

Joy, Joy Forever

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 25, 1890,

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"But let all those that put their trust in You rejoice: let them always shout for joy, because You defend them: let those also that love Your name be joyful in You." [Psalm 5:11](#).

"THE Lord does put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel." There is an ancient difference which He has made in His eternal purpose and this is seen in every item of the Covenant of Grace. "The Lord has set apart him that is godly for Himself." But it is also written, "The foolish shall not stand in Your sight: You hate all workers of iniquity." You that have believed are of the house of Israel and heirs according to promise, for they that are of faith are the true seed of faithful Abraham. See that you make manifest this difference by the holiness of your lives. "Come out from among them and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing."

Display this difference always by the joyfulness of your spirits. Let not noisome cares invade you, for we read, "I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there." Fear not that the wrathful judgment of God will fall indiscriminately, for we read, "Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail." The servants of the Lord should wear the royal garments—those garments are made of the fine cloth of holiness, trimmed with the lace of joy! Take care that you exhibit both holiness of character and joyfulness of spirit, for where these two things are in us, and abound, they prove that we are not barren nor unfruitful.

To us there should be joy to strikingly contrast with the unrest of the unbeliever. Over all the land of Egypt there was darkness which might be felt, even thick darkness, for three days—"They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days—but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." If it is so with you, that the Lord has given you the light of joy, let your faces shine with it! If you walk in the light as God is in the light, go forth and let men see the brightness of your countenances and take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus and have learned of Him His gracious calm as well as His holiness. "Rejoice in the Lord always." Your Lord desires that your joy may be full. He gives you a joy which no man takes from you—it is His legacy. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you."

The subject for this morning is joy, the joy of faith, the joy which is the fruit of the Spirit from the root of trust in God. May we not only talk about it at this hour, but enjoy it now and always! It is pleasant to read and hear and think about joy—but to be filled with joy and peace through believing is a far more satisfying thing! I want you to see not only the sparkling fountain of joy, but to drink deep drafts of it—yes, and drink all week and all

month, and all the year— and all the rest of your lives, both in time and in eternity! "Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King."

I. First, let us speak a little upon THE KIND OF JOY WHICH IS ALLOTTED TO BELIEVERS—"Let all those that put their trust in You rejoice: let them always shout for joy, because You defend them: let those also that love Your name be joyful in You." Note, first, concerning this joy, that it is to be universal to all who trust— "Let all those that put their trust in You rejoice." This is not only for the healthy, but for the sick—not only for the successful, but for the disappointed. It is not only for those who have the bird in the hand, but for those who only see it in the bush. Let all rejoice!

If you have but a little faith, yet if you are trusting in the Lord, you have a right to joy. It may be your joy will not rise so high as it might do if your faith were greater but still, where faith is true, it gives sure ground for joy. O you babes in Divine Grace! You little children! You that have been newly converted and sadly feel your feebleness—rejoice, for the Lord will bless them that fear Him—"both small and great"! "Fear not, you worm, Jacob." "Fear not, little flock."

There is a joy which is as milk to nourish babes—a joy which is not as meat with bones in it—for the Lord adds no sorrow to it. The little ones of the flock need not vex themselves concerning the deep things of God, for there is joy in

those shallows of simple Truth where lambs may safely wade! The joy of the Lord is softened down to feeble constitutions lest it overpower them. The same great sea which floods the vast bays also flows into the tiny creeks. "Let all those that put their trust in You rejoice." You, Miss Much-Afraid over yonder, you are to rejoice! You, Mr. Despondency, hardly daring to look up—you must yet learn to sing. As for Mr. Ready-to-Halt, he must dance on his crutches and Feeble-Mind must play the music for him. It is the mind of the Holy Spirit that those who trust in the Lord should rejoice before

Him.

This joy, in the next place, is to be as constant as to time as it is universal as to persons. "Let them always shout for joy." Do not be content that a good time in the morning should be followed by dreariness in the afternoon! Do not cultivate an occasional delight—aim at perpetual joy! To be happy at a revival meeting and then go home to groan is a poor business. We should "feel like singing all the time." The Believer has abiding arguments for abiding consolation. There is never a time when the saint of God has not great cause for gladness—and if he never doubts and worries till he has a justifiable reason for distrust he will never doubt nor worry! "Rejoice in the Lord always and again"—what? "Always" and yet does the Apostle say, "and again"? Yes, he would have us rejoice and keep on rejoicing and then rejoice more and more! Brothers and Sisters, go on piling up your delights! You are the blessed of the Lord and His blessing reaches "unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills."

