

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

A MERRY HEART.

The Christian's heart is merry because his sins are forgiven. Nothing depresses the spirit more than a consciousness of sin. The memory of sin makes the past dark, and the guilt of sin casts a cloud over the future. No one with sin on his soul can look up into the face of his heavenly Father without shame and fear. But a sense of pardon changes all. Jesus said to the paralytic at his feet, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are all forgiven." That announcement alone was almost enough to send currents of life and health throbbing through his veins. It must have been easier after that to say to the afflicted man, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." With sin blotted out the heart began to leap for joy. It is the sense of pardoned sin that makes the heart merry.

The Christian heart is merry because it is a new heart. Some people think they would be happy if they had more money, or if they had a better house to live in, or if they had a higher station in the world. But it is not probable. Take a rattlesnake out of his den in the rocks and put him in a glass cage and he is a rattler still. The change will not eliminate the poison from his fangs. Take a morose, disagreeable man out of his hut and give him a palace to live in and he will be the same sour spirit that he was aforesaid. No changes of season nor place will make any change in his mind. Others think they can make the heart merry by drinking strong drink. No doubt a drink of wine will bring a thrill of pleasurable excitement, but so soon as the effect of the wine has passed off the same old evil will assert itself. It is not wine, nor amusement, nor change of place that the bad spirit needs, but a change of heart. New conditions will not make the heart merry, but a new heart wrought within by the Holy Ghost.

The Christian has a merry heart because he looks on the bright side. There is a bright side to all things except sin. Look on the bright side of life, the bright side of the country, the bright side of the church, the bright side of the world. The world has its bright side. Spring is wonderful with its bounding life. Summer is splendid with its ripening harvests and delicious fruits. Autumn is beautiful with its fading foliage and its myriad tints. Winter is grand with its frost and ice and snow and storm. The Creator made all the seasons for His glory and our enjoyment and improvement. Happy the man who can appreciate the good in the world and in affliction and pain.

A true Christian appreciates common things. What heights and depths of beauty and splendor there are in the everyday, cheap, little things. Under a microscope a grain of sand picked up from the pavement flames with a multitude of brilliant colors as if the diamond and ruby and sapphire and topaz were combined in one common display of beauty. So the trifling things under our feet and in our hands are full of beauty and blessing. Men are forever longing for extraordinary things, uncommon things, big things, costly things, and cheating themselves out of the good of common things. There is scarcely a ray of bliss in the millionaire's entertainment which cost a hundred thousand dollars and is described in all the daily papers of the great cities, but there is a world of joy in today's sunshine of summer beauty which falls on millions of common people.

Moreover, a real Christian will find pleasure in what he has. Why should we mourn over the things we have lost, the things which we see others have, the things which we vainly imagine would cure our unrest? Behold the things we have. Are they not the best things after all? We have life, and the gold of Ophir is not to be compared with life. We have the sight of our eyes, and the topaz of Ethiopia should not be mentioned in comparison with this. We can hear. We have memory, imagination, friends, home and love. Who can boast of anything better? We have the church, the Bible, the songs of Zion, the mercy seat, the forgiveness of sins, the hope of glory, and the best country in the world. Yet some men will find fault. They criticize everything even the Bible. They never see the bright side. They are dark themselves within and without, and they see nothing but darkness wherever they turn.

Faith in God will make the heart merry. Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God." Is that not enough? Ye believe in God. Why be afraid? Why murmur? An eminent physician has said that the fears of the people have greatly increased since the eruption of Mount Pelee and Mount Vesuvius, and the San Francisco earthquake. Why? Because of a lack of faith in God. The psalmist says: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." If we have faith in God we shall not be disturbed though an earthquake like that which shattered the cities on the Pacific coast should shake every city in the land, and financial panic rob us of all our earthly substance. God rules. Think more of God and less of the good things that perish. Look not on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, and the things which are not seen are eternal. "Set your affections on things above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."—Christian Advocate.

CAN'T.

There is such a thing, no doubt, as Cant in things religious. Mr. Pecksniff and Mr. Stiggins are well-known examples in literature of nauseating professions unaccompanied by sincerity. But we make bold to say there is as much Cant in non-religious circles as may be found among adherents of the church. Take, for example, the letters that appear from time to time (mostly anonymous) in public journals, in favor of a wide-open Sunday—a "Rational Sunday" it is called. These letters usually profess to be interested in the poor working man. They want street-cars run for his benefit, "so that he can get fresh air once a week;" so that he can attend some other church "when so disposed;" and so that on Sunday forenoons, afternoons, or evenings, he can lie on the grass under the trees, and look from nature up to nature's God," etc.

Now, as a matter of fact, most of these appeals for the wide-open Sabbath are simply cant of the most hypocritical character. On the one side of this question of the preservation of the Sabbath you will find Sabbath school teachers, ministers, and the men and women of solid religious principle and practice, on the other side you will find Mammon, the Liquor Traffic, and Frivolity.

JACOB'S SERMON.

"Had a good sermon, Jacob?" my wife asked me last night when I came home from church.

"Complete, Rachel," said I.

Rachel was poorly, and couldn't go to meeting much, so she always wanted me to tell her about the sermon and the singing and the people.

"What was the text?"

"I don't think there was any. I didn't hear it."

"What was the subject, then?"

"As near as I can remember, it was me."

"You, Jacob Gay?"

"Yes, ma'am. You think it is a poor subject. I'm sure I thought so too."

"Who preached? Our minister?"

"Well, not exactly. The minister preached from the pulpit, but I could not listen. I was thinking about my sermon. I will tell you about it. You know that young woman at the post-office, Mrs. Hyde's niece. She and I were the first ones at meeting, and we sat by the stove warming. I had seen her a good deal in the post office and at her aunt's when I was there at work. She is a pleasant-looking and a nice, pretty girl. We were talking about the meeting. She was speaking of this one and that one who was converted. There was quite a silence, and then she said, sort of low, and trembling in her voice, and a little pink blush on her cheek, and the tears just a-starting:

"Oh, Mr. Gay, some of us were saying at the prayer meeting last night that we did so want you to be a Christian."

"Her cheeks flushed redder and the tears fell. I know she felt it, and it was a cross to say it. I never was so taken back in my life."

"Why," I said, "my child, I have been a member of the church forty years."

"My tears came then, and I guess my cheeks would have been redder than hers if they weren't so tanned."

"Do excuse me, Mr. Gay," she said: "excuse me for hurting your feelings, but I didn't know you were a Christian. I never see you at prayer meetings or Sabbath school, and I never notice you at communion. I'm sorry I've hurt your feelings."

"Tut, tut, child," I answered. "No harm done. I'm a member, as I said; but I haven't worked at it much, I'll allow. I made the excuse to myself and other folks that Rachel was poorly and needed me to stay with her; but I'm afraid the Lord wouldn't accept it."

"Just then the people began to come, and I took my seat; but the looks and words of that young woman went to my heart. I couldn't think of anything else. They preached to me all the meeting time. To think that some of the young people in Wharton who didn't know I was a member, were concerned for the old man! I said to myself, by way of application, 'Jacob Gay, you've been a silent partner long enough. It is time you woke up and worked for the Lord; time to let your light so shine that the young folks can see it.'"

Here on earth we are as soldiers fighting in a foreign land. Let us die like soldiers, with submission, with courage, with a heroic joy. "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." And from the bosom of Eternity there shines for us celestial guiding stars.—Carlyle.