

THE BIBLE AND MUSIC.

By Rev. R. D. Macbeth.

Atheism has no music of its own, and the cheerless halls of infidelity never echo the sound of song. Perhaps it is because of this that we instinctively shrink from the man who despises music. In any case the dictum of our greatest poet appeals to most of us when he says:

That man who hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus,
Let no such man be trusted.

There are many who think Shakespeare too strong in this famous piece of invective, but we all understand that there is in ourselves a willingness to trust one who hums and sings at his work, and an unwillingness to company with the person whose "savage breast" refuses to be soothed by music's peerless charm.

Atheism has no songs because it denies God, and therefore has no reason or capacity for music. The nerves of the higher senses have been atrophied, and the capacity for the exhilaration of song have been chloroformed by unbelief. Hence the fearful silence and the chill despair of her temples. But religion is the very mother of music, and her abodes are ever resonant with singing. Religion is the reflection of heaven in the soul, and heaven is a continuous roll of symphony. Where there is unalloyed and unsullied joy the heart flows over in music and it is easier to sweep back the ocean tide than to repress that swelling wave of song.

The Bible abounds with the idea of music till the reader feels the whole atmosphere tremulous with notes of exultant gladness. There are songs of triumph as when Miriam leads the thanksgiving of the host delivered from the pursuing Egyptians. There are songs of soothing tenderness as when David touches the harpstrings and lifts the shadows from the heavy spirit of Saul. And there are wonderful battle songs which fall upon the ear like the roar of a wintry sea. Every instrument known in that day was pressed into the service of expressing emotion, and one can feel the quivering of Judean hills under the rhythm of the great Processional chanted at the opening of Solomon's temples.

It is little wonder then that the world's greatest musicians have caught their divine afflatus from the Bible. The simple wooing of the Gospel hymn and the mighty splendor of oratorio take their rise in the heart of the matchless book and like a purling stream or a rushing river, gladden and inspire the lives of men. The composers who arouse the noblest passions and the singers who charm the cares of this weary world away are those who learn upon the bosom of God till His heartbeat answers theirs. Then and then only can they thrill the world. Without that they are but artifi-

cial parrots imitating each other in conventional and soulless correctness. From the Bible alone there speeds forth the nightingale, which shall not cease its flight till the heaviest burdened wayfarer who has been cheered by its singing lays down his load, and enters the rest that remains for the people of God.

GOSPEL BENEVOLENCE.

By C. H. Wetherbe.

For a long time I have been opposed to the system of benevolence which is based on the law of tithing. Many Christians have spoken of the blessings which they received by the practice of giving a tenth of their income to benevolent purposes, and, doubtless, special blessings have come to them as a result; but this fact does not necessarily prove that the practice is such as a Christian should pursue. A reader of the Christian Herald recently asked the editor this question: "If one earns an income of fifty dollars a month, and one's living expenses are forty, ought the tithe to be paid on the fifty, or on the balance of ten?" The answer is as follows: "If the living expenses include no business charges, that is, if you have fifty dollars clear of all expenses connected with your occupation, we presume that to be consistent with your principles you should pay on that. There are some cases in which it would be impossible to tithe the whole income, and yours may be one of them. In cases of sickness in the family, for example. Sometimes, with the utmost care and economy, it is impossible to live so as to give a full tithe. Your own conscience must be the guide. You are not under compulsion, as the Jews were, but if your heart is in the system you will practice all the economy you can in order to fulfill your obligation." I contend that the tithing system is no part of the gospel dispensation. It was wholly Jewish, and was in force only under the legalism of Old Testament times. Gospel benevolence is a very different thing in some respects, and it stands upon the principle of one's giving according to his ability and from the exalted motive of love to God and a hearty desire to benefit those who may need pecuniary support. There is a blessed freedom in this way, and it is a freedom which should be used, not for expected blessings in return, but with a purpose to honor God with one's substance. The new is better than the old.

FOR DAILY READING.

- M., Apr., 17. The resurrection strengthens. John 20: 24-29.
T., Apr. 18. It emboldens confession. Act 4: 10-20.
W., Apr. 19. It transforms life. Acts 26: 4-18.
T., Apr. 20. Has power for healing. Acts 3: 12-16.
F., Apr. 21.—Power for keeping. 1 Peter, 1: 1-5.
S., Apr. 22. It encourages. 2 Tim. 2: 8-13. *and*
Sun., Apr. 23. Topic—"The power of His resurrection." Rom. 6: 1-13; Phil. 3: 10. (Easter meeting.

RESURRECTION POWER.

Some Bible Hints.

It is precisely as necessary to play "to the glory of God" as to work for His glory (1 Cor. 10:31).

It is not a favored few whose lives are fallen in pleasant places, but all Christians can say that, in whatever place they may be (Ps. 16:6).

The secret of a glad heart (Ps. 16:9) is a present God (Ps. 16:8). There is no other secret.

In God's presence is fulness of joy. Absolutely no true pleasure is omitted from the Christian life (Ps. 16:11).

Suggestive Thoughts.

God is the Creator; of course he takes an interest in our re-creations.

It is not a re-creation unless it re-creates us—restores our energy, our health of body and of mind.

The test of any sport, and a sufficient test, is this: can I readily think of Jesus as engaging in it with me?

If our sports are to re-create us, we must plan them as carefully and as prayerfully as our work.

A Few Illustrations.

As the best rest of one set of muscles is often to use another set of muscles, so often the best rest from one kind of work is to turn to another and very different kind.

Are our recreations the high lights in our life pictures? There is nothing that the painter so carefully studies as the high lights.

We can learn many lessons from what we may reverently call God's recreations in nature—the colors of flowers, the songs of birds, the splendors of sunsets.

Hearty laughter at one's meals will do more to ward off dyspepsia than all the doctor's pills; it is as good a specific against spiritual dyspepsia.

To Think About.

Am I taking my recreations at hazard?

Am I selfish in my sports, or do I play for God's glory?

What is the unconscious aim of my sports?

A Cluster of Quotations.

Oh, there is a thrill in the joy of doing good. It is the most magnificent recreation to which a man ever puts his hand, his head, or his heart.—Talmage.

John Wesley's mother once wrote to him in college: "Would you judge of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of a pleasure, take this rule: whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things; whatever increases the authority of your body over your mind—that thing to you is sin."

Folded in swaddling clothes lies he who has decked the firmament with stars and the earth with flowers. A manger holds him whom the heavens cannot contain.—Anselm.