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VOICES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE.

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There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification—I. Cor. xiv., 10.

WHEN we think of the "gamut" with its four full tones and its three half-tones, and when we realize that from this there radiate the harmonies that fill the sky, that crowd the ear, that vibrate upon the soul, it is almost impossible to believe that seven distinct notes may be so keyed and arranged as to include everything that we know of sound. And yet, every chord in music, every cadence in the human voice, every sound in Nature comes within the compass of the gamut; and whether it be the roar of the waterfall, the crash of the thunder, the boom of the breakers, or the song of the birds, the whisper of the winds, the gurgle of the brook; whether it be the peal of the organ, the blast of the trumpet, the beat of the drum, or the murmur of the harp, the tinkle of the bell, the breathings of the violin; whether it be the shout of command, the wail of agony, the cry of despair, or the song of victory, the ripple of laughter, the cooing of childhood; each one can be located and harmonized, and its place and relations accurately determined. And each voice has its significance. In the organ of Nature's vast cathedral there are no dummy pipes or ornamental stops. Everything speaks, and it speaks for a purpose, and though the exact meaning of each voice may not be quite clear to us, yet, as the text says: "None of them is without signification."

And if this is true of the sounds and harmonies of Nature, how much more true must it be of human life? If the patter of the rain, the rustle of the leaves, the splash of the sea are voices articu-

See to it, therefore, that you choose your legislators for their strong faith in the living God and in the future of humanity. Put your conscience into your choice. Be not deceived by brilliant gifts. Never surrender your power to the greed of place and pelf. Get men to legislate who believe in God and are resolved to battle against all evil, to suppress intemperance and cruelty and injustice, to aid the weak, defend the imperilled, and help forward the kingdom of God on the earth.

But remember, too, that the safety and progress of states and the widening welfare of mankind depend upon the heroic service of individual citizens, on men and women who, through faith in God, are masters of themselves, patient with suffering and failure, but impatient at wrong, iniquity, and dishonor, and who give to the world the distinctive influence of a pure Christian character and the consecrated service of a noble Christian life.

JESUS THE JOY-BRINGER.

By REV. THEO. L. CUYLER, D. D.

Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.—St. John xx., 20.

TEN men—perhaps others with them—are assembled on a certain night in an upper room in Jerusalem. If that room were still in existence, it might well be considered the most sacred apartment on the globe. Its doors are shut that night, for enemies are about. The doors open once to admit two brethren, who come to them with cheering news from Emmaus. Still they feel sad and lonesome; some are utterly cast down by unbelief. Did the door open again? Or was it through the closed doors by a miracle that the longed-for guest enters among them? No matter which way he comes. He is here! In actual flesh and blood, for He challenges them to “handle” His scarred form, that they may be sure He is not a mere apparition! It is too good to be true. They break out into such delight that it quite upsets their faith, for Luke tells us that “they believed not for joy, and wondered.” But He sits down among them, and eats of their fish and honeycomb in the old familiar manner. He pronounces upon them His benediction. He breathes upon them fresh spiritual power, after their late demoralizing panic and desertion. “Then were the disciples *glad*

when they saw their Lord." His predictions are verified. They are no longer bereaved. Jesus is among them, the same Divine friend, teacher, comforter and redeemer.

I love to study this scene. Through it, as through a window, shines in the inspiring truth that Jesus is a *Joy-Bringer*. There is no greater mistake than to present Christ, our elder brother, to mankind, in too somber an aspect, as the Man of Sorrows, and mainly as the righteous condemner of sin. Rather should we present Him as both loathing sin and loving the sinner. Just turn to the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, and read the passage which He expounded Himself in Nazareth's synagogue, as the inspired description of His own character and mission. To preach good tidings to the meek, and liberty to the captive, to bind up the broken-hearted, to comfort all that mourn, and to give the oil of joy for sorrow—this was His errand from the skies. He came into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. The cross brought agony to Jesus; but joy to the universe.

