

Practical Papers.

PULPIT TALK.—No. II.

CHRISTIAN JOY.



What respect is Christian Joy an object of desire?

1. Because it is in accordance with the soundest philosophy. Joy is one of the primitive elements of our being. All healthy action, both of mind and body, is joy-giving. Pleasure is intended to be interwoven with the most ordinary instincts and appetites of human life; eating and drinking, for instance. Medical men tell us that, if our daily food be taken without relish, it lacks one of the principal constituents of a healthy nutrition. And the same remark applies either more or less to every conceivable condition of mind or body. Sorrow destroys the appetite, dries the bones, and prostrates the man. But joy is strength. The late venerable Thomas Jackson, when in his 82nd year, stated at a public meeting in Manchester, that he had not had a single melancholy hour in his life. Joy "doeth good like a medicine." It gives buoyancy to life, relish to duty, success to labour, and sunshine to everything.

If then joy is so intimately connected with bodily and mental well being, can we suppose that the soul, which is the seat of the emotions, the centre of power, the essence of the man,—that the soul in its noblest exercises is intended to be a stranger to its influence? Can we suppose that joy, which is man's strength in everything else, is man's weakness in religion? Can we suppose that joy, which gives health to the body, sparkle to the eye, nerve to the will, attraction to success, has nothing to do with the toils and triumphs of the soul? Do a healthy body and a healthy mind move in and feed upon an atmosphere of joy, and a healthy soul move in and feed upon an atmosphere of sorrow? No, it does not. The notion is philosophically unsound. Joy is as normal to the soul, as it is to the body. Natural joy is the strength of the one, the "joy of the Lord" is the strength of the other. My brother, sorrow will unstring the muscles and nerves of thy Christian character.