

"O Come, Let Us Sing."

Singing occupies a large place in the religion of the Bible. The ancient Hebrews were famous singers. Their psalms are grand compositions, and in their public worship singing was a prominent feature. Christianity has always laid great stress on music. The advent of the Saviour of the world was announced to the shepherds by a choir of angels, who accompanied the glad tidings with a song of praise and peace. The apostles sang and insisted on singing as an essential part of public worship. The disciples of our Lord have made the world vocal with spiritual songs throughout all their generations. Every Sabbath is a day of song, and every morning and evening the earth is cheered and blessed by the songs of Christian pilgrims on their way to Zion.

Less is made of sacred music, however, than should be made. Christians consider it a privilege to sing, and those who have good voices and a natural talent for music feel themselves at liberty to sing when they are so disposed. But few Christians think it a duty to sing. They do not place singing in the same category with praying and searching the Scriptures. They do not feel called upon to sing unless their hearts are free to it. Singing is looked upon as an ornament to, rather than an essential part of, public worship. Those who cannot sing well consider themselves released from this part of the service. Those who cannot sing at all are sure that they have neither part nor lot in this matter.

But many who cannot sing may learn to sing, just as one who cannot read may learn to read. Many who sing so indifferently as to produce discord and confusion might learn to sing well if they would devote time and thought to it; and those who cannot sing nor learn to sing can make melody unto the Lord in their hearts.

Let us sing to express our joy. The Christian religion is a religion of joy. Every true Christian knows from experience that the fruit of the Spirit is joy. This joy should find expression. The world should know it.

"Come, ye that love the Lord,
And let your joys be known."

The best expression of Christian joy is a holy song. The language of ordinary speech is not adequate to express the rapture of a soul who knows his sins forgiven and his name written in heaven. Nothing short of exalted poetical strains sung by the human voice can reach the theme. "Is any merry, let him sing psalms."

Let us sing to dispel our gloom. The Christian has his seasons of depression and trouble. This is a time to pray and read the Bible, but it is also a time to sing. A holy song will often dispel the gloom and lift the soul into a clearer atmosphere. When Paul and Silas sang praises in the prison at Philippi we may be sure that the song which echoed through the old prison cheered the hearts of the sufferers and did a world of good besides. Many of the richer strains of Hebrew poetry were born in broken hearts. Many of the noblest hymns of our own admirable collection were composed by afflicted men and women who learned to be singers by the things they suffered.

Let us sing as an act of worship. Are there not some who sing merely as a form, or to display a well cultivated voice, or to give a certain tone to the worship, or to entertain the hearers? This may be well enough in certain places and at certain times; but in the house of God and on the holy Sabbath singing should always be an act of worship. We cannot worship the Lord in song unless our hearts are in tune. One may have the voice and culture of the finest artist, and sing so as to attract and entertain thousands, but if the heart is not in harmony with the sentiment there is no worship in it at all. There is no worship in a musical composition or the tones of a voice. They that worship God must worship him in spirit. If our hearts be in harmony with the Spirit of God, and the song be in harmony with the gospel of his Son, we shall worship him in the beauty of holiness.

Let us sing as a means of instruction. How few think of the value of music as a channel for conveying holy sentiments into the minds of men. "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Every song of Zion should teach some important lesson. Songs which are destitute of sublime and holy sentiment, or in which the psalms have been tortured to fit into eccentric musical composition, or which are rendered with such wretched articulation that they cannot be understood, are all barbarous. But in no other way can a holy sentiment be conveyed so effectually as by a good song from a pure heart.—N. Y. Advocate.

I Seem to Know the Way.

The snow line's reached, and fog's in every breath,
The night below, and at the summit death!
And yet in spite of blinding fog and snow,
And mountain-shaking blast, I seem to know
The way; and crawl or plunge from drift to drift,
Defy the storm, and hope the fog will lift.

ARTHUR D. WILMOT.

"Our Brute Inheritance."

BY REV HENRY M KING.

The late Professor John Fiske's popular phrase, "throwing off the brute inheritance," is open to very serious objections. It is based upon that view of evolution which derives not only man's physical structure but his evil nature from the lower orders of being, and upon that theory of moral science which places the seat of sin in the animal passions or sensuous nature. It is a revival of the Manichæism of the third century. It is scientifically untenable, philosophically shallow and theologically false.

According to this theory, sin arises from the original constitution, the fleshly substance, of our being. It may be a misfortune, but there can attach to it no guilt. But the Word of God and the conscience of man find the seat of sin in the human will, not in the physical or animal nature, but in the moral nature, in the soul itself. Paul's use of the term "flesh" was a convenient method of designating not man's body with its animal instincts and passions and appetites, but his whole being that was not under the control of the Spirit of God. Says Dr. Julius Muller: "The flesh which lusteth against the spirit, denotes man's habit of life and conduct in this present world. This, and not the sensational nature, is the flesh which is to be crucified."

The dualism was not between man's animal nature and his spiritual nature, but between "the old man" and "the new man," between the unrenewed man still remaining in him and the renewed man struggling for the mastery. The major sins of which men are guilty, are not those which are fleshly or sensuous, those which have their manifestations in the animal passions and appetites or have any connection with them whatever. They are ambition, avarice, dishonesty, envy, malice, selfishness, self-righteousness, unbelief, lawlessness or anarchy, hostility against God and disobedience to his holy commandments. These sins do not spring from the physical organism, neither indeed do cruelty, licentiousness, drunkenness and murder. To say that any of these things are our "brute inheritance" is not only a cowardly attempt to throw off personal responsibility and guiltiness, but it is libel on the brute creation. The only tiger in a man's nature is the one he puts there; in other words, is himself, a free, moral, accountable being. There is no inherent evil in the physical nature which God has given us, no *malum physicum*. It is the corrupt or depraved nature of man which makes the body and its members instruments of evil, instead of the temple of the Holy Ghost.—W. Recorder.

