

Our Young People

JOY.

Topic for April 22.—"Serving God Joyously."—Matt. 22: 1-14.

"That your joy might be full."

Sunward.

One of the younger members may recite this at the meeting.

What though my lot is in a lonely place,

And my spirit behind the bars?

All the long day I may look at the sun,

And at night look out at the stars.

Dear God! let me grow from day to day,

Clinging and sunny and bright!

Though planted in shade, Thy window is near,

And my leaves may turn to the light.

—Mary Mapes Dodge.

Joyous Service.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CULLER, D.D.

There are two ways of serving Jesus Christ. The one is the service of a bondman, the other is the service of a lover; the one is a drudgery, the other is a delight. Notice the difference between persons who work only for money-pay, and those who work for the love of what they are doing, or of those for whom they labor. The hireling looks at his watch, and says, "It is six o'clock; my day's toil is done"; and he flings down his tools and hastens homeward. But an enthusiastic artist is so enamored with his picture that he is willing to sit till midnight at his easel. Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.

It is a sin and a shame for a Christian to be wretched. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice," exclaimed an old scarred and storm-beaten hero who was very soon to be a martyr. There was not a happier soul than his in all Rome. Would you be a happy Christian? Get the heart full of Jesus. Would you be a thorough and effective Christian? Get the heart full of Jesus. Put your love of your Saviour so deep down that it shall underlie all other affections—so deep that no frost of unbelief can freeze it—so deep that the devil cannot get at it, or the daily frictions of life wear it out. Your heart must be in your religion, and your religion in your heart, or else the service of your Master will be toil and task-work.

Jesus Christ asks nothing of us, and is pleased with nothing from us, that is not rendered with the "willing mind" of grateful affection. Love rejoiceth to be irksome for Him who bore the bitter agonies of the cross for us. Love never reluctantly murmurs, "Must I do this? Must I give that money? Must I submit to that sacrifice?" Rather does it look up into His sweet, divine face, and say, "Master, may I do this for Thee?" In my humble opinion no man is fit to be a minister who ever wants anybody else to preach for him as long as he can do it himself; he would as soon ask anybody to eat a dish of strawberries for him.

There must be something wrong with you, my friend, if you are pretending to work for Jesus, and yet find no delight in it. How can you possess Jesus Christ in your heart and not be happy over it? Joy is love looking at its treasures. A Christian's joy is in possessing Christ, and in the expectation of seeing Him, and being with Him forever; and every service you render Him in doing good to other people and in saving souls will help to fill up your jewel-casket. If you say to me, "I have not enjoyed my religion much lately," then I would suggest to you that probably you have not had much religion to enjoy.

Christ's smile on His faithful, loving servants is a constant sunshine. Deserters, shirkers, and backsliders never have Him; they doom themselves to an Arctic midnight. The love of Jesus streaming down into your soul creates heat, and that heat generates spiritual power. The love of Jesus kindles joy. Close contact with Christ and constant work for Christ will keep your heart up to a red glow. That is the charm of an Endeavor meeting in a time of revival. It becomes like an aviary of singing birds; every one has a new song in his or her mouth.

I know of some aqueish Christians that hardly have strength enough to shake. They live down in the swampy regions where fever and ague prevails, and the air is loaded with malaria. The water is bad, it comes out of the puddles worldliness; the sewerage is bad and gets clogged up with sin; the atmosphere is bad, and chokes prayer, and takes the very life out of a Christian. Move out! Get back to your duty! Take a good dose of Bible truth every morning. Lay hold of your work again, and come out into the blessed sunshine of Christ's countenance. Then once more, with a clean conscience and a good appetite, you will take a perfect delight in serving your Saviour. The joy of your Lord will be your strength.

Arise!

Every time a man passes from resentment to forgiveness, from cruelty to compassion, from hardness to tenderness, from indifference to carefulness, from selfishness to honesty, from honesty to generosity, from generosity to love—a resurrection, the bursting of a fresh bud of life out of the grave of evil, gladdens the eye of the Father watching His children.

"Awake, then, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." As the harvest rises from the wintry earth, so rise thou up from the trials of this world, a full ear in the harvest of Him who sowed thee in the

soil, that thou mightest rise above it. As the summer rises from the winter, so rise thou from the cares of eating and drinking and clothing, into the fearless sunshine of confidence in the Father. As the morning rises out of the night, so rise thou from the darkness of ignorance to do the will of God in the daylight; and as a man feels that he is himself when he awakes from the troubled and grotesque visions of the night into the glory of the sunrise, even so wilt thou feel that, when first thou knowest what thy life, the gladness of thy being, is. As from painful tossing in disease, rise into the health of well-being. As from the awful embrace of thy own dead body, burst into thy spiritual body. Arise thou, responsive to the indwelling wish of the Father, even as thy body will respond to thy indwelling soul.—George Macdonald.

How to Have a Joyous Meeting.

In order to get every one to looking on the "joy" side of Christian service, announce that the song service will consist of the most joyful songs in the book, suggested by the members, to be followed with a season of joyful prayer—all thanksgiving and praise—and joyous testimonies, each one telling the brightest experience in his whole Christian life. Pass around slips of paper on which invite the members to write the most joyful Christian work of which they can think, with one reason for thinking it so. Give two minutes for free expressions as to how we show our joy in service, in face tone, touch, manner. Give another period to having named some of the chief joys which we look forward in Christ's service in this life, and in the life to come.

Sp' r'ling for Jesus.

"O Lord! help us to sparkle all over for Jesus," was the prayer of a native Christian in Ceylon.

For Daily Reading.

Mon., Apr. 16.—The joy of Christ. Heb. 12: 1-8

Tues., Apr. 17.—Wearing the garment of praise, Isa. 61: 1-3

Wed., Apr. 18.—Gladness in religion, Ps. 93

Thurs., Apr. 19.—Making another joyful, Luke 2: 1-10

Fri., Apr. 20.—God's joy in us, Eph. 1: 1-14

Sat., Apr. 21.—Happiness in Christ, Phil. 3: 1-8

Sun., Apr. 22.—Topic. Serving God joyously

Matt. 21: 1-14

Hints for Talks and Testimonies.

How do we know that God means that service shall give joy?

What is the reason for the common feeling that Christian service is not joyous?

Why must service be joyous to be acceptable to God?

How can that be joyous that calls for self-sacrifice?

What is one to do when not finding joy in service?

What is the difference between true Christian joy and occasional happy moods?

Why does not the joy of service depend on the particular work assigned us?

What is there in the conditions of God's service to make it joyous?

What is there about the results of God's service that gives cause for joy?

How may one win others to Christ by showing joy to God's service?