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Poetry.

The Smoking Flax and Bruised Reed.

When evening choirs the praises hymned
In Zion's courts of old,
The high priest walked his rounds, and
Trimmed
The shining lamps of gold;
And if perchance some flame burned low,
With fresh oil vainly drenched,
He cleansed it from its socket, so
The smoking flax was quenched.

But Thou who walkest, Priest Most High,
Thy golden lamps among,
What things are weak, and near to die,
Thou makest fresh and strong.
Thou breathest on the trembling spark,
That else must soon expire,
And swift it shoots up through the dark,
A brilliant spear of fire.

The shepherd, that to stream and shade
Withdrew his flock at noon,
On ready stop soft music made,
In many a pastoral tune;
And if perchance the reed were crushed,
And could no more be used—
Its mellow music muffled and hushed—
He brake it, when so bruised.

But thou, Good Shepherd, who dost feed
Thy flock in pasture green,
Thou dost not break the bruised reed,
That sorely crushed hath been;
The heart that dumb in anguish lies,
Or yields but notes of woe,
Thou dost return to harmonies
More rich than angels know.

Lord, once my love was all ablaze.
But now it burns so dim;
My life was praise, but now my days
Make a poor broken hymn.
Yet ne'er by Thee I forgot,
But helped in deepest need:
The smoking flax Thou quenchest not,
Nor break'st the bruised reed.

—Rev. W. B. Robertson.

Religious.

The Truth and its Demands.

The following is from an eloquent discourse by Pere Hyacinthe, translated from the French, by Rev. L. M. Bacon, D. D.

What! shall there be no generous reaction of the conscience? What! are we never to break the power of that sword which slays the soul with a lie? Nay, this reaction exists always and everywhere, for the glory of human nature; but it comes to view most of all in great crises of national history. And yet, hitherto it has done its work but imperfectly, because it has come into collision with two obstacles that tend to perpetuate the power gained by error: I mean the claim of infallibility, and the fear of martyrdom.

We all claim to be infallible. There is no man in the exercise of power, in whatever sphere, the family, the school, the community, as well as in the church, who does not mean to exercise it without mistake or fault. And what is true of power is also true of liberty, which is only one form of authority; for when liberty is exercised, it confers a real authority on those toward whom it is exercised. If I have rights, you have duties; consequently, my liberty implies a substantial authority. Well, then, if the representatives of liberty and the representative of authority have, with rare exceptions, a strong tendency to infallibility, are there many who resist this tendency? I do not assert, I only ask.

You understand now what I mean by the claim of infallibility. It is a transmitted claim. In the individual it is transmitted from youth to manhood. Manhood, to be sure, clothes the errors which it receives from youth in cooler, more thoughtful, more tenable forms, but it holds them like an inheritance. It hands them on in its turn, to old age, and age carries them with it to the grave—nay, rather, it bequeaths them to the generation following—bequeaths them as a sacred trust to its honor, filial piety, so that in the very radiance of that inward light that enlightens and condemns us, we deem ourselves

bound in conscience and affection to continue, not the sacred traditions of our fathers, but their traditions of error and infallibility.

Thus it is that the kingdom of lies is kept up among men. Ah! the world, the false world, the world that Jesus never loved, if it were to look to-day upon the disciple of the Pharisee Gamaliel, stricken down in the dust of the road amid the noonday light, and rising up an apostle of the Christ, a confessor of the God of truth, the world would say to Paul, "You are an apostate!" The world likes a hypocrite better than a convert.

And now as to the fear of martyrdom. This is the second cause that maintains and perpetuates the usurping reign of falsehood. When I speak of martyrdom, I do not refer to Nero or Diocletian, or their imitators, under whatever form or name. There is another martyrdom than that. Rosmini was right; there is a martyrdom that does not rack the limbs, nor spill the blood, nor burn the flesh. And, yet, is it not a torture that touches flesh and blood and soul, to rend away from one, for the testimony of the truth, parents, friends, affections not less old than life and far more dear, since being taken away, they leave life without delight, if not without force? Is it not exile to feel oneself a stranger, misunderstood, shut out from influence, among one's fellow-citizens? Is it not proscription to be assailed with outrage and hatred by those you have most dearly loved—to hear the shameless insult yelling unrebuked at the dearest, the purest of all that belongs to you in the world—to know the cowardly calumny that dogs your every step, and to which you can no more reply than the decent man can answer the strolling woman that calls after him in the public streets?

Is not that the deepest and most grievous of martyrdoms which extorts the tears that Augustine calls tears of blood—*sanguis quidam animæ*—which inflicts the unseen wounds that never heal, the racking of the mind, dislocation of the faculties—the reason and the conscience—from the memory and the affections? Gather up before you for a moment the sacrifices demanded sometimes all at once by the simple testimony of the truth, and you have an idea, a feeble idea of the ravages of that sword of the Word of the God which wounds those who do not flee from it into a refuge of lies, and which pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit! Such is the martyrdom that must be met, and borne, by those who would do homage to the truth, who would protest against the error which holds dominion in religion over fanatic consciences, in worldly affairs over selfish interests.