Next, let your joy be manifested. "Let them always shout for joy." Shouting is an enthusiastic utterance, a method which men use when they have won a victory—when they divide the spoil, when they bear home the harvest, when they tread the vintage—when they drain the goblet. Believers, you may shout for joy with unreserved delight! Some religionists shout and we would not wish to stop them—but we wish certain of them knew better what they were shouting for. Brothers and Sisters, since you know Whom you have believed and what you have believed and what are the deep sources of your joy, do not be so sobered by your knowledge as to become dumb! Imitate the children in the Temple, who, if they knew little, loved much and so shouted in praise of Him they loved. "Let them shout for joy."

A touch of enthusiasm would be the salvation of many a man's religion. Some Christians are good enough people— they are like wax candles—but they are not lit. Oh, for a touch of flame! Then would they scatter light and thus become of service to their families. "Let them shout for joy." Why not? Let not orderly folks object. One said to me the other day, "When I hear you preach I feel as if I must have a shout!" My Friend, shout if you feel forced to do so. [Here a Hearer cried, "Glory!"] Our Brother cries, "Glory!" and I say so, too. "Glory!" The shouting need not always be done in a public service, or it might hinder devout hearing—but there are times and places where a glorious outburst of enthusiastic joy would quicken life in all around. The ungodly are not half so restrained in their blasphemy as we are in our praise! How is this? They go home making night hideous with their yells. Are we never to have an outbreak of consecrated delight? Yes, we will have our high days and holidays and we will sing and shout for joy till even the heathens say, "The Lord has done great things for them."

This joy is to be repeated with variations. One likes, in music, to hear the same tune played in different ways. So here you have it. "Let them rejoice. Let them always shout for joy. Let them be joyful in You." There is no monotony in real joy. In the presence of mirth one grows dull, but in living joy there is exhilaration. Commend me to the springing well of heavenly joy—its waters are always fresh, clear, sparkling—springing up unto everlasting life! Joy blends many colors in its one ray of light. At times it is quiet and sits still beneath a weight of glory. I have known it weep, not salt drops, but sweet showers. Have you never cried because of your joy in the Lord? Sometimes joy labors for expression till it is ready to faint and others it sings till it rivals the angels! Singing is the natural language of joy, but oftentimes silence suits it even better. Our joy abides in Christ whether we are quiet or shouting, whether we fall at our Lord's feet as dead, or lean on His bosom in calm delight.

This joy is logical. When I was a child and went to school, I remember learning out of a book called, "Why and Because." Things one learns as a child stick in the memory and therefore I like a text which has a "because" in it. Here it is: "Let them always shout for joy, because You defend them." Emotions are not fired by logic and yet reasons furnish fuel for the flame. A man may be sad though he cannot explain his sadness, or he may be greatly

glad though he cannot set forth the reasons for his joy. The joy of a Believer in God has a firm foundation—it is not the baseless fabric of a vision. The joy of faith burns like coals of juniper and yet it can be calmly explained and justified. The joyful Believer is no lunatic, carried away by a delusion—he has a "because" with which to account for all his joy—a reason which he can

consider on his bed in the night watches, or defend against a scoffing world! We have a satisfactory reason for our most exuberant joy—"The Lord has done great things for us; thereof we are glad." Philosophers can be happy without music and saints can be happy despite circumstances. With joy we draw water out of deeper and fuller wells than such as father Jacob dug. Our mirth is as soberly reasonable as the worldling's fears.

Once more, the happiness is a thing of the heart, for the text runs thus—"Let them that love Your name be joyful in You." We love God. I trust I am speaking to many who could say, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Is it not a very happy emotion? What is sweeter than to say, with tears in one's eyes—"My God, I love You, too!" To sit down and have nothing to ask for, no words to utter, but only for the soul to love—is not this heavenly? Measureless depths of unutterable love are in the soul and in those depths we find the pearl of joy. When the heart is taken up with so delightful an object as the ever-blessed God, it feels an intensity of joy which cannot be rivaled. When our whole being is steeped in adoring love, then Heaven comes streaming down and we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

I feel I am talking in a poor way about the richest things which are enjoyed by saintly men. Many of you know as much about these matters as I do, perhaps more. But my soul does even now magnify the Lord and my spirit does rejoice in God my Savior. Although I feel unworthy and unfit to speak to this vast throng, yet I have a great sympathy with my text, for I am "glad in the Lord."—

"Oh, what immortal joys I feel,
And raptures al divine
For Jesus tells me I am His,
And my Belo ved mine!"

