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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

A Glimpse at Life, a Glimpse of Heaven.

Our life is brief; it passes soon;
This morn, then burning noon,
Ere the cold, dark, cheerless night;
In youth life's stream flows swift and strong,
The passing years seem strangely long,
The days are tardy in their flight.

But manhood finds these fancies gone;
The end of life draws swiftly on;
The days like meteors flash from sight;
The years a moment seem to stay,
Shed light on mortal man's decay,
Then sink into the past's drear night.

And in the darkly gathering shade,
Retracing paths in vigor made,
Old age recalls youth's vanished dreams;
And down the withered cheek flow tears,
And in the heart are anxious fears,
While fade the day's last ling'ring beams.

Do we know all there is of life?
Is there no rest from toil and strife?
Is there no happier land than this?

No glorious realm where shades ne'er come,
Where none can see a sinking sun,
But where is found immortal bliss?

Beyond the spangled, starry sky
I glance with Fancy's piercing eye,
And perfect glories there behold;
No cloud is stretched the welkin o'er,
No tempest's flash, nor thunder's roar,
But brightness which can ne'er be told.

No burdened heart, no tear stained face,
Are found in all the heavenly place,
Nor weeping, moaning, hopeless grief;
No wall disturbs the holy air,
No startling shriek from black despair;
No piteous voice implores relief.

There is no weariness, no pain;
And naught disturbs the peaceful reign
Of God-created, holy joy.
The happy souls whose home is there,
Are never reached by anxious care;
No restless wants their peace annoy.

O Lord, give me the wings of faith,
A trust in what Thy Scripture saith,
And to this home my hopes shall soar;
Ere long the weary conflict past,
The crown of victory won at last,
With Thee I'll rest forevermore.

O. C. S. WALLACE
Worcester, Mass., Jan. 3, 1879.

Religious.

Music in the Soul.

BY REV. B. D. THOMAS.

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Making melody in your hearts to the Lord. Eph. v. 19.

Music is a divine art. Its power over the human mind has been gratefully acknowledged by men of the most diversified genius. It has ministered inspiration to the philosopher no less surely than to the poet. Bacon and Milton unite in their eulogies of the strange, weird, fascinating power of music. It is grateful and refreshing as the breezes of the mountains. It is stimulating as the breath of Spring. It comes to the mind like an enchantment from that world of infinite harmonies where God himself dwells.

And if we in our higher moods and more exalted experiences are so susceptible to the harmony of sweet sounds, embodied in good music, if upon our minds there is exerted a soothing, elevating, inspiring influence by the rhythmic symphony of human voices or the masterly play of human hands, may we not fairly conjecture that to Him who gave us these faculties of execution and appreciation, music is a pleasure? The very fact that music is in harmony with our highest, noblest life is sufficient to assure us that it moves the heart of God.

The poetic masters of the Old Testament frequently represents the material universe as producing with its innumerable voices a sublime symphony. It is the highest conception entertainable of this vast, illimitable theatre in

which God has displayed His wisdom and His power. Everything which the Creator has brought into existence has been set to music. Every star, planet and constellation moves in one sublime, unvarying harmony. The earth is not an exception to this universal order. She has not been so blighted with the curse as not to be in unison with the spirit and pathos which throbs through every fibrous atom of the material universe. There is not a mountain height or forest solitude where the voice of praise is not heard. The earth is full of music.

Our text, however, speaks of music of a far higher order: God listens to the harmonies of nature with approbation and delight because they attest His wisdom and His power. It is the great artist listening to the splendid tones and matchless combinations of the instrument which He has constructed. But when the heart pours forth its melody, the very soul of Deity is moved. It is now the Father listening to the voice of his long-lost child. It is now the harmony of intelligence and affection. Heaven listens with interest to the music of the soul. We observe then:

1. THAT THE HIGHEST CONDITION OF EARTHLY EXISTENCE IS THAT IN WHICH THERE IS MUSIC IN THE SOUL.

1. Because where there is music there is harmony. Music is the combination of complex sounds so blending as to produce a symphony. The soul is in the true and only sense musical when all its emotions and faculties are in perfect concord—when every thought and feeling are tuned to concert-pitch—when love and gratitude, benevolence and heroism are not mere sentiments, hanging loose on the soul's life, principles well tested—virtues alone are harmonies.

2. Because where there is music, there must be culture. The great masters of the musical art were men of exquisite culture. It was not a wild, undisciplined genius that caught the virgin sounds that floated everywhere through the wide expanse and made them expressions of immortal harmonies. A mind keenly sensitive to the slightest discord in musical execution and capable of combining complex sounds into ravishing symphonies, betokens a refinement of culture which cannot be mistaken.

And it is even so with the music of the soul. It is ever and always the result of culture. When the heart is musical, it is a sure evidence that the Holy Spirit has been at work. None but the breath of God can make the æolian harp of the soul give forth its melodies.

3. Because where there is music, there is happiness. The more thoroughly we are brought into sympathy with God, the more perfect the harmonies of the inner life, the more happy must we of necessity be. Happiness is the natural outcome of a musical soul. If the heart be full of gladness, the lips will be full of praise.

