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Poetry.

GOD'S SONGS.

There's a song in the sigh of the summer air,
And a song when the night winds sweep;
And a song in voices lifted in prayer,
Thou, the tones be of those that weep.

There's a cadence falls from the airy halls,
Where the starry tapers burn;
And soft and low on the heart it falls,
That would God's own music learn.

And the gushing rills from a thousand hills,
Sing merrily too, as they pour
In flash and in foam to their ocean home,
To be lost in its wild uproar.

And when from the north the rains rush forth
To moisten the burning sod,
Those thunders say, "O what are they,
But the trumpets and drums of God."

That herald the heavily freighted ships,
Which sail through the upper sea,
And richly pour from their ample store,
Their treasures so full and free.

And the desert wild have their quiet songs,
And a dirge "neath the cy press pall,
And the dewdrops sweet with fairy feet,
In tinkling measures fall.

And the ancient hills from their sinless deeps,
And the oaks of the forest strong,
And the blue sea-waves from their coral caves,
All burst into happy song.

And the glad God speaks in His voice of love,
He speaks to His chosen few;
And He gives them "songs in the night" to sing,
With the cross and the crown in view.

Oh mothers that weep by the wayside graves,
Whose human treasures lie;
They have naught to fear, for now they hear
The angelic lullaby.

Oa, way-worn pilgrim, in toil and tears,
Does the rugged path seem long?
Remember the gladness of endless years,
Remember the harp and song.

The harp whose entrancing strings ne'er break,
The song that can ne'er grow old;
The melodious tide, like the waters wide,
Of the songs of the Upper Fold.
A. H. D. STRATON.

Religious.

THE ART OF WINNING SOULS.

BY EMMA M. JOHNSON.

Let no one suppose, at the outset, that it is going to be easy work. You may indeed, be hopeful as to results; you may even be sure of success directly or indirectly; but the road to success may prove anything but smooth. There is, in the first place, no set way of approaching people. There are a thousand different avenues to as many different hearts. These avenues are crooked or straight, broad or narrow, winding in and out with many a strange, intricate turn; in a word, they vary according to the character of the individual. Just how to make the first approach, is an all important step. A little manoeuvre may accomplish the whole thing, or it may be that some study will be required.

The idea of putting directly and abruptly, to all people alike, the question of their souls salvation, is neither practicable nor wise. There are times when one may be in a peculiar mood, bristling with irritation, harassed with care, divided between many interests and anxieties. All these things combined will, for a time, render them unfit for calm reasoning, for responsible action. And perhaps just one reason why so many fall off so soon after professed conversion is, that they have been suddenly appealed to and exhorted at unfortunate moments, thus forcing the question when the soil was not yet ready to receive it.

A single word, look, or touch, accompanied by prayer, may lead to the conversion of a soul, while in other cases a whole system of strategy may have to be employed. A tract-distributor was once cautioned against a certain woman on her district, who was said to be unapproachable on the subject of religion. The visitor's feet may have been somewhat heavy, but her heart beat freely as she entered

the house of the godless one. Sure enough, she encountered a hard, bitter woman, who resolutely set herself against all appeals. For some time the case seemed hopeless the subject only replying in short words to all conversation. At last, as the tract distributor in her growing despair, lifted her heart to God, at the same moment she raised her eyes and saw, hanging upon the wall a portrait of the woman's dead brother. It was anything but a work of art, but fortunately a pair of good dark eyes were there to be commented upon. Very adroitly was the thing managed. The dark eyes were praised, and then the cold, blue eyes of the woman filled with tears. She began to speak of her dead, and then the visitor spoke of a like loss which she had sustained. Then the wedge was thrust in; gently and cautiously religion was mentioned, as the only thing upon which one could rely in time of all trouble.

The hardened woman admitted this. The ice was melted; the waters began to flow. The troubled soul promised to attend church; and did, for the first time in many years, find her way to the house of God.

Lay down no rules for your work; go freighted with the Holy Spirit, and speak as you shall be moved, and be sure of your own entire consecration, and keep up constant supplies of grace. No barren heart has anything to give to another; it is only when its banks overflow, that it will bless the land as a fruitful harvest.—*Christian at Work.*

RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

FROM A SERMON PREACHED BY THE REV. ARTHUR MURSELL, IN BEWICK STREET CHAPEL, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, BEFORE THE BAPTIST UNION.

"From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God"—Psalm xc 2

A RIGHT STARTING-POINT NECESSARY.

