ills which afflict us. It is not I, gentlemen, it is not a man of times already past, who can find here the guiding clue. A philosopher has said: "In periods of great difficulty the young are generally more discerning than the aged." However, as those who have convoked your assembly have asked me to speak, I shall address you—not some advice, but a few questions.

LIVING QUESTIONS.

I. Ought we not, in order to triumph over infidelity, employ science itself, humble and healthy science in opposition to a partial, proud, and sickly science, which seeks the knowledge of creation, but rejects the knowledge of the Creator, from whence result moral and intellectual enfeeblement and continual change. A system lasts a few years and then it is succeeded by another. A scholar will affirm that we derive our origin from one of the lower animals, which gradually became a man; and he may succeed in leading many superficial minds to adopt his theory, and then he will retract, but without being able, most likely, to bring back those whom he has led into error. Men of genius, who have been the great lights of humanity, Bacon, Kepler, Newton, Pascal, Leibnitz, Euler, Haller, and many others, studied the

creation, but they also acknowledged the Creator; and their theories have become the basis of all our science. Unfortunately some of the learned men of our day (I do not say all) have not such elevated minds. The knowledge of visible things will only be sound when it is accompanied by the knowledge of the invisible God who is the author of them.

II. Is it not important to uphold energetically the right of mind in contradistinction to the extravagant and humiliating pretensions of matter? Let us defend manfully the superior attributes of man. Let us affirm that the faculties in virtue of which he is capable of knowing God, the Invisible, the Infinite, the Origin and End of Man, are immensely above those by virtue of which he crawls upon the earth. How paltry is humanity if deprived of communion with the Eternal God? Fallen, debased, we must say of him as did the prophets, "The crown is fallen from his head." (Lamentations v., 16.)

III. Should not reform begin in the ministry of the Word? The princes of this world seek continually to remodel their armies, improve their soldiers, their rifles, their cannons; and shall the army of Jesus Christ alone do nothing for its amelioration? Many are the changes that ought to be made in the ministry, but I shall mention only one, and that in the words of our great reformer John Calvin. Proofs and arguments are necessary with unbelievers, but that is not sufficient. There must also be sound doctrines, and there is besides a right way of presenting them to the people. Calvin shows that the minister must not be satisfied with reading a sermon coldly or reciting it correctly. "True preaching says the reformer, 'must not be dead, but living and effective. There is a force, there is an energy, which should be found in those who desire to be good and legal ministers of the Word. No parade or rhetoric, but the spirit of God must resound in their voice, in order to operate with power.' (*L'Esprit de Dieu doit résonner en leur voix pour Vespérer en vertu.*) Thus spoke Calvin. Doubtless one sometimes hears such voices, but they are rare. The progress which we have to make is a revival of the ministry of the Apostles and of the Reformation. It was for the Church of England and to the Regent of the Kingdom the uncle of Edward VII., that Calvin wrote these words in 1548, but they are applicable to every church. May the Spirit of God resound in our voices.

IV. Ought not Christians in the times in which we live—the people and the pastors—to attach themselves more and more to the person of Jesus Christ? We must do so in order to contend against infidelity, and still more against Popery. Let us therefore cleave with a living faith, with earnest love not indeed to a fantastic ideal of Jesus, invented by unbelieving imaginations, but to the true person of Jesus Christ? such as the Holy Scriptures alone make him known to us, in all His humility, but also in all His beauty, His power and His glory. Let us attach ourselves to Him, not only for our own peace, but also for the salvation of the Church. We are in a great crisis, I would almost say, but if we are under the eye of such a friend, who has said with truth, "All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth" (Matthew xxviii., 18), and if He has added, "I am with you always" (Matthew xxviii., 20), should we not be senseless if in this pressing danger we did not apply for help to that friend? Well, those words were addressed to us by the Son of God. We are full of confidence in the reality of His promise let us act accordingly.

A Rector of a large Episcopal church, and very evangelical too, said to one of our distinguished Baptist bishops as follows:

"I started a service for Freedmen, in the lecture room of my church. In our city there are about forty thousand colored people. The first Sabbath I had twenty-four; the second Sabbath