4. Because where there is a cultured musical faculty there must be a keen sensitiveness to all discord. There are those who are so keen in their perception of the inharmonious that they cannot endure the slightest discord. You could inflict no greater punishment upon them than to compel them to listen to jarring sounds.

It is even so with souls cultured in heaven's pure melody. If every virtue is a harmony, then every vice is a discord. Where there is music in the soul, where the spiritual nature is so cultured as to appreciate the true and beautiful and good, every form of impiety, every evil expression, either of thought or life, is a harsh and jarring sound. Alas! for those who have no sense of appreciation for divine harmonies. Observe:

II. THAT THIS DEEP INNER HARMONY OF THE SOUL IS ONLY POSSIBLE IN JESUS CHRIST.

The moral harmony of the world was broken by disobedience. The dark hand of Satanic cruelty swept the strings of the sweet harp of Eden and left it shattered. In an evil hour the

music that floated amid the trees of paradise was hushed. The splendid instrument that had been tuned by hand divine and that had hitherto poured forth the most enchanting melodies was hung upon the willows of a darkened conscience. The heart is now a musical instrument out of time and tune. Its harmonies can only be restored by the hand of Him who made it. The new chord of forgiveness must be introduced before it can again become the home of melody. This is effected through the redeeming agency of Jesus Christ. Through faith in Him, "being reconciled to God through His blood," we may yet have "music in the soul."

Observe once more:
I. THAT THIS CONDITION OF INNER HARMONY IS ONE DEVOUTLY TO BE COVETED.

1. Because it is only thus that we can appreciate the harmonies of the universe. The inner interprets the outer. When there is music in the soul the whole universe teems with songful voices.

2. Because it is only thus that we can appreciate the melodies of heaven. The song of the redeemed must be learned on earth. The man of corrupt sympathies and selfish, worldly life shall never strike a single note in that wonderful acclaim. Those who are not developed here beneath the refining influences of a heavenly culture can never add to swell the jubilees of immortality—

What is music here but madness,
Funeral marches for the dead?
Sighs of want and notes of sadness
Roll around each fainting head.
Sweet, oh sweet, the airs of heaven,
Happy hearts those skies enfold,
And with robes of light are given
To each wearer "harps of gold."

I would praise as they are praising,
I would strike a harp of gold;
Shall the songs which they are raising
Be but by an angel told?
Then I heard a soft low breathing,
To my heart the whisper came,
Saying, "Thou may'st join their rapture,
Thou may'st wake their chords of flame."

Hearts are filled with thoughts of heaven,
Hearts to coërite musings dear,
Hearts redeemed and hearts forgiven,
Hearts where love has cast out fear;
Hearts that would be ever raising
Loving thoughts for love untold;
Hearts on Jesus ever gazing,
Hearts of love are harps of gold.

The Life of Faith.

As for the life and walk of faith, they are the most wonderful things in the world. I seem myself to have been climbing a series of mysterious staircases, light as air and yet as solid as granite. I cannot see a single step before me, and often there seems to the eye to be nothing whatsoever to form a foothold for the next step. I look down and wonder how I came where I am, but still I climb on, and he who has brought me so far supplies me with confidence for that which lies before me. High into things invisible the ethereal ladder has borne me, and onward and forward to glory its rounds will yet conduct me. What I have not seen, has often failed me, but what I have not seen, and yet have believed has always held me stably.—Spurgeon.

Our friends of the Presbyterian communion are having a dispute over the ownership and administration of half a million of dollars. The money it seems is an endowment, originally created from lands reserved by the Imperial Government for the benefit of the "Protestant Clergy" in Canada. In 1855 it appears the clergy of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland commuted their claim upon these lands, and funded the proceeds in a common purse called the Temporalities Fund, which could only be used for the purposes of that church. Later the majority of this church joined with another body formerly called "The Free Church" and with the two other Presbyterian denominations, the whole taking the name of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. The majority took with them the funds which they claim to administer "for the benefit of all concerned" under an Act of the Legislature of Quebec. It

seems a number of ministers and other influential people adhered to the Scotch connection, and ignoring the union claimed the administration of the endowment fund—a fundamental condition of the creation of which was, that any minister leaving the Scotch connection should cease to be a beneficiary. Litigation has gone on for some time with a view to determine the legal rights of the rival claimants to the money—but the merits have not been reached—the parties confining their efforts to a "preliminary canter" over technicalities. A fresh action has just been issued at the instance of the Scotch connection party, accompanied with an injunction against the Temporalities Board staying all further administration or disbursement of the Fund, and seeking to have the Quebec Act declared unconstitutional. It appears to many of us who are outside that there may be a serious controversy here for the Courts to determine. This is not a subject for legal skirmishing. Let both parties go straight to the merits. Scotchmen have never been afraid of a fair open fight. Let the case be put on its best legs before the judges, and then "let justice be done though the Heaven shall fall," and "the filthy lucre" go to the rightful owner.—Canadian Spectator.

Scolding the Gospel.

