

Pastor and People.

(For the Presbyterian)

THE NATURE AND PROPRIETY OF CHRISTIAN JOY.

BY E. W. W., WATERBURY, Vt.

If I were to give a definition of joy in the general, I should say that it is a pleasurable emotion occasioned by the possession, or acquisition, or even the expectation of anything which we may deem to be desirable or good. But living instances cited may be more intelligible than verbal definitions. I shall be most unmistakably understood when I say that this feeling is the one which is experienced by the child when he obtains the newly purchased toy, by the school-boy when he wins the prize at the examination; by the youth when the last day of his apprenticeship is served and he emerges into liberty, untrammelled by indentures; by the merchant when, in the transactions of trade, he nets a large and unexpected profit; by the soldier when, in the hard fought battle, he obtains the victory, and captures the standard, the cannon, and the position of the foe. Now Christian joy differs from all these in this, that it is a holy feeling excited by spiritual objects. When the gospel comes to a man it finds him in the possession of an emotional nature. In its operations upon him it does not destroy this, nor add to it, nor take from it; it simply sanctifies it for holy purposes, so that it can be influenced by the spiritual and the divine. The exaltation of the worldling at the acquisition of large property, and the rejoicing of the penitent believer when he has found the pearl of great price, both have their seat in man's emotional nature; the difference being that in the case of the one there is nothing carnal or earthly in the feeling—it is a holy feeling, excited by a spiritual object. Hence we find joy enumerated by the Apostle Paul among the fruits of the Spirit; he places it second—"Now the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." It is of the very essence, indeed, of true religion, "for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Now, mark, the faculty or power of rejoicing is not a new one, created for the purpose, and added to our humanity; it is the old power or faculty which is sanctified by the spirit of holiness and directed to worthy and to religious ends.

There are different degrees of joy, and it may be felt variously by different persons, and even by the same individual at different times. There is none of our emotions that is capable of greater excess, or of rising to a greater height. Joy is the most demonstrative emotion of human nature. In the case of love, although the fires may burn fiercely, they do not crackle and roar so noisily as in the conflagration of joy. In the case of fear the feeling is paralyzing rather than animating. Sometimes it seals the lips and blanches the cheek. Anger, I know, may be boisterous and obtrusive enough, but though it may be possible to be mad with rage, it is also possible to be wild with joy. Sorrow is the most unsocial of our emotions; it shuns the crowd, it seeks not sympathy from others. Sorrow is like the stricken deer, which leaves the herd and seeks the depths of the thicket that it may die there alone and unsees; or like Mary stealing to the sepulchre whilst respectful observation whispers, "She goeth to the grave to weep there." I know we find that sorrow sometimes makes a public proclamation of its griefs, but even then the peals are muffled, and sad and slow is the tolling of the bell. Not so, however, when a national joy excites a whole people, when merry peals come chattering from a thousand bellies, when the day winds up with feast and song, and when at night gay illuminations set the city ablaze, and dazzling fireworks appear almost to pale the very stars of heaven. It is scarcely necessary for me to remark here that Christian joy will never be allowed to run to such excess, as I have described the emotion capable of. The right direction of high religious feeling is in virtuous action. The Christian who has experienced this joy will not content himself with mere sentiment; he will turn his feelings into action. Action will at once express and temper his emotions. Piety in dutiful action is piety in its highest and safest state. Sighs of sorrow and shouts of rapture are verily worse than worthless, unless they pass into dutiful deeds and consolidate the character. Years, and sorrows, and joys should invigorate the moral heart, as rain strengthens the oak.

Now, we see there is no emotion that is so reacted upon by sympathy as joy, and none that is capable of a greater augmentation. And whatever augmentation it is capable of, from the operations of the social principle and of sympathy, may be experienced by the church as well as by the world. It is impossible for a congregation of Christians to rejoice together as well as a party of politicians, and to have the individual joy in each case intensified

by sympathy through thus rejoicing together. As the crowd of reapers rejoice when the last winn of the precious grain is safely gathered in for the coming winter—they leap, and shout, and cry, "harvest home!" so with the spiritual husbandry, when the field of this world is white unto harvest, and the gospel labourers go forth in great numbers, and when souls by thousands are gathered into the garner of God. As an army rejoices together in the hour of victory, as with shouts louder than the roar of the battle, they seize upon the position of the enemy, and see the foe fly before them in broken squadrons and in scattered columns; so it is with the militant host of God's elect when they follow Him who goes forth conquering and to conquer, who has a name written on His vesture and on His thigh, "King of kings and Lord of Lords." "They joy before Thee," says the prophet, "according to the joy of harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil."

