

THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL.

VOLUME I.

ST. JOHN, N. B., SEPTEMBER 26, 1899.

No. 20.

Melody in the Heart.

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There is an abundance of music in the world, but it avails us nothing unless we get some of it into our heart. To make music on an instrument or even with the voice, is bitter mockery if we have only discord and darkness in the soul. The heart is made for melody, and life is maimed and disappointed unless it rises to the freedom and rhythm of a song.

Sometimes melody comes we know not how. We hear the sound thereof, but whence it comes or whither it goes we cannot tell. We only know that, suddenly arousing ourselves, we hear our heart sing. Sometimes we can trace connection between this music and a good deed done; sometimes the heart stands up and sings because a burden has been rolled away; sometimes hope whispers things so sweet that the soul is deluged with a flood of music. But there are times when we are happy and we know not why; happiness has not been in all our thoughts, we have made no conscious change in attitude or choice; but suddenly, as if by magic, the universe takes on new loveliness, old clouds melt and fade away, the road grows smooth beneath our feet, and life becomes a sweet and sacred song.

In such rare hours it seems as though the heart's door, left ajar, has been pushed open by one of the harpers whom John saw harping with their harps, and that the celestial visitor, having excused himself for a season from the choir of heaven, has come to earth to make a mortal's life melodious.

Or, may it not be that the universe is music? If all created things are thoughts of God, why should we not think of the universe as a melody of the Infinite? In that case Mrs. Frowning's words would be strangely true: "God Himself is the best poet, and the realm is His song." The philosophers of the ancient world felt certain that there is a music of the spheres. "There is not the smallest orb which thou beholdest but in his motion like an angel sings, still quiring to the cymbinged cherubims."

And the poets have dared to go even beyond the philosopher's dreams, and have said:

Such harmony is in immortal souls,
But while this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in,
We cannot hear it.

But the Christian can go further still. He knows by experience that, not only does this celestial harmony exist, but that even though shut in by the "muddy vesture of decay," the harmony reports itself to consciousness, and becomes a reality to the earthly life of man.

That there is such a thing as celestial melody in immortal souls is a fact of universal experience. Man, as Tertullian said, is naturally Christian, and all men at some time or other in their life, if even only for an hour, act and live up to the limit of their possibilities, and know what it is to feel in harmony with themselves, the world, and God.

But such luminous and melodious experiences are, for the most of men, occasional and fleeting. The world is full of discords, and these creep inevitably to the heart. Society is sick and burdened, and the shadow of its sorrows falls upon us. Our own nature, complex and myriad-sided, does not work without friction and occasional disorder, and many a week is filled with existence which is confused and jarring and harsh. In a world in which so many eyes are weeping, so many voices sobbing, so many hearts breaking, and in which the trail of the serpent is over us all, music does not spring at all times spontaneously in the Christian heart, and the question presses on us: How can melodious frames of mind be formed?

St. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, gives us suggestions which have been often tested, and never tried in vain: "Look carefully how you

walk: not as unwise, but as wise." Paul sees that if the interior life is to be harmonious, there must be nothing in the conduct to clash with the law of God. It is impossible that the heart shall sing if the tongue and hands and feet are doing things which God's law does not allow. The New Testament, at every turn, comes back to Jesus's central words: "If ye will to do His will, ye shall know." Conduct is the organ of knowledge, and it is also the channel through which flow emotions that are rich and full.

Therefore, "look carefully how you walk." The emotions are not under the control of the will. They flow like rivers from the mountain range of behavior. "Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." If ye know not what it is, we are apt to run against it; but if we know it, we can bring our life into conformity to it. And a life in harmony with the law of God immediately becomes melodic. "But be not drunken with wine wherein is riot, but be filled with the spirit." Heart-melody is spiritual music. Stimulating the senses cannot produce music in the soul. It is only when the bodily senses lie quiet and hushed that the heart becomes conscious of the reach of its powers.

But after we have, done all, we need the cooperation of others. By their assistance we can reach heights unattainable by our own individual efforts. We can put one another in tune. Our conversation may be the means of creating musical moods. If our talk is melodious, the heart readily responds. When we speak one to another not in the cold phrases of criticism, but in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, we incite in ourselves and also in others a spirit kindred to that out of which the world's sweetest songs have all come.