Some ministers are chronic scolds. It is probable that in many cases the liver is at fault, and that they are more to be pitied than blamed. Often physical health may be the means of promoting spiritual health, and many ministers would be more attractive and powerful preachers if blessed with better health. But whatever the cause of the evil may be, a chronic scold in the pulpit is a nuisance.

It would be a blessing if he could see himself as his people see him. In his hands the Gospel becomes the water of Marah rather than the fountain of life.

We have some ministers who try to scold the Gospel at their people. To them we commend the following from the *Examiner & Chronicle*. For fear that the very men who need the paragraph may overlook it, it would be well for their parishioners to cut it out and send it to them. By doing this the afflicted pew may preach the pulpit an excellent and much needed sermon.

Scolding is a poor method of persuading men to do anything, and is particularly a poor method of persuading them to come to Christ. And yet some preachers are always scolding, always belligerent, always giving somebody a rap over the knuckles. We have in mind such a pastor. At first his style of preaching was a new and piquant sensation. People rather liked to be pummeled by his rhetoric. But the novelty wore away after awhile, and soon his grumblings and scoldings were no more regarded than the freaks of a spoiled child.

There are times, it is true when sharp reproof and indignant rebuke are as fitting—times, even, when to speak softly would be unfaithfulness. But as a rule, the reverse is the case. Men are lost, need succor; astray or misled, and need to be pointed to the right way; weary and disconsolate, and need sympathy. The Gospel is a joyful message, the "glad tidings" of help and pardon for all, and hard, angry, bitter words are unfitted to convey the message. On the contrary, the minister should, as an ambassador of Christ, plead with men, "Be ye reconciled with God." Often when we have listened to a preacher have we longed to say to him, My dear brother, you imagine you are preaching the Gospel to bless men; you are mistaken, you are scolding it at them.

This scolding the Gospel at men is the poorest kind of policy, too. Men can be persuaded where they cannot be driven. An appeal to men's good sense and better natures will reach them far easier than threats. At least this is true of all but the hardened few who can be influenced only by arousing their fears. Most men resent a threat or a

scolding, and are only made more stubborn by either. Few men can steel themselves against him who speaks to them gently and lovingly.

And then it ill-befits the dignity of an ambassador to be scolding and fuming at men because they disregard his message. Such conduct only disgraces the ambassador and the power he represents. Rather should he deliver his message with gentleness, yet with firmness, not doubting but that it will be received. If the Gospel is thus offered to men as full of Divine love, told in winning words, clothed in attractive form, it will be welcomed by many a man that will never be removed by scolding the Gospel at him.—Lutheran Evangelist.

Mr. Ruskin on a Picture.

The following is a beautiful exposition of Holman Hunt's picture of the Light of the World:

On the left hand side of the picture is seen the door of the human soul. It is fast barred; its bars and nails are rusty; it is knotted and bound to its stanchions by creeping tendrils of ivy, showing that it has never been opened; a bat hovers about it, and its threshold is overgrown with brambles, nettles, and fruitless corn—the wild grass whereof the mower filleteth not his hands, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom. Christ approaches it in the night time—Christ in his everlasting office of Prophet, Priest, and King. He wears the white robe representing the power of the Spirit upon Him; the jewelled robe and breastplate, representing the sacerdotal investiture; the royal crown of gold, interwoven with the crown of thorns, not dead thorns, but now bearing soft leaves for the healing of the nations.

Now, when Christ enters any human heart he bears with him a two-fold light—the light of conscience which displays past sin, and afterwards the light of peace, the hope of salvation. The lantern carried in Christ's left hand is the light of conscience, its fire is red and fierce; it falls only on the closed door, the weeds that encumber it, and an apple shaken from one of the trees of the orchard; thus marking that the entire awakening of the conscience is not merely to be committed, but to hereditary guilt. This light which proceeds from the head of the figure, on the contrary, is that of the hope of salvation; it springs from the crown of thorns, and though itself sad, subdued, and full of softness, is yet so powerful that it entirely melts into its glow the form.

The Moral Advantages of Saving.

Saving raises the individual morally as well as materially. It teaches him habits of self-denial and self control, and stirs him up to the fullest employment of his powers by giving him an object for exertion. And if it be well for the individual to be industrious and temperate, no less is it a benefit to the State that her people should be of diligent habits and frugal tastes. A sound and sober state of society generally goes with sound and sober government, and a corrupt mode of life with a corrupt administration. Probably the sacrifice of principle to self-indulgence and extravagance in private affairs prepares men for the sacrifice of principle to interest and expediency in public matters. Further, what a moral gain there is in the self-respect and in dependence which saving gives a man. He who, having spent all his own, builds his hopes and expectations on others, is bound to consult their wishes, and must often shape his conduct to please them; but he who is conscious of needing no help but what he can give himself, can afford to act as he himself judges to be right.

If there be one thing on earth which is truly admirable, it is to see God's wisdom blessing an inferiority of natural powers, where they have been honestly, truly and zealously cultivated.—Dr. Arnold.

It is better to be defeated in a good cause than to be successful in a bad one.