If you sit before the Lord at this time and indulge your souls with an outflow of love to God and His Son Jesus Christ— and at the same time perceive an inflowing of heavenly joy—it will not much matter how the poor preacher speaks to your ear, for the Lord Himself will be heard in your soul and Heaven will flood your being!

II. Now I come to the second head, where we will consider THE GROUND AND REASON OF HOLY JOY. I am bound to speak upon this matter, for I have told you that the joy of the Believer is logical and can be defended by facts and so, indeed, it is. First, the Believer's joy arises from the God in whom He trusts. "Let all those that put their trust in You rejoice."

When, after many a weary wandering, the dove of your soul has at last come back to the ark and Noah has put out his hand and "pulled her in unto him," the poor, weary creature is happy. Taken into Noah's hand and made to nestle in his bosom, she feels so safe, so peaceful! The weary leagues of the wild waste of waters are all forgotten, or only remembered to give zest to the repose. So, when you trust in God your soul has found a quiet resting place, a pavilion of repose! The little chick runs to and fro in fear. The mother hen calls it home. She spreads her soft wings over the brood. Have you ever seen the little chicks, when they are housed under the hen, how they put out their little heads through the feathers and peep and twitter so prettily?

It is a chick's Heaven to hide under its mother's bosom! It is perfectly happy. It could not be more content. Its little chick nature is full to the brim with delight. This is your joy, also—"He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust: His Truth shall be your shield and buckler." My Nature gets all its needs supplied, all its desires gratified when it rests in God. Oh, you that have never trusted God in Christ Jesus, you do not know what real happiness means! You may search all the theatres in London and ransack all the music halls, clubs and public-houses, but you will find no happiness in any of their mirth, or show, or wine! True joy dwells where dwells the living God and nowhere else. In your own home with God, even though that home is only a single room and your meal is very scanty, you will see more of Heaven than in the palaces of kings! Have God for your sole trust and you shall never lack for joy!

Our joy arises next from what the Lord does for us. "Let them shout for joy, because You defend them." God always guards His people from whomever may attack them. "The Lord is your keeper." Angels are our guardians, Providence is our protector—but God Himself is the Preserver of His chosen. "You shall not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flies by day; nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday." No fortress guards the soldier so well as God guards His redeemed. The God of our salvation will defend us from all evil. He will defend our souls. "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident."

Further, our joy arises out of the love we have towards our God. "Let them that love Your name be joyful in You." The more you love God, the more you will delight in Him. It is the profusion of a mother's love to her child which makes her take such delight in it. Her boy is her joy because of her love. If we loved Jesus better, we should be happier in Him. You do not, perhaps, see the connection between the two things—but there is a connection so intimate that little love to Christ brings little joy in Christ—and great love to Christ brings great joy in Christ. God grant that in a full Christ we may have a full joy!

Do you see what I mean? When a man comes to God in Christ and says, "This Savior is my Savior. This Father is my Father. This God is my God forever and ever," then he has

everything and he must be joyful! He has no fear about the past—God has forgiven him. He has no distress about the present—the Lord is with him. He is not afraid about the future for the Lord has said—"I will never leave you, nor forsake you." If you understand my text and put it into practice, you possess the quintessence of happiness, the essential oil of joy! He that has joy on his barn floor may see it bare! He that has joy in his wine vats may see them dry! He that has joy in his children may bury that joy in the grave! He that has joy in himself will find his beauty consume away—but he that has joy in God drinks from "the deep which lies under"—his springs shall always flow, "in summer and in winter shall it be."

I have pointed to the deep sources from which the joy of the Believer wells up, but I must also add, it is by faith that this joy comes to us. Faith makes joyful discoveries. I speak to those of you who have faith. When you first believed in Christ you found that you were saved and knew that you were forgiven. Some little while after that you discovered that you were chosen of God from before the foundation of the world. Oh, the rapture of your soul when the Lord appeared of old unto you, saying, "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you"! The glorious doctrine of election is as wines on the lees well-refined to those who by faith receive it. It brings with it a new, intense and refined joy such as the world knows nothing of.