The Sacredness of Everyday Life.

We have often been led to wonder at the false estimates placed upon life. In the everyday world it is usually measured by dollars and cents. A man is worth only so much to another as he can secure in the way of cash by using him. Even one's own life often places value upon self in proportion to the number of dollars it can heap together from the general pile. But the Saviour's challenge keeps on ringing down the centuries unanswered: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"—literally, "his own life." The challenge has never been answered, because the "profit" can be only eternal, and the "loss" unmeasurable loss. There is not enough gold locked up in the everlasting hills to measure the value of a single life. Life is a sacred thing, beyond the power of finite hand to fashion or value. Not till we can know the infinite fullness of the triune God can we fully value a single human life, for to save a single soul the Father, Son and Holy Ghost unite their power. And can any finite mind hope ever fully to grasp the infinite? Hence the full value of a life must ever remain only partially known.

And can we, then, divide life up? Does it carry one value through six days of the week, and on the seventh suddenly assume a more sacred worth? It would often seem that we do thus seek practically to divorce life from itself. We fail to realize that "everyday" life is a sacred thing, and that the sanctity which God enjoined upon the Sabbath day is purposed to emphasize this sacredness of all life by calling a halt upon the world's mad race for place, and turning the spirit's gaze upon the great Author of life.

All life is sacred, for "nothing is secret that shall not be manifested, either hid that shall not be known and come abroad," in that day when the Son of Man shall sit upon his throne of judgment. Down in the carpenter shop of Nazareth, day after day the Christ wrought on, as a man fashioning yokes and bows out of materials already fashioned by his divine power. The men of Nazareth doubtless passed and repassed the shop, with never a thought as to who he was, or as to the lesson he was there setting of the sacredness of everyday life. All his toil ended in benefit to some one. It was not emptiness. It was not spending his hours in questionable, if not harmful deeds. It was a sacred service.

If these few thoughts will help the reader to carry this

fact of the working Christ more fully into his everyday life—behind the counter, in the shop, on the street, in the home, wherever he may be—the writer will be glad. Time, place, surroundings, nothing can rob life of its sacredness. All service, everywhere, should be sacred service, and every day is a sacred trust.—Presbyterian Banner.

The Value of the Religious Press.

There will be a waking up one of these days among Christians with reference to the important place and need of what in the past has been slightly referred to as the denominational press. Christian people have been too slow to discern the subtle but persistent effort made by certain types of aggressive dailies to neutralize the idea which would hold that the press has a right to be religious or treat the common problems of life with any serious or reverent spirit. There is an attempt on the part of the Sunday press in particular to appear religious, but it is almost wholly of that "broader" or more "liberal" type, which is insisted on as the only real article, and what is given the reading public is usually of that order which the major portion of the Christian world, unwillingly accepts. As an illustration of what we have said, look at the issue of a recent prominent Sunday journal. Five articles cover this attempt to furnish religious food. One is a defense of Unitarianism, another of Buddhism by a disciple of that cult, and a third an argument in favor of Christian Science, while the other two are side thrusts at the churches and an effort to show that the real creed to-day that is worth anything is the creed of the man who belongs to the big sect outside of the church. Now, if it is not within the province of the secular press to teach religion, why the efforts to be religious? And if within the sphere of the secular press to stand for one kind of a religious cult, why not the province of the religious press to stand for religion in its broader and more spiritual bearing? And why not the legitimate and necessary function of the religious press to be denominational, if it has any specific mission at all? To furnish food and inspiration to people of distinct and definite conviction is by far more important than to create a fog in which to enshroud the world. We know the world to-day could not exist without the secular press, but we are as absolutely sure that the religious press has no less nor important a place in the welfare and progress of this generation, and that when the people in general realize this sufficiently the Christian world will give an adequate patronage to its religious publications.—The Standard.

God's Goodness to Us.

God's parental heart does not wish to grieve us; he must wound us to the very heart, that he may cure his malady. He must take from us what is most dear, lest we love it too much, lest we love it to the prejudice of our love for him. We weep, we despair, we groan in our spirits and we murmur against God; but he leaves us to our sorrow and we are saved; our present grief saves us from an eternal sorrow. He has placed the friends whom he has taken from us in safety, to restore them to us in eternity. He has deprived us of them that he may teach us to love them with a pure love, a love that we may enjoy in his presence forever; he confers a greater blessing than we were capable of desiring.—Fenelon.

"Safe From Temptation."

BY REV. G. CAMPBELL MORGAN.

When you feel you are safest from the attack of Satan, you are most in danger of becoming a victim of his wiles. Show me the man who has had some spiritual experience—call it conversion or second blessing, or anything you please—and who, coming out of that experience, says, "Now I am safe. I have passed the region of temptation; I have gained the mastery;" and I will show you the man in supremest danger. It is the man who clings tenaciously, out of the agonized sense of his own weakness, who is strong; and not the man who stands erect, and says temptation can have no power on him. Satan has no respect for any building, or convention, or religious frame of mind man has ever possessed. The pure soul of Jesus was met with temptation when the divine voice had been heard, and the divine approval declared.—S. L.

'Tis Such a Little Thing.

'Tis such a little thing to walk together
Along life's way,
Some weary feet that march beside us falter
Each passing day.
Dear friends that greet us in the morning vanish
Here it is noon,
And tender voices melt away in silence—
A broken tune.
'Tis such a little while for loving kindness,
Or cold disdain;
To smooth the way for weary feet that falter,
Or chide and blame;
A little while, and it were unavailing
Kind words to say,
For those that walked but yesterday beside us,
Have passed away.

—Selected.