

AN EXPERIMENT.

BY ANNIE A. PRESTON.

They were talking of the spiritual life, and James, who is a collegian, said:

"I am a believer, but not a Christian, and I begin to fear that I shall never be one. I attend church and prayer meeting regularly, as I was brought up to do, but as for conviction or conversion or any spiritual life I have had no experience."

"Do you desire to be a Christian, James?" asked his Aunt Hannah.

"I do not object; indeed until quite recently I have been receptive and expected my heart to be touched. Lately I am beginning to suspect that with everyone it is a matter of imagination."

"Doubtless you are very methodical in the use of time," said Aunt Hannah, with seeming irrelevance.

"From necessity, for I can only learn by close application."

"Can you not find a half hour in the morning for Bible reading, meditation and prayer?"

"Oh, yes; I could manage it."

"Very well, then. Be as honest in your use of this half hour as in that of any other throughout your day. Begin with the Gospel of Matthew, meditate upon it honestly, pray reverently. Do not think about your feelings; just make that one of your faithfully followed pursuits."

"For how long?"

"As long as you live."

The young man made a wry face. "Is the prospect so unpleasant? Try it for a month, then we will talk it over again. Meantime do not make a confidant of anyone."

Aunt Hannah did not fail to note that Jamie was a trifle more quiet and thoughtful than usual. He attended all the church services and, she fancied, joined in the singing with unusual fervor. One evening he seemed to surprise himself by repeating, "Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

A few evenings later, in the testimony meeting, Jamie arose and said: "I have been trying an experiment for some time now. Every morning I have given my first half hour to devotion. For a few days I simply gained some knowledge of the Bible and committed a few texts to memory, but soon, when I knelt to pray, I found my heart moved by a strange joy, and as this increased morning by morning I could cry out, 'It is of the Lord! It is the power of the Holy Spirit!' and now my whole being is so pervaded by it that I can no longer keep it to myself. From having no objection to being numbered among the Lord's followers, it is now the greatest desire of my heart."

CHRISTIAN CHEER.

It is an old charge against religion that it makes persons gloomy. A favorite excuse for not becoming a Christian at once has long been the plea that one wants to enjoy life awhile longer.

The follower of Christ knows that true cheer is to be found only in following him. Others may note the shining face and the overflowing life of some while still at a loss for the cause. When the secret is learned, these attractions have great power to win to the Master that makes them possible.

But even in our churches are some-

times to be found strangely mistaken ideas of Christian joy. To mention death is enough to make one considered melancholy and doleful. To refer to sin's certain consequences is thought intolerable. Such subjects must be banished from the pulpit and conversation alike. Only the pleasantest truths and the pleasantest side of truth are to be presented. The other side may be nominally accepted in theory, but always to be held only in silence. The taste of the age, it is said, has changed.

Surely the gospel of good cheer is preached widely and in many different ways in these times. It is fortunate that it should be always provided that it is the gospel. Any other promise of good cheer is a sham and a delusion. But how does Christian cheer differ from pagan thoughts of cheer? The ostrich method of finding the world rosy by shutting one's eyes and stopping one's ears against a whole hemisphere of truth is a poor way of bringing joy into life. It is far enough from the Christian method. The optimism of the world may consist in blinding one eye. Christian optimism has both eyes open. It is joyful, not because of what it refuses to see, but because of what it sees that had remained hidden. Its happiness is not due to forgetfulness of some of life's most serious realities, but is in spite of these, if it may not even be said to be because of them.

Contrast for a moment the false thought of Christian cheer with Paul's constant rejoicing. He did not have to forget the trials that he endured. He did not ignore death and sin and punishment. In dwelling on the love of God he did not turn his back on these facts. It was when he looked at them that he rejoiced most. They were the cloud against which the rainbow shone. He looked on death, and exulted in the victory that had been won; he looked at sin, and marvelled at God's grace.

Men are familiar enough with attempts to be jolly by dismissing unpleasant facts from their thoughts. But in their hearts they know the folly and vanity of the effort. They are hungry for a faith that can face the facts, and still be genuinely happy. There is such a faith. It is the part of the Christian church to illustrate that. But men will see little reason for adopting a life that promises joy, while its advocates give the impression that in their opinion the joy is to be had by silence or by blinking plain truths.—*Christian Endeavor World*.

Pimples and Blotches.

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HIS WAY OF PUTTING IT.

The leader of an adult Bible class tells this story:

"More than two years since one of the men, who is employed in the engine room of a large manufacturing establishment, commenced to tell me of the petty annoyances he was subjected to by his fellow workmen as soon as they learned he had, as they termed it, 'Got religion.' He said they were constantly ridiculing him,

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and jeering at him, and at the same time they spread false and malicious reports about concerning him, and whenever it was necessary for work to be done on a Sunday the foreman always insisted that he should attend to it.

"We had many talks together on the subject, and finally made an agreement that he should pray twice a day for the strength he needed to be faithful, and I promised to pray for him every morning and evening.

"Early in the year the same man came and told me a different story.

"Thank the Lord," he exclaimed; "Things are running my way now. Last week the boss told the men he was tired of hearing them tell lies about me. He said he had been watching them, and then he discharged the foreman and put me in another room."

"You ought to thank God for that," I said.

"So I do," he replied, with great heartiness. "Then after a short interval of silence I saw his face brighten, and turning to me he said: 'Those fellows don't know where I get my pull from, do they?'"

"I could not think of any suitable answer to give him; but afterwards the words of the Psalmist were brought to my remembrance, 'My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.'"—*Plymouth Chimes*.

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It looks queer when the deacon votes with the devil.

FACTS PROVE TRUTH.

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