An eccentric tale-writer once stumbled on the strange conceit of a lame demon, who could lift the city roofs at will, and show the scenes and the pursuits of those who lived and died, who toiled and played, who suffered and rejoiced beneath. Strange contrasts of condition and pursuit would such a limping disclose! But there are two scenes to which that demon's finger might have pointed where the difference, though apparently marked enough might be more in seeming than reality. He lifts up one roof, and shows a kneeling group with bended knee and reverent head, and from the group there rises, like the sound of one strong voice, the cry, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth"; and then the voice of earnest prayer, mingled perhaps with strong crying and tears. They pray for pardon of sin, they pray for all kinds of gifts and blessings, they pray for relatives and friends. And they can do so because they believe in God the Father Almighty. Another roof is lifted, which reveals a lonely student at his books, poring hard into the night over deep problems about life, and noting them down into his parchments; while a third shows another in his laboratory, searching in glowing crucibles, and reading with wistful eagerness the phenomena of chemistry. Now, is there contrast or correspondence in the pursuits of these? Both. But if we could lift the heart-roof from the student's thoughts as well as the thatch from his retreat, we could tell whether the correspondence or the contrast was most marked. It all depends on whether their starting-point is the same. If they both start from this: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," who shall say that each is not a suppliant, that all are praying, and that the laboratory is as much an oratory as is the temple? But if the student and the chemist, having laid the Bible on the dustiest shelf, start from this: "I believe nothing till I have found it out," then there is no contrast wider in the entire panorama of mankind. The search in the one case is for the

dead cold "it is"; in the other, for the living and eternal "I Am." One gropes in the dark under the shadow of his own materialism—the other sits at the living feet of a living Father, petitioning Him by each experiment, and waiting to be taught of Him through every page.

Does it not seem to resolve itself into an axiom which the meanest intelligence may grasp, that there are certain germ-truths which a finite mind must accept upon some authority or other before it can reason at all? These must be some basis for induction, some momentum to set the human thought in motion. And this germ-truth surely must be an intelligent and wise First Cause, behind all the phenomena, the laws, and the life which we experience and behold. To deny this seems, instead of claiming freedom for the mind, to bring thought to a stand-still altogether, and to shut out all hope of the shining of a true light, because it shuts out God from His own created world. Our scientific teachers are ingenious in evading the term atheist. They tell us that if that stage of scientific inquiry at which they have arrived should seem to point in an atheistic direction they cannot help it; that they or their successors may reason their way into a clearer light anon, and that meanwhile the gospel they have to declare unto the world is that matter is life and life is matter. Let us be as evasive as they. We don't say it is not so. But while we are waiting for the next revelation from the schools we mean to keep hold of our Father's hand and trust if we cannot trace. The scientific declare, "We don't say there is no God, but we have not weighed and analysed Him yet, so we have nothing to do with Him, and have no name to give or homage to present to Him." We say, "We don't say that matter is not life, but we do say that God is the life of matter, and the author of law, and the source and manager of all phenomena, and light alike of science and religion, and we believe in Him, whom having not seen we love, in whom, though now we see Him not, yet, believing, we rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

THE WEAKNESS OF PHILOSOPHY AND THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL.

It is after all but the flourish of a rhetorical charity to say that the man who works and studies to investigate phenomena is a worshipper in Nature's temple, just as truly as we are worshippers in the temples of the creeds. He may, or he may not be. If he accepts God as his starting-point and invites him as his teacher and companion, then he is devoutly studying, and his study is a sacred worship. But if he leave God out or pass God by, he is a presumptuous atheist. He may say he is a truth-seeker, but he begins his quest with a lie. The man of faith has the start of him. One is seeking truth, the other is waiting on the truth. One is a pedant vainly cudgelling his brain for light, the other is a child sitting at his Father's knee. One is a would-be wise orphan, the other is a trusting son. Truth is not God, but only the emanation of God. To know truth you must postulate God and then ask God to show it you, not try to find it out for yourself. It is certain that I have a father—there is no need for documents and certificates to verify it—I am myself the living proof. But enough. We have not meant to say a word in disparagement of human inquiry, and might have said much in eulogy of the splendid history, the heroic intrepidity, and the opulent results of the work of scientific men. We gather up the largesses they have given us and are grateful. And it is because we are solicitous that they may win wider and yet nobler spoils that we would fain offer them the lamps of faith and of religion to aid them in their search. It did not baulk the genius of Newton to confess a God; it did not narrow the mind or cramp the horizon of Faraday that he believed and prayed. The last sentence of Faraday's address to his students as he