It is a befitting thing for the Christian to rejoice. Rejoicing is enjoined upon us by St. Paul in the way of a duty—a duty which he, in writing to the Thessalonians, classes with the duties of prayer and thanksgivings, "Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks." And it is not under the new dispensation only that this duty is enjoined; it was also enjoined under the old. The psalmist in his day said, "Rejoice in the Lord, for praise is comely for the upright." Listen to the prophet Habakkuk:

"What though no flowers the fig tree clothe,
Though vines their fruit deny,
The labour of the olive fall,
And fields no meat supply
Though from the fold, with sad surprise,
My flock cut off I see,
Though famine pine in empty stalls,
Where herds were wont to be?
Yet in the Lord will I be glad,
And glory in His love;
In Him will I joy, who will the God
Of my salvation prove."

But some may object that it is wrong to command an emotion. Some may complain and say our emotions are not under the control of the will; why should we be commanded to rejoice when our emotions are as involuntary as the circulation of the blood itself? Now there is some show of reason in this objection, for there is a sense in which it is true that the emotions are not under the control of the will. We cannot love when we like; we cannot hate when we like; we cannot fear at the mere bidding of our will; we cannot rejoice at the mere exercise of a volition. For instance, if I tell you to take a walk to-morrow at one o'clock, I tell you to do something that is under the control of your will; you can do it, if the Lord spare you. But if I tell you to rejoice to-morrow at two o'clock, to love at three, to hate at four, to admire at six, I tell you to do something which is beyond the mere control of your will, if, at the same time, I do not place objects before the mind calculated to excite these emotions. If I tell you to rejoice when there is nothing to rejoice over, you cannot obey. But if I show you the masterpiece in painting of some great artist, and whilst you are admiring it, I tell you to admire, you can and will do so. If I take you to Niagara Falls, and whilst you gaze upon its towering cataract and listen to the thunder of its dash, and behold masses of mountain rising from its silver margin—if I take you there and show you these, and tell you to admire, you can and will admire, some of you to rapture and ecstasy. Now, although the will has not power over the emotions, yet the will has power over the faculty of attention, and when our emotions are commanded in the Bible it just means that we are to direct our attention to the objects which are calculated to excite these emotions; and then the feeling will necessarily and naturally be called forth. We are to reflect upon our position as children of God, as heirs of glory; we are to think of the great things which God hath done for us, of all that He has wrought in us, of our past blessings, of our present mercies, of the future felicities which are promised us, and of which we are the heirs. We are to think of our vital union with Jesus, that we are in Christ, that He is in us, our wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, and that reciprocally we have Christ in us the hope of glory. And when you think of all these things, then the Christian teacher can tell you, and may tell you, to rejoice, and you can under these circumstances obey.

There is no feeling more befitting the Christian than the feeling of joy.

"Why should the children of a king
Go mourning all their days

Have we not occasion for joy in the circumstance to which I have just referred? And yet there are many, alas! who are members of Christian churches whose piety is morbid, and melancholy, and unrejoicing, and austere. Just glance for a moment at some of these unrejoicing Christians. There is the doleful Christian, his face lengthened with grief, is the very index of sorrow. His is the winter of religious experience, in which you have gloom and fog and cloud; but no gladness, no sunshine, nor is the singing of birds come, nor the voice of the turtle heard in the land. I know that the most rejoicing Christians have their trials, but surely the most tried Christians have their joys; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. But with these professors it is always night, and morning never comes, and rejoicing is never alternated with weeping. Far be it from us to speak slightly of the trials of God's people. Far be it from us to refuse our sympathy to those of our brethren who are suffering affliction and sorrow. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith the Lord," is the divine injunction which is laid upon us, and which, according to the best of our ability and opportunity, we try, we trust, by the help of God's grace, to fulfil. At the same time we deem it our duty to discriminate between real trials and those which are made trials of by a complaining piety—between actual trials and trials which are created by the imagination.

Cross question some of these complaining Christians about their constantly-talked-of trials, and you will find in some cases

that with them a very little inconvenience and mis-adventure is dignified with the great big name of a trial. Hills which a mere child in Christianity might jump over they deem Alps, which a Hannibal in piety could scarcely scale. Citadels of which possession might easily be taken if they had courage, are in their estimation cities walled up to heaven and impregnable; and contemptible adventures, a thousand of whom might be put to flight by a man of courageous piety, are with them the giants, the sons of Anak, that have come of the giants. We read of the capture of the Ishtar in Babylon, that they "wept when they remembered Zion;" but these persons of whom I now speak, cannot sing the Lord's song in a land of promise; they weep, and hang their harps upon the willows whilst they sit by Siloah's brook, which flows hard by the oracle of God.