In how many ways is our Saviour a bringer of gladness! Every sinner as soon as he feels the sting of his guilt becomes miserable. That sting he cannot extract with his own hand, and while it remains it rankles. Nothing cuts and kills like sin. No wretchedness is so wretched as that of a soul convicted by God's Spirit. There is a story of a rich Eastern master whose most skillful artisan began to fall off in his work. The master spoke to his steward about it. The steward replied: "It is no wonder that the poor fellow cannot turn out good work. His hands tremble so that he cannot manage his tools; his eyes are so full of tears often that he cannot see what he is about. A heavy debt is pressing him, so that he even drinks to drown his sorrow. While that debt remains, you need not expect him to produce any more good work." "Then," replied the generous master, "go and tell him that his debt is paid." From that hour the artisan was a changed man. His tears were dried and he plied his tools with a happy heart; his work was done better than ever before.

A guilty soul can never work for God, or enjoy any lightness, until its terrible debt to the Divine justice is paid, and the condemnation of sin is lifted off. The atoning blood of Jesus pays the debt of every penitent sinner that trusts in Him. When Christ

comes into the heart, light and joy enter like the rays of the morning.

The Saviour smiles. Upon my soul
New tides of joy tumultuous roll ;
His voice proclaims my pardon found,
Seraphic transport wings the sound.

Earth has a joy unknown to heaven—
The new-born peace of sins forgiven ;
Tears of such pure and deep delight,
Ye angels never dimmed your sight.

It is not only the new convert to whom Jesus is a joy-bringer. He is the best of comforters to every believer in his troubles. Ah ! my brother, there is an "upper room," an *inner* chamber, of which you and I surrender the key only to the dearest friend. It is the heart's sanctum, with which the stranger intermeddleth not. Sometimes that inner room becomes dark, and dreary, and lonesome. The lights burn low, and the air is heavy. One enters through the closed doors. How sweetly sounds His voice of love : "Peace be unto you !" He shows us the scars of His sacrifice for us. He opens to us the casket of His precious promises. At such times of communion with Jesus we do not give Him "the honeycomb." He gives it unto us, and it drops sweetness on our bruised spirit. His consolations fill the room with their choice perfume. We lie in His arms as the beloved disciple did ; His right hand is under our head, and His left hand doth embrace us. We can say, with happy assurance : "My beloved is mine, and I am His. Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none on earth whom I desire besides Thee." There is no sweeter, stronger fellowship with Jesus than to bring our troubles to Him. He lifts them off, and grants the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Then are we *glad* when we see our Lord.

The more we have of Christ's presence, the more serenely peaceful we become. An empty heart is always wretched. Riches, fame, worldly success, never fill the inner chamber of an immortal being. After counting them up the sad heart asks : "Is this *all* ?" But the Christian inventories his treasures, and exclaims : "Christ is mine ! I am an heir to the inheritance that never fadeth away ! Joy is simply love looking at its treasures. A Christian's joy is in clasping Christ and looking forward to the hour when He shall be like Him, and see Him as He is.

The glory of heaven will be in seeing Jesus. "A little while and ye shall see Me, because I go unto My Father." "Where I am ye shall be also." When we return home after a long absence, it is not the house, or the furniture, or fireside that awaken our joy, it is meeting the loved ones. If they have gone, every forsaken room or empty chair is in agony. So in our Father's house it will not be the pearl gate or the streets of gold that will make us happy. But oh! how transcendently glad will we be when we *see our Lord!* If we ever weep in heaven, it will be tears of joy at meeting Jesus. Perhaps in that "upper room," also, He may show unto us His hands and His side, and we may cry out, with happy Thomas: "My Lord, and my God!"

THE USES OF COMMERCE.

I REGARD trade as a religious institution; selfish only within those limits in which selfishness loses every base and ignoble characteristic, and exists in harmonious union with fraternal impulse. I look upon the personal gain resulting from commercial pursuits as only an accident, but in no sense representative of the great design. God never brought such a vast system of complex force into the world to minister only to the person, to the individual. The power that builds cities, makes government a necessity, begets and nurtures civilization, serves as the pioneer and then the supporter of Christianity, brings that knowledge of men to men, upon which, when perfected, as a statue upon a pedestal, the recognition of universal brotherhood shall stand,—such a force, I say, is so vast and potential in its influence that it forbids the thought that God brought it forth only to benefit the direct agents of it. No; commerce is one of those great powers in the hand of God destined to serve, enrich and elevate, not one man in a community, not a group of men in any city, nor any particular nation, but the whole community, every city in the nation, and every nation on the face of the earth. It is that mighty lever, having the Divine purpose for its fulcrum and the Divine hand to supply the necessary weight, by which the entire world is to be, and is in very fact being, lifted to a higher level of conception and experience.—
Murray.