closed a course of lectures was to warn them to look higher than the laws they studied—to the Lawgiver who enacted them. But there is a bitter contrast in the final line of the address which has so lately sounded from the learned chair at the parliament of science. A wail of sadness seems to vibrate from it, for it proclaims no finality, no rest from this bloodshot search for truth by the seekers who will not carry with them the candle of Revelation and of Faith. Having landed himself in a mist, the learned teacher leaves his hearers in the fog to which he leads them, confessing that he must quit a theme too great for him to handle, "but which will be handled by the loftiest minds ages after you and I, like streaks of morning cloud, shall have melted into the infinite azure of the past!" Such is the best horoscope which godless science can cast for you, for me, and for itself. To "melt into the infinite azure of the past!" This is not, thank God! the hope set before us in the Gospel. We look towards the infinite azure of the future, and in its light we see a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, and, environed amidst that righteousness, we see our ignorant and sinful selves needing no candle of illumination but the glory of the Lord, and with the robes that were defiled made white in the blood of the Lamb. While the seer of materialism desecrates his successors still toiling in the same darkness, and panting across the same illusory mirage, waving the incense before a diety who still mocks the homage and disdains the censor, the prophet of our faith beholds the children of the regeneration flinging their crowns before the living God, and serving Him who hath loved them day and night in His temple. Which will you choose, the truth that makes you free, or the slavery of a drudge who is ever learning but never winning knowledge! Which, think you, is the brighter prospect, that of the army of the faithful holding fast the form of sound words amidst the gibes of wittings and the scorn of scribes; or of a succession of bewildered Pilates, crying "What is the truth?" and quibbling with a Christ they meant to crucify, instead of embracing an Immanuel they mean to love? What need to cry, "What is truth?" while the light of the world is blazing, and solving every problem as he brings life and immortality to light? Sad that he should shine before sealed and purblind eyes which cannot see His sheen! Brethren, we despise not learning. We would retard no pilgrim and detain no adventurer through the fastnesses of discovery. We have nothing but a shrill "Excelsior!" to shout after the climber who would dare Olympus. But we would say, "Search the world as God's world—and the God who made it shall reveal its mysteries." And we ask you, by the dust which lies upon your sainted fathers' graves, by the blackened stakes which mark the martyr-path behind you, and by the cross which is at once the beacon and the bourne of Christian chivalry—shall your children's children be graduated through universities into this Cimmeria of learned gloom, to inherit a bequest of splendid slavery from ancestors who, melted into "the infinite azure of the past," declaring, but with polite periphrasis, that there is no God?—or will you, faithful to the traditions in which religion is baptized, teach them to fling the arms of faith round Jesus and His Cross, and through the open portal of the open heart to break at once to liberty and light, until the Truth hath set them free? Oh, first let the heart rest in an accepted revelation, and then let the mind strain and speculate if it will with the solid standpoint of a living God behind it; but do not begin from the chaos which is dead, and which man can never quicken, instead of the living voice which cast it into order when He cried, "Let there be light." The inquirer, who begins at matter, twines his useless skein around the white ribs of a corpse; while the starter from the

faith which trusts in God winds his throbbing fibres round the beating heart of central life. One is the dull silkworm, spinning its poor cocoon out of itself around its own cold body, and drying up and dying in the midst of its own brittle work; the other is a nascent fledgling waiting for the wings to grow out of the love which shelters it within the nest, and preening the plumage of its immortal flight through the cloeness of its heart to the Eternal. I catch a truer and a holier strain from the Parnassus of the poet than I do from the chair of the philosopher.

While here the wisest sage must live
By faith, and not by sight;
For duty only, heaven will give
Enough for guiding light.

But when at length from life's dark road
We climb heaven's height serene,
All light upon the hill of God
In God's light shall be seen.

All kingdoms of the truth shall there
To tearless eyes be shown;
And, dwelling in that purer air,
We'll know e'en as we're known.

In that serene expectancy I wait and trust. And meanwhile I will not have the man who mocks my prayers and spurns my faith to be my teacher; but I will swear my truth to Him who calls me to His bleeding side, and shows to me His pierced hands; who offers me His bosom for my pillow, His smile for my light, His strength for my defence; and who, as He lays His yoke upon my shoulder, gives rest unto my soul. The true philosopher will hold a language more like that which false philosophy despises—"I have wearied through the schools, and they have struck more props from underneath me than they have given me hopes to hold by; they have quenched more lights than they have kindled. I have heard the so-called new philosophy, but it is but the echo of the old lie. And now I come back to the seashore at Galilee, and the cornfields in the valley of the Kedron. I ask to rest under the jasmine thatch at Bethany, beside the sisterhood, and hear the Master speak again, for 'never man spake like this man.' Yes, Jesus! I come to Thee. Thou wilt not spurn me. Thy feet shall be my study; Thy cross shall be my token forever! I will live by this; will die by this; and trust my sin-stained soul to this alone. Sentiment! Emotion! sneer the schoolmen—yet I love Thee still—'Fool and fanatic!' shouts the wisdom of the world—but still I stand beside the cross, and say the nursery creed, as the creed also of my death bed at the end, 'I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ His only Son—MY LORD!'"

"I MUST HAVE A RELIGIOUS NEWSPAPER."

So says a subscriber to one of our contemporaries. And he gives the following reasons:

1. Because such a paper, rightly conducted, is a public institution of great value, exerting a happy influence upon all the varied important interests of society, and I am bound to do my part in sustaining such an institution.
2. Because my own religious growth as a Christian is materially promoted by such a paper. My religion waxes or wanes in life and power in proportion to clear or dim views I have of the great things of the kingdom of God. Next to my Bible, my paper increases the clearness and extent of my spiritual vision, giving light and expelling darkness by its never-ceasing supply of facts and appeals, which are sunshine and shower to the spiritual verdure of my soul.
3. Because I want a good commentary on the Bible. My religious paper furnishes it, often by direct expositions, by items of religious biography, strikingly illustrative of Bible truth, by constantly recurring events of divine Providence equally illustrative, by narratives of revivals, conversions, progress of missions at home and abroad, all showing the power of the