My dear readers, are you among the complaining Christians? are you some of these unnecessarily doleful persons? If so, "give to the winds thy fears." I have good news for you. The Lord has come to appoint unto you "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Let it be known that religion does not require of us austerity and gloom—that it is a bright, a happy, a cheerful thing. The church is not a widow, draped in black, and crowned with weils, but a bride, leaning on her beloved, with the orange blossoms upon her brow; she is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Let us, however, discriminate between foolish levity and Christian joy. The man full of jokes and jests and perpetual merriment is not very beautiful of a saint. Christian joy is spiritual; it is one of the fruits of the Holy Ghost. It is because the spirit is given to us, because Christ hath breathed upon us and hath said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," that we are enabled to obey the behest of the Apostle, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say rejoice." May God, by His grace, enable us, like the Ethiopian of great authority, to go on our way rejoicing.

Snares in the Pathway of Girls.

Girls, especially those of an amiable disposition, are in danger of leaning too much upon others, and of thus failing to form a solid, independent character. I don't think a woman should obtrude her opinions on the public notice, but she should have them. Her actions ought not to be controlled by what "Mary" says, by what "they" say, nor by the impulses of her nature; but by pure and well-grounded principles.

Without this force of character, she is but a mirror, reflecting every face and figure which passes before it. If she is with worldly-minded people, she is sure that there is no harm in dancing; if she is talking to her minister, she wonders how people could be so wicked as to dance. It is easy to see how such a person may be led into forbidden paths.

If her home influences are good, the evil of her chameleon nature will not appear until she is sent to boarding-school. Here she meets with a great variety of characters; many more perhaps like herself, unbridled under the command of two or three rival leaders, a few independents, and some fluttering bats. When she is able to decide which company to join, she obeys the captain implicitly. If a poor scholar comes, and the leader says it is not respectable to associate with such girls, she will vie with the others in heaping slights upon the lonely stranger. Suppose the ruling spirit falls out with a teacher; her assails will combine against him, and worry him until the poor man's peace is gone. Worst of all, if a revival of religion should begin in the school, and a leader should be converted, many of her friends would profess conversion, who had experienced no real change, such as the ascendancy which a strong mind gains over those that are weak.

Some girls, who do not lean so much upon others, are the "creatures of present impulse." They rush headlong into everything. Now, I would not chain down these sweet impulses of a young girl's nature which make her charming. I would not have her gliding about as dry as chalk, and as silent as the ghost of propriety.

If your friend is saying sweet things to you, my child, and no one else is near, throw your arms around her neck and kiss her, if your heart prompts the need; if she is telling you her sorrows, restrain not your sympathetic tears. But in questions of right, let reason, conscience, the Bible and the Holy Spirit, be your guides. To act without thought is to put yourself on a level with irrational beings, it is ungrateful to God, who gave you a mind, and it is an insult to the Holy Spirit, who is waiting to help you.

If you wish to be nobler than the animals around you, and if your wavering sister wishes to be other than a mere automaton, think. Sit at the feet of wise men and learn of them—no attitude is more lovely for a woman—but don't accept what they say as truth until you have reasoned it out in your own minds.

Read—most especially read the Bible, and pray that the Spirit of God may guide you into all truth. When from these sources, you have extracted your code of morals, obey it, if need be, in defiance of "the world, the flesh and the devil."

This will be for your own good, and for the good of those around you. Woman's influence is silent, yet powerful. She speaks through her father, her brothers, her husband, her sons. O, that her gentle voice may ever be heard pleading for the right.

A FEW weeks ago the editor of *The Congregationalist*, Boston, sent out to over two hundred Congregational pastors, scattered over the whole country, a letter of inquiry as to the exact form of invitation to the Communion Table. Last week's number of that paper contained the answers received. These (10) in number may be classified as follows: 1. Those who invite members of evangelical churches, fifty. 2. Those who invite all church members, ninety. 3. Those who invite all Christians, thirty-six. 4. Invitations not belonging to either of these three classes, fifteen.

(For the Presbyterian)

Songs in the House of My Pilgrimage.

VII.