I have done. I have shown you the two causes which tend to perpetuate the kingdom of lies, or at least, of error in human society: aspiration for infallibility and fear of martyrdom. But before I leave this platform, were you have given me so generous a hearing, after all the shadows I have cast over your souls and over mine, I wish once more to declare my profound conviction that, thanks to the reason and conscience of man, and thanks above all to God's work in the world, righteousness and truth shall get the victory!

There appeared one day, in Judea, before the tribunal of justice, a man charged with wishing to make himself king. Interrogated by the magistrate, he confessed the crime, but with an explanation. His kingdom was not of this world. It depended not on the spears of soldiers, but on the testimony of the truth. "Thou sayest it. I am a king. To this end was I born; for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness of the truth." Then Pilate asked, "What is truth?" and without awaiting the answer, which he deemed impossible to his skeptic question, he withdrew to quiet the mob. Therefore the strange personage before him seemed to him no longer worthy of serious consideration. He costumed him like a tragedy-king, and gave him up to the honors of the guard-

room, a crown of thorns on his head, for sceptre a reed trembling in his hand, and his crimson blood mingling on his shoulders, under the soldiers' scourge, with the crimson of the cast-off rags of royalty. From the hands of a magistrate without conscience, the man who called himself King of the truth fell into the hands of a people without reason. He was dragged to a hill-top and nailed to a slave's gibbet. But with a last surviving scruple of justice, Pilate wrote above his head his royal title: *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*. And there he died. And there he reigns.

And I, in fellowship with all Christians complete in faith and knowledge, do worship him because bearing witness to the truth. He feared not to make himself one with the truth, saying that wonderful word "I am the Truth." I worship him; but if you have not yet attained to this, you may at least admire, recognizing in him—what is no light thing to do, but much graver, perhaps, than you think—the model for mankind. Like him, then, whoever we may be, of whatever rank or condition, if we hold fast our own integrity, if we keep the respect of our own conscience, if we maintain the honor due to truth and righteousness, it is our right and our duty to say, "To this end was I born, for this cause am I come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." At cost of our interest, at cost of our repose, at cost of life, at cost of what is dearer than life—of honor and affection—through evil report and good report, it matters not, to this end are we born, for this cause are we come into the world. And when the truth shall have come into its kingdom, not only in the eternal world, but here, in time and on the earth; when the reign of reason and religion shall be ushered in—the reign of righteousness and peace; when the hour shall strike for the peaceful embrace of authority and liberty, now at last reconciled; when the great harmony shall be accomplished of all that men have sought so long and so vainly to put asunder, then they that have lived and died for the truth shall share from above in its triumph; for its triumph shall be their triumph, and they shall reign with it and by it, and they shall be blessed.—*Complete Preacher, October.*

The English Baptist Union.

The Autumnal meetings of the Union recently held at Newport in South Wales appear to have been occasions of great interest to all present. We have full reports of the proceedings in our English exchanges. Deputations were received from other Christian bodies, and a most agreeable fraternity seemed to animate the speakers. The Rev. H. Oliver, (Independent) presented an Address which, amongst a great many good things, said:

"We congratulate you as a denomination on the work which you have accomplished in the service of our common Master. Among the various bodies that have laboured in the kingdom and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ, you hold a distinguished place. We greet you as brethren who preach the same Gospel as ourselves, and honour you for your loyalty to Christ and His Word; and when we contemplate the vast amount of spiritual good which has resulted from your labours, we glorify God in you. In the long and weary struggle for religious liberty, you have invariably been found faithful. When others have wavered and faltered, your loyalty or freedom has never flagged. In the noble army of progress your place has always been in the van, and when you exult in the liberty which we now enjoy, you have a right to cherish the proud consciousness that the Baptist denomination has had no mean share of the honour of making England what it is. In common with you we rejoice in the splendid results of missionary labours; but to you belongs the honor of having been the

pioneers. The first organised missionary society was formed by Baptists, and other churches owe them a debt of gratitude for stirring them up by example to this great work. The names of the founders of your Missionary Society are not only dear to you, but are known and loved by all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Your influence on the religious thought and your contribution to the theological literature of our country are worthy of grateful mention. Through a long period of agitation and of progress, you have given no uncertain sound. The writings of Fuller, Robert Hall, and John Foster, to mention no more, are the common property of every section of the Christian Church. To the past you can look with gratitude, and to the future with confidence. You have done much, but we trust that you are destined to do still more. It is not with envy, but with joy and admiration, that we behold the present strength and vigour of your denomination. We pray for your prosperity, and rejoice in your success. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sake, I will now say, "Peace be within thee." (The address was signed by all the Nonconformist ministers of Newport, and was received, with repeated applause by the vast assembly.) Mr. O. afterwards said, "reference has been made in the address to your efforts for religious liberty. We do not speak now much of religious liberty; we have coined another word, 'religious equality'—(applause)—and in the struggle for the realization of religious equality, I hope the Baptists will be as brave now as they were in the past. I trust that you Baptists in the future will be worthy of your traditions, and worthy of your principles. (Applause.)