Having discovered your election of God, you looked further into your justification—"for whom He called, them He also justified." What a pearl is justification! In Christ the Believer is as just in the sight of God as if he had never sinned! He is covered with a perfect righteousness and is accepted in the Beloved. What a joy is justification by faith, when it is well understood! What bliss, also, to learn our union to Christ! Believers are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. Because He lives we shall live also. One with Jesus! Wonderful discovery, this! Equally full of joy is our adoption! "Beloved, now are we the sons of God," "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Faith thus heaps fuel on the fire of our joy, for it keeps on making discoveries out of the Word of the Lord!

The more you search the Scriptures and the nearer you live to God, the more you will enjoy that great goodness which the Lord has laid up in store for them that fear Him. Though "eye has not seen, nor ear heard the things which God has prepared for them that love Him," yet, "He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit" and thereby He puts gladness into our hearts more than increasing corn and wine could bring!

Furthermore, faith gives cheering interpretations. Faith is a Prophet who can charmingly interpret a fearsome dream. Faith sees a gain in every loss, a joy in every grief. Read aright and you will see that a child of God in trouble is on the way to greater blessing. Faith views affliction hopefully. Sorrow may come to us, as it did to David, as a chastisement for sin. Faith reads—"Whom the Lord loves He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives." Better to be chastened with God's children, here, than to be condemned with the world hereafter! Faith also sees that affliction may be sent by way of discovery to make the man

know himself, his God and the promises better. Faith perceives that affliction may be most precious as a test, acting as does the fire when it shows what is pure gold and what is base metal.

Faith joys in a test so valuable. Faith spies out the Truth of God that affliction is sent to develop and mature the Christian life. "Ah, well!" says Faith, "then, thank God for it. No trial for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it works out the peaceable fruit of righteousness in those that are exercised thereby." Faith sees sweet love in every bitter cup. Faith knows that whenever she gets a black envelope from the heavenly post office, there is treasure in it. When the Lord's black horses call at our door they bring us double loads of blessing.

Up to this moment I, God's servant, beg to bear my unreserved testimony to the fact that it is good for me to have been afflicted. In spiritual life and knowledge and power, I have grown but little except when under the hand of trouble. I set my door open and am half-inclined to say to pain and sickness and sadness, "Turn in here, for I know that you will

leave a blessing behind. Come, crosses, if you will, for you always turn to crowns." Thus faith glories in tribulations, also, and in the lion of adversity finds the honey of joy.

I have said that trial comes to us as chastisement, as we see in the case of David—as a discoverer of Divine Grace, as we see in Abraham—or as a test, as we see in Job. It can also be a preventive, as in the case of Paul, who wrote, "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me." In every tribulation God is moved by love to His people and by nothing else. If He cuts the vine with a sharp knife, it is because He would have fruit from it. If He whips His child till he cries, like David, "All the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning," it is for his profit, that he may learn obedience by the things which he suffers. All things work together for the Believer's good—and so faith interprets sorrow itself into joy.

Moreover, faith believes great promises. This opens other wells of joy. I cannot stop to quote them to you this morning, but the Book of the Lord is full of them. What more can the Lord say than He has said? The promises of God are full and as varied as they are full, and as sure as they are varied and as rich as they are sure. "Exceedingly great and precious promises." When I wrote "The Check Book of the Bank of Faith" I was at no loss to find a promise for every day in the year—the difficulty was which to leave out! The promises are like the bells on the garments of our Great High Priest forever ringing out holy melodies. When a man gets a promise fairly into the hand of faith and goes to God with it, he must rejoice! The children of the promise are, all of them, worthy to be called Isaac, that is, "Laughter," for God has made him to laugh who lives according to promise. To live on the promises of man would be starvation—but to live on the promises of God is to feed on fat things full of marrow!

Above all, faith has an eye to the eternal reward. She rejoices in her prospects. She takes into her hands the birds which to others are in the bush. To be with Christ in Glory is the joy of hope, the hope which makes not ashamed. Our hope is no dream—as sure as we are here today, we who are trusting in Christ will be in Heaven before long—for He prays that we may be with Him where He is and may behold His Glory! Let us not wish to postpone the happy day! Shall our bridal day be kept back? No, let the Bridegroom speedily come and take us to Himself. What a joy to know that this head shall wear a crown of glory and these hands shall wave the palm branch of victory! I speak not of myself alone, my Brothers and Sisters, but of you, also, and of all them that love His appearing. There is a crown of life laid up for you which the righteous Judge will give you. Therefore, have patience a little while. Bear, still, your cross. Put up with the difficulties of the way, for the end is almost within sight—

"The way may be rough, but it cannot be long: So we'll smooth it with hope, and cheer it with song." May the Lord give us the ears of faith with which to hear the bells of Heaven ringing out from afar over the waters of time!