"A HARMON OF THE HOLY THAT EXCELS THE"

O fair the gleams of glory,
And bright the scenes of truth,
That lighten human story,
And cheer this weary earth,
But richer far our treasure
With whom the spirit dwells,
Ours, ours, in heavenly measure
The glory that excels.

The lamp-light faintly gleameth
Where shines the no-mid-day ray;
From Jesus face there beameth
Light of a recent fold day,
And earth's pale lights, all faded,
The Light from heaven dispels,
But shines for ever unshaded
The glory that excels.

No broken cisterns need they
Who drink from living rills,
No other must heed they
Whom God's own thrills,
Earth's precious things are tasteless,
Its boisterous mirth repels,
Where flows in measure—wasteful
The glory that excels.

O! he who once sees Jesus
Shall never count again
Aught the vain world that pleases
A thing of joy or gain;
O'er every joy prevaileth
The joy from life that wells;
O'er every gain avaleth
The glory that excels.

Since on our life descended
These beams of light and love,
Our steps have heavenward tended,
Our eyes have looked above,
Till through the clouds concealing
The home where glory dwells,
Our Jesus comes revealing
The glory that excels.

New Edinburgh, Ont. C. I. C.

How to Pray.

BY FRANCIS Q. ABLES.

Man's plea to man is that he never more
Will beg, and that he never begged before;
Man's plea to God is that he bid obtain
A former suit, and therefore sue again.
How good a God we serve, that when we sue,
Makes His old gifts the examples of His new!
If thou wouldst learn, not knowing how, to pray,
Add but a faith, and say, as beggars say,
"Master, I'm poor and blind, in great distress,
Hungry, and lame, and cold, and comfortless;
O, succour him that's grovelled on the shelf
Of pain and want, and cannot help himself!
Cast down thine eye upon a wretch, and take
Some pity on me for sweet Jesus' sake!"
But hold! take heed this clause be not put in,
"I never begged before, nor will again."

"They Can't Believe It."

BY MARY W. GREELEY, CAMBRIDGE.

Many of those who listened to Miss H. G. Brittan's thrilling stories of the Zenana women of India, will recall her touching account of a Hindoo convert who, filled with love for her new-found Saviour, was burning with earnestness of desire for the salvation of those still in the darkness of heathenism. With a burden of distress and doubt she came to her missionary: "If Christians in America believe all that you have told us of Jesus' love for us, and our danger if we do not trust in Him, why do not more of them come to tell us the sweet story of His salvation? Oh, they can't believe! they can't believe it, else they would surely come with the good news."

"They can't believe it." What a world of reproach these words speak to us who, living in the midst of Gospel abundance, look with indifferent eye upon those who are starving for the want of food. Can you not hear the cry of those perishing women, as they stretch out their hands to us for the Bread of Life? "You who have tasted the sweetness of Christ's pardoning love, do you not care that we are living in utter ignorance of that love; that we are dying for lack of the life which has been given to you so abundantly? O come and teach us of the wonderful Christ life, if indeed it be for us, as well as for you. We need your presence, your words, your prayers. Oh, give them to us!"

Can we turn away from this necessity? Can we count our own ease of more account than the salvation of these dying souls? Is not this pre-eminently woman's work—to reach for the hand of love, to speak words of gentle persuasion which will draw her dark-minded sisters to the light of life which will dispel all their gloom forever? We know that to educate and Christianise the women is to lay the foundation for a large and full Christianity; for the mothers make a nation. Who can so well lay this foundation as Christian women.

An eloquent appeal has recently been made for lady missionaries to help carry on the work of Christ in foreign fields, but the response has not yet come. Surely there are women of deep consecration, women of solid culture and earnest piety, in many respects just the ones who are needed, but home duties detain them.

Do we believe it! Do we believe that heathen women have souls just as precious in God's sight as our own? Do we believe that the Bread and Water of Life is for them as well as for ourselves? Oh, let us arouse from our lethargy and each of her own heart this question: "Am I doing all that I can to lead these benighted women to Him who is the Way of Life? Freely I have received; and shall I not freely give? Am I willing to go myself carrying in my hand the message of mercy from the Saviour to those who stand in such manifest need?" The field is white with the harvest, but the labourers are few. Those who are bearing the burden and heat of the day, cry aloud to us, "Come over and help us." Shall they call in vain? Though it costs sacrifices, heavy and broad, will not many a one respond looking for strength to him who alone can give it, "Here am I, all ready for the work. I will go!"—*Congregationalist*.

Points of Difference.