The Rev. W. Bishop (Wesleyan), who was heartily applauded, said: Mr. President, honoured brethren. I give you in the name of those whom I represent, a very hearty welcome to this town. For myself personally, I do feel grateful for the meeting which I have attended during this season. As a returned missionary, my heart was full to overflowing yesterday. I feel it a very high privilege to be able to express my sense of gratitude to the Baptist Missionary Society for the kindness which has been shown to me in my connection with their missionaries abroad.

Another scene presents itself to my mind, and with your permission, Mr. President, I will give it, and that will be perhaps the way in which I shall substantiate my claim to represent the Methodist bodies of this town on this platform of your Union. (Hear.) I want to take you right away to mountains which your late secretary knows very well. There, on a beautiful afternoon, with the bright blue sky of the tropics above, the murmuring river flowing over the beautiful polished stones, and ever-green trees dropping and kissing the waters, a little band is gathered. A hymn is sung, prayer is presented to the great God who is not restricted to temples made with hands, but who hears the worshippers wherever they present their petitions to Him, and after the prayer is ended a missionary goes down with a candidate into the water in the old-fashioned way—(loud applause)—and baptizes her into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. There is a little Baptist Church gathered there at the head of which is my friend Meplus Marn. Our brother was not an ordained minister then, and he requested me to go and introduce into the Baptist church there one of their candidates, and I, as a Wesleyan minister performed the office of a thorough-going Baptist. (Laughter and applause.) Let us go forth in the might of our risen Lord, and baptized with His Holy Spirit, to win trophies for Christ, and may the Lord help us. I have very great pleasure in presenting you with the cordial greetings of the Methodist churches of this town. (Loud applause.)

Rev. W. Davies (Presbyterian) said:

I am not so fortunate as to be the son of a Baptist, nor am I a returned missionary; but I belong to a body of which I may say, without boasting, that it fills a brilliant page in the history of Wales. (Hear, hear.) We are known in Wales as Methodists—we are the Methodists of Wales—an improved edition of the Methodists across the borders. (Laughter.) A very high authority—a gentleman who would be an authority in any assembly of Englishmen, but especially an authority here to-day—Mr. Spurgeon—(applause)—has said that our body is the best combination possible. (Laughter, and "Hear.") We are Methodists, and Calvinistic Methodists. (Laughter.) We have been called Presbyterians; we are Calvinistic in creed, and Presbyterian polity, and in the name of the Moderator of the Association for South Wales, who is a member of my church, and in the name of the other members of our churches in Newport, I bid you a very cordial welcome to the town. You have always been in the van, as we have already said. Go forward, fathers and brethren, and, as fast as we possibly can, we will follow you.

The President responded by saying: We receive these expressions of brotherly sympathy on the part of the Independents, and the Wesleyans, and the true Methodists—an unparalleled combination not to be exceeded. (Laughter) with very much pleasure, and reciprocate with great sincerity the kindly feeling that they have expressed. (Applause.) If they were only a little more advanced, I could even conceive that our Calvinistic Methodist friends might be almost better than they are, and as for our friend Mr. Bishop, seeing the excellence there is in him, they took him for a Baptist. On behalf of the Union, we return the prayers of these respective bodies, which they through these gentlemen have offered for us. For our brethren and companions' sake we say too, "Peace be with you," and for the Lord's sake, "The Lord himself be with us and you." (Applause.)

The various matters that usually occupy the attention of the Union were brought up and discussed with the freedom which Baptists everywhere rejoice in. British and Irish Home Missions (beginning at Jerusalem) commenced in 1797 were the first matter attended to. The secretary's report shews the great need of the gospel in the agricultural counties, and the greater need in the manufacturing and metropolitan counties and closed; by saying:

"Above all, brethren, let a sense of our responsibility to Almighty God and to Jesus Christ our Master govern us in our decisions to-day. We are the heirs of a glorious inheritance. To us the Gospel has opened a land flowing with milk and honey. Rescued by the hand of the Redeemer from the powers of darkness, we enjoy peace with God; often we rise even to the heavenly places, where our communion is with the Father and the Son; sometimes we have glimpses from the Delectable Mountains of that Celestial City which is to be, through grace, our everlasting home. But to this very day there are millions of our fellow-countrymen to whom all these things are but fables. Living without God and without hope in the world, they draw one another down to a lower and yet a lower deep. Their life is demoralised and unhappy, their end is in outer darkness. This cannot be the will of Him who gave Himself for our redemption; and if we have caught anything of His spirit, we shall deem no effort, no sacrifice too great if we can happily succeed, by His power, in breaking the yoke of bondage, and saying to the oppressed, 'Go free.' The watchword of Carey for the heathen, some eighty years ago, is our watchword to-day for the heathen at home. Brethren, let us expect great things from God; let us attempt great things for God." (Loud applause.)

"The Education of Ministers' Children" was the first subject of the