Faith has always reason for joy since God is always the same, His promises are the same and His power and will to fulfill are the same. In an unchanging God we find unchanging reasons for joy! If we draw water from the well of God, we may draw one day as well as another and never find the water abated. But if we make our joy to depend in part upon creatures and circumstances, we may find our joy leak out through the cracks in the cistern. Last Sunday morning I cried out to you, "Both feet on the Rock! Both feet on the Rock!" and the words led one poor heart to try the power of undivided faith in God. This is the road to joy and there is no other!

Drink waters from your own fountain and do not gad abroad after others. Is not the Lord enough for you? Is it not sufficient to say, "All my fresh springs are in You"? Neither life, nor death, nor poverty, nor sickness, nor bereavement, nor slander, nor death, itself, shall quench your joy if it is founded in God alone!

III. We will look, for a minute or two, into a third matter which is THE FAILURES REPORTED CONCERNING

THIS JOY. I think I hear somebody say, "It is all very well for you to tell us that Believers are joyful and have logical reasons for gladness, but some of them are about as dull as can be and create dullness in others." I am obliged to speak very carefully here, for I am afraid that certain Christians give cause for this objection.

Let me say to some of you who love to raise objections, What do you know about this joy? Are you unbelievers? Well, then, you are out of court—you are not competent to judge. The griefs of Believers you do not know and with their joy you cannot intermeddle. You have no spiritual taste or discernment and what judgment can you form? A genuine Believer

may be as happy as the angels and yet you may not know his joy because you are not in the secret. You have not a

spiritual mind and the carnal mind cannot discern spiritual things. I would have you speak with bated breath when you talk on this matter. When a blind man goes to the Royal Academy, his criticisms on the pictures are not worth much, but they are quite equal in value to yours when you speak of spiritual things! You cannot know what joy in the Lord means for, alas, you are a stranger to such heavenly things.

Alas, some professors of religion are mere pretenders—these have no joy of the Lord. To carry out their presence, these persons even imagine that it is necessary to pull a long face and to talk very solemnly, not to say dismally! Their idea of religion is that black is the color of Heaven. But, dear Friends, we cannot prevent hypocrites arising—it is only a proof that true religion is worth having. You took a bad half-sovereign the other night, did you? Did you say, "All half-sovereigns are worthless, I will never take another"? Of course not!—you became more careful—and you were quite sure that there were good half-sovereigns in currency, or else people would not make counterfeit ones. It would not pay anybody to be a hypocrite unless there were enough genuine Christians to make the hypocrites pass current. Therefore do not say too much about hypocritical weepers, lest you slander true men.

Next, remember that some persons are constitutionally sad. They cried as soon as they were born. They cried when they cut their teeth and they have cried ever since. Their spirits are very low down and when the Grace of God gets into their hearts it lifts them a great deal to bring them up to a decent level of joy. Think of what they would have been without it! Many would have died in despair if it had not been for faith. The Grace of God has kept them up or they would have lost their reason. I am sorry there should be persons who have bad livers, feeble digestions, or irritated brains, but there are such. Pity them, even if you blame them. They must not so pity themselves as to make an excuse for their unbelief—but we must remember that often the spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.

When you have met with Christians who are not happy, did it never strike you that their depression might only be for a time under very severe trial? You may go to the South of France, where the days are sunny and you may happen to be there for a couple of days, only, and it may rain all the time—it would be unfair on that account to say that it is a gloomy place! So it may be that the Christian is under extreme pressure for the time and when that is moderated he will be very joyful. I do not excuse his loss of joy but still, there is a November of fogs in the year of most men. Judge no man by the day, but watch his spirit on a larger scale and see whether he does not usually delight himself in God.

Moreover, I would like to say a very pointed thing to some people who charge the saints with undue sadness. May you not be guilty of making them so? There is an unkind, morose, wicked, drinking husband and he says, "My wife's religion makes her miserable." No. It is

not her religion, but her husband! You are enough to make 20 people unhappy—you know you are—and therefore do not blame the poor woman, if, when she sees you, tears are in her eyes. Alas, when she thinks of your going down to Hell and knows that she will be parted from you forever, the more she loves you the more sad she is to think of you.