There is a subtle relation between the tongue and the heart, and what the tongue first speaks the heart can be induced to feel. To banish ugly moods one need only begin to speak lovely words. If we would have joy in the heart we must put joy in the face and keep joy in the tones, and our vocabulary must be rich in words which have a joyful sound. Emotions are intensified when given adequate expression. An emotion after it has reached a lofty pitch passes naturally into song. The song of the lips reacts on the heart, and body and soul, thus assisting one another, unite in pouring forth more abundant thanksgiving to God. This is why Paul urges us to speak one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with our heart to the Lord. We create musical moods by employing the themes and phrases of music.

Paul knew from experience how to produce and maintain melody in the heart. When he and Silas were thrown into the Philippin jail they spoke to each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and so great became their joy that at midnight they burst into singing, a sound never before heard in a Macedonian prison. In singing Paul and Silas followed the example of the Lord Himself. As he entered the garden of Gethsemane He calmed His heart and braced His spirit by singing in company with His disciples a favorite Psalm.

If a melody is, as the musicians have told us, a "musical thought," then why should not "God so loved the world" be counted the sweetest of all melodies known to our race? If a melody is "a sweet and agreeable succession of sounds," what more enchanting melody can the heart ever know than the promise which constitute the Lord's gracious gift to the world? If His word abides in us, then are we His disciples, and we carry with us through all life's nights and tempests "melody in the heart."

Nothing narrows and spoils one's disposition more surely and rapidly than setting up as a dictator over other people's consciences. The Scripture commendation is given to him who governs his own spirit.

Fruits of Missions.

When the Rev. James Calvert was asked to give in one sentence a proof of the success of missions, he said: "When I arrived at the Fiji group, my first duty was to bury the hands, arms, feet, and heads of eighty victims whose bodies had been roasted and eaten in a cannibal feast. I lived to see those very cannibals who had taken part in that inhuman feast, gathered about the Lord's table." Truly, the gospel is still the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth!

Keeping in Touch with God.

A missionary from South Africa said he one morning saw a converted African chieftain sitting under a palm-tree, with his Bible open before him.

Every now and then he cast his eyes on his book and read a passage. Then he paused and looked up a little while, and his lips were seen to be in motion. Thus he continued alternately to look down on the Scriptures and turn his eyes towards heaven.

The missionary passed by without disturbing the good man, but after a little while he mentioned to him what he had seen, and asked him why it was that sometimes he looked up. This was the African's reply:

"I look down to the book, and God speaks to me. Then I look up in prayer, and I speak to the Lord. So we keep up in this way a holy talk with each other."

What One Cent Can Do.

A son of one of the chiefs of Burdwan was converted by a single tract. He could not read, but he went to Rangoon, a distance of 250 miles; a missionary's wife taught him to read, and in forty-eight hours he could read the tract through. He took a basket full of tracts, with much difficulty, preached the Gospel at his own home, and was the means of converting hundreds to God. He was a man of influence; the people flocked to hear him; and in one year 1,500 natives were baptized in Arracan as members of the church. And all this through one little tract! That tract cost one cent. Oh, whose cent was it? God only knows. Perhaps it was the mite of some little girl—perhaps the well-earned offering of some little boy. Yet, what a blessing it has been!

"Some People Believe—"

"We have yellow science papers now."—(Prof. W. G. Peckham.)

"Colonel Ingersoll has kept up the spirits of the immoral, and been the patron saint of the suicide."—(J. M. Buckley, D. D.)

"The more horse sense a man has the less he bets on the races."—(Chicago News.)

"To be a Christian means to be happy, for hope for the future is more important than present possessions."—(R. A. Torrey, D. D.)

"If man refused to argue and discuss until he knew what he was talking about, man would cease to be a talkative animal."—(The World, N. Y.)

"The very best man that attains to the greatest holiness on earth has need constantly to strive and pray, if he would keep away evil from his thoughts, passions from his nature."—(Mrs. Henry Wood.)