

THE JOY OF BEING IN CHRIST.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER

The Bible description of a true Christian is a man "in Christ." This was Paul's description of himself. That branch of Concord grapes before me did not come off of the vine; it really came out of it, for it was originated in the vine, and was a part and parcel of it. Union with Christ is the beginning, the source, the support, and the very essence of the Christian life. There are several blessings that flow from this delightful union.

The first is deliverance from condemnation. In Noah's Ark there was no deluge; in Christ Jesus we have deliverance from the deadly curse which sin entails. "All bridges break down but this one," said Bunsen: this one carries us safely over from the domain of guilt and death into the life that never ends. The next blessing is assurance. The Master promised "because I live ye shall live also, and the true believer responds it is not I but Christ that liveth in me. Every branch of an apple-tree might say that The whole tree liveth in me for the very trunk is pledged to furnish me the sustaining sap. The chief reason why many church members become dry, stunted and barren, is that they are rather tied on to a church than drawing their vital forces out of Christ. The branches that does not abide in the Vine is cast forth and withered.

"What if after all your praying and trusting your soul should be lost forever? inquired a raw young minister of an old Scottish peasant woman who had been drawing her soul-life out of Christ for forty years. "And is that all the length ye hae got, my mon?" she replied. "I can only say, sir, that God would lose more than I would, for poor old Nannie would only lose her soul, and that wad be a sair loss; but God would lose His character for truth, and then the world would gae to ruin. I hang on His promises, and God wad na dare to break His promises." The simple-hearted old saint knew whom she believed, and that He was able to keep all that was committed to Him.

Peace is another blessing—the peace that passeth all comprehension. "My peace I give unto you." When this peace comes, the soul's desire is to desire nothing; its will is to wish nothing; its anxiety is to care for nothing out side of Christ.

Not many do attain to this ideal of the Christian life, but those who reach up the most nearly to it are the most serene and joyous under all weathers. Fullness of spirit supply also is assured to all who are in Christ. The Great Apostle told his Colossian brethren "ye are complete in Him." He did not mean that they did not need to grow in grace. He must have referred to the entire sufficiency of provision for all their spiritual needs. Everything they required Christ had provided. An excellent reading of the text is "ye are filled full in Christ." No soul need starve while the granary of grace is open to him; no soul need lack the water of life while the infinite reservoir holds it.

It is no presumptuous delusion for such a joyous believer to cry out "thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ!" This is the battle-cry of faith, and it will be the final shout as the victory comes in among the crowned conquerors before the throne. Good friend, are you in Christ? Then carry the joy of it in your countenance, prove the strength of it by your resistance of temptation, convert others to Christ by making your religion so bright and so attractive that they shall long to have it also. On this wintry night no shivering traveller would care to enter my house unless he expected to find a fire. The world will never be attracted into the church while its atmosphere is down to zero. The more thoroughly, heartily, completely we are "in Christ" ourselves, the more we shall do to bring others in.

CURIOUS CUSTOMS OF SAVAGES.

Sir John Lubbock, in a lecture which he delivered a short time ago, on the customs and ideas of savages, gave a number of very humorous instances of native habits. For instance, one Australian race could not understand the yoking of oxen, taking the horns for spears in the head, and the animals for wives of their owner, because they carried the baggage. Some races did not know the mode of showing affection by kissing. Among the Esquimaux it was considered a compliment to pull a man's nose, and in some tribes it was deemed a gracious salute to apply the thumb to the nose. The Chinese held it a thoughtful action to present an ailing relative with a coffin. The "medicine man" among