"Oh," says some wild boy here, "my mother is wretched!" I do not wonder! I should be wretched, too, if you were my son! If any of you are living ungodly lives, it makes your parents' hearts ache to see you going headlong to perdition. Is it not abominable that a man should make another miserable and then blame him for being so? If you were but saved, how your mother's face would brighten up! If your father saw his boy turn to the Lord, he would be as happy as the birds in spring! Speak tenderly on this matter lest you accuse yourself!

If you say that some Christians are unhappy, must you not also admit that many of them are very happy? I was once waited upon by an enthusiast who had a new religion to publish. Numbers of people have a crack which lets in new light and this man was going to convert me to his new ideas. After I had heard him, I said, "I have heard your story, will you hear mine?" When I talked to him of my lot and portion in the love of a Covenant God and the safety of the Believer in Christ, he said, "Now, Sir, if you believe all this, you ought to be the happiest man in the world." I admitted that his inference was true and then I said to him, which rather surprised him, "So I am. And I am going to be more so all the rest of my life."

If a man is chosen of God from before the foundation of the world. If he is redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. If he is quickened by the Holy Spirit and renewed in the spirit of his mind. If he is one with Christ and on his way to Heaven—if he is not happy, he ought to be! Surely we ought to rejoice abundantly, dear Friends, for ours is a happy lot! "Happy are the people whose God is the Lord." If God's people are not happy at times, it is not their faith which makes them unhappy—ask them. It is not what you believe that makes you unhappy—it is your lack of faith, is it not? If a man

begins to doubt, he begins to sorrow, but as far as his faith goes, he has joy. Oh, for more faith! Faith does create joy. We can answer all objections by the fact that "we that have believed do enter into rest."

IV. I close by mentioning THE ARGUMENTS FOR ABOUNDING IN JOY. You cannot argue a man into gladness, but you may possibly stir him up to see that which will make him happy. First, you see in my text a permit to be glad— "Let all those that put their trust in You rejoice." You have, here, a ticket to the banquets of joy! You may be as happy as ever you like. You have Divine permission to shout for joy! Yonder is the inner sanctuary of happiness. You cry, "May I come in?" Yes, if by faith you can grasp the text, "Let all those that put their trust in You rejoice." "But may I be happy?" asks one. "May I be glad? May I?

Is there joy for me?" Do you trust in the Lord? Then you have your passport—travel in the land of light!

But the text is not only a permit, it is a precept. When it says, "Let them shout for joy," it means that they are commanded to do so. Blessed is that religion wherein it is a duty to be happy! Come, you mournful ones, be glad! You discontented grumblers, come out of that dog house! Enter the palace of the King! Quit your dunghills! Ascend your thrones! The precept commands it—"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." We have here more than a permit and a precept, it is a prayer. David prays it—the Lord Jesus prays it by David. Let them rejoice, let them be joyful in You! Will He not grant the prayer which He has inspired by causing us to rejoice through lifting upon us the light of His Countenance? Pray for joy yourself, saying with David, "Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation."

The text might be read as a promise—"All those that put their trust in You shall rejoice." God promises joy and gladness to Believers. Light is sown for them—the Lord will turn their night into day. Listen to the following line of argument which shall be very brief. You only act reasonably when you rejoice. If you are chosen of God and redeemed by blood and have been made an heir of Heaven, you ought to rejoice. We pray you act not contrary to Nature and reason. Do not fly in the face of great and precious Truths of God. From what you profess, you are bound to be joyful. You will best baffle your adversaries by being happy.

"They say." "They say"—let them say! "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." But the attack is cruel. No doubt it is, but the Lord knows all about it. Do not cease to rest in Him. If your heart is full of God's love you can easily bear all that the enemy may cast upon you. Abound in joy, for then you will behave best to those who are round about you. When a man is unhappy he usually makes other people so—and a person that is miserable is generally unkind and frequently unjust. It is often indigestion that makes a man find fault with his servants and wife and children. If a man is at peace with himself, he is peaceful with others. Get right within and you will be right without. One of the best medicines for a good temper is communion with God and consequent joy of heart.

You yourself, also, if you are happy, will be strong—"The joy of the Lord is your strength." If you lose your joy in your religion, you will be a poor worker—you cannot bear strong testimony, you cannot bear stern trial—you cannot lead