

"I ALLUS SEES DE BRIGHT SIDE."

During the great war in the United States, a chaplain in the Northern army lay in his tent burning and racked with pain from a Southern fever. Early one morning a dark face peered into his tent. A colored woman entered, and with great tenderness inquired:

"Massa, does you see de bright side ob dis 'ere?"

"No, Nannie," replied the minister, "all seems dark where I am."

"Well, massa, I allus sees de bright side."

"How is that, Nannie? It may be you have not seen any great trouble."

"Mebbe I haben't, massa," she replied.

Then in her broken way she told him that, when a slave in Virginia, all her children had been sold one at a time and taken down South. Then her husband was sold from an auction block and driven off likewise. Last of all, she was sold in a similar manner, and driven off to labor, and, as she expected, to die in the rice-swamps. There she was all alone, not having seen one of her relations for years.

"Mebbe I haben't seen any trouble, massa."

"Well, Nannie, is it always bright with you?"

"Yes allus, massa, allus."

"How is it, Nannie, that you always see the bright side? Do tell me."

"Well, when I sees de dark black cloud risin' and about to come crushin' down upon me"—and then she waved her hand as if she saw the cloud coming down within the tent—"when I sees de dark black cloud coming crushin' down upon me, I just slips round on de udder side, and dar I fins Jesus. Den it's all bright an clar. It's allus bright, massa, where Jesus is."

"Well, Nannie, if you can do that, I ought to do it."

"It 'pears like you orter to, since you is a minister ob Jesus."

Nannie disappeared, and the minister, turning over on his blanket, said: "The Lord is my Shepherd," and now come sickness or health, life or death, burial on the Yazoo Bluff, or among friends at home, all is well."

With the peace of God in his heart, he quietly fell asleep. When he awoke he found himself in a genuine perspiration. The cloud had been lifted from his soul, only the bright side being visible, and the fever had left his body. Nannie's faith had saved him.

Some readers may be inclined to think that such brightness might always dwell in such a heart as Nannie's, and that even in the midst of all her bereavements, because of the weakness of domestic affection among those slaves. This is a great mistake. The colored population of the United States have ever been peculiarized by the strength and depth of their domestic affections. To the slave also, the wife, the husband, and child were the only earthly treasures left for the heart to expand its affections upon. Hence it was that all the soul's earthly sympathies and affections centered in such objects. None could feel bereavement more than the slave parent did. It was of such dark, black clouds as these, coming crushing down in terrible succes-

sion, that Nannie's faith ever found the heavenward side, and always found it "bright and clear."

It was a "bright cloud" that came over the disciples when they were with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, and a voice came to them out of the cloud—the voice of God directing them to Jesus. When "Christ dwells in the heart by faith," the same light which shines in the soul, shines upon all God's providences, however, dark they may appear on their earthward side. It is the privilege and duty of every believer, whatever "fiery trials" he may be called to endure, to say with Paul, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."

Paul's experience went beyond comfort, and took on the aspect of gladness and deep joy and triumph amid his deepest sufferings, "Most gladly," he says, "will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong."—Pentecostal Herald.

ONE HUNDRED MILLION CIGARETTES A DAY IN THE UNITED STATES.

Mr. J. H. Dickason, associate secretary of the National Dry Federation, Pittsburg, Pa., has the following to say about the cigarette menace:

"The American Tobacco Leaf says we are using 100,000,000 cigarettes a day in this country! Three thousand miles, if laid end to end, in an unbroken line. One for every man, woman and child in this country, every day. The year 1918 is a notable one, indeed, and marks the highest achievement in the history of the tobacco trust. Never has it made so many friends; never has it enrolled so many new followers in a given period of time. Fifteen hundred new boys every day enrolling in the cigarette army! It is estimated that fifteen hundred more of adult age join their little brothers in the ranks. Our consumption in 1917 showed, over the year preceding, a gain of more than 7,000,000,000; but the year ending June 30, 1918, promises to show an increase of almost 10,000,000,000 cigarettes—as many as we used altogether only seven years ago. The consumption for one year will total almost if not quite 40,000,000,000 cigarettes." What do you think of this statement?

THE AGONY OF PRAYER.

"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest we enter into temptation."—Luke 22:44-46.

DID JOHN THE BAPTIST BLUNDER?

"Of course John the Baptist blundered when he said of Jesus (as recorded in Matt. 3:12), 'whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.'"

I heard a preacher in an influential church say that, and it hurt me. If this is true, where is the person who shall tell us what we are to believe, and what to disregard, of the Holy Scriptures?—A California Reader.

Jesus himself is the best authority as to unquenchable fire. In the story of the rich man and Lazarus, our Lord is very definite about this, when he speaks of the rich man as being "tormented in this flame" (Luke 16:24). Our Lord also said that "whosoever shall say [to his brother], Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." This is the translation of the Greek word "Gehenna," a place in the valley of Hinnom where human sacrifices were offered. Eleven times our Lord himself speaks this solemn word in warning against the results of sin (Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; and Luke 12:5).

The same word for the eternity of hell is used for the eternity of God. Thus, "the eternal God" is spoken of in Romans 16:26, and "the eternal Spirit" in Hebrews 9:14. The same root word is used again in I. Timothy 1:17, "Unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible." In Mark 3:29 occurs the expression "in danger of eternal damnation;" in Jude 7, "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;" in Matthew 18:8; 25:41, 46 occur the expressions "everlasting fire" and "everlasting punishment." In these passages, where the same Greek word is translated "eternal" or "everlasting," the conclusion cannot be resisted that if there is to be an end to hell, there may also be an end to God's existence, which is unthinkable.—Sunday School Times.

A SATISFYING RELIGION.

There is a religion which is satisfying. I will call your attention to four features of it:

First, a sense of the conscious favor of God. You feel that God loves you, that he holds you in his arms.

Second, the consciousness that he has made you good. If the world pours into your lap all its wealth and honors, you would still be a miserable creature unless you knew that you were good and honest and true and pure.

Third, the consciousness that you are doing your duty to the Lord and to those about you.

Fourth, the assurance that all is going to be well. There may be difficulties in the way now; but if we have the assurance in our hearts that all will be well in the end, it will bring satisfaction.

And this satisfying religion you can have without money and without price on the simple conditions that you go right down and submit yourself to Christ, believe in Him, and trust in Him.—General Booth.