We can never become careless, or comparatively careless, of our points of difference, until we learn what wretched stuff they are made of; that these points of difference reside in opinions acquired at no cost at all, and that they often rise no higher in the scale of value than borrowed prejudices. So long as "orthodoxy" of opinion is more elaborately insisted on in the pulpit than love and purity; so long as dogmatic theology has the lead of life; so long as Christianity is made so much a thing of the intellect and so subordinately a thing of the affections, the point of difference between the churches will be made of more importance than the points of sympathy. Pride of opinion must go out before sympathy and charity can come in. So long as brains occupy the field, the heart cannot find standing room. When our creeds get to be longer than the moral law; when Christian men and women are taken into, or shut out of, churches on account of their opinions upon dogmas that do not touch the vitalities of Christian life and character; when men of brains are driven out of churches or shut away from them, because they cannot have liberty of opinion, and will not take a batch of opinions at second-hand, our pride of opinion becomes not only ridiculous, but criminal, and the condemnation of Christian unity is put far off into the better future.—*Dr. J. G. Holland, Scribner for May.*

Random Readings.

To beautify is to better.
BELIEVER, forget it not—you are the soldier of the Overcomer.

How many a worldly person hath Satan reasoned into the bottomless pit.

FAITH has nothing to do with reasonings, but is the most reasonable of all things.

ALL our happiness depends upon prayer; all our prayer upon love.—*Ford.*

REMEMBER, my brother, thou never pleasest thy Lord more than when thou leastest thy whole weight upon Him.

"LET us love one another out of a pure heart fervently," bearing and forbearing, dealing tenderly with one another.

PRAYER continues in the desire of the heart, though the understanding be employed on outward things.—*Wesley.*

MISSIONARY Progress in the South Seas, especially on the Gilbert Islands, has been quite remarkable during the past year. On one Island, where a year ago thirty were reported to have professed Christianity, there are now 320 who have thrown off heathenism. On another Island, instead of fourteen candidates reported last year, there are upwards of 400 this, and of these some one hundred have been admitted to church membership. Reports from two other Islands are equally encouraging. The work is in charge of English missionaries.

A GENTLEMAN in England was walking over his farm with a friend, exhibiting his crops, herds of cattle, and flocks of sheep, with all of which his friend was highly pleased, but with nothing so much as his splendid sheep. He had seen the same breed frequently before, but had never seen such noble specimens; and with great earnestness he asked how he succeeded in producing such flocks. His simple answer was, "I take care of my lambs, sir." Here was all the secret of his large, heavy fleeced, fat sheep; he took care of them when they were lambs. Let parents and teachers take the hint.

THE best rule for Christian people to observe is to tell folks of only what will give them pleasure. Whoever speaks a word that causes a heartache, sins. Whoever disturbs the peace and tranquillity of a mind, even by rehearsing any perambulating gossamer, lessens the joy of a life to whose joy it is his duty in Christ, to minister. Life is too short, and joys too few, for us to mar the peace of the one, or lessen the number of the other. If any reader of these lines has been in the habit of tolling people unpleasant things, we sincerely hope the perusal of this article will cause him to stop doing so.—*Golden Rule.*

THE N. Y. Evangelist says to children who neglect their fathers' God: "What better principle is really governing such youth than that which governed Achan? He was a splendid fellow. The youth in Jerusalem admired him, my gay, gifted, ambitious reader, as much as your mates and the youth of your set admire you. His father loved him as fondly as your father or mother loves you. Wherein are you less selfish in the course you are taking than he in the course he took? It is not a splendid throne you are after. You are breaking the heart that loves you best for something less than that."

RELIGIOUS truth is addressed to the mind, appeals to the feelings, and aims at the will, the character, the life. Dr. Daryea, in a recent address on "The Feelings," said:—"Why do not men take hold of the things of religion as they do in other fields of thought? It comes from what we have called depravity, and there must be what we call the change of heart, and this being the work of the Holy Spirit, is beyond our power. But this we are sure of, that after we have taught faithfully, and have placed before the mind the things which should awaken the soul, we can leave the Holy Spirit to do the rest of the work. There will come a time when the Spirit will work, and then we can go further and appeal to the feelings; can put the truth before the mind, and press it home to the heart. In Scotland, Moody and Sankey preached and sang with great effect, but the hard-headed Scotch preachers had been teaching for a generation, and had prepared the soil for the reception of the seed of truth. The heart must be treated as a very sacred thing, and should not be trifled with. Feelings are the property of the individual, and are not to be excited needlessly and without fair prospect of result. Teach the truth, and watch for the time when the Spirit shall work, and then drive home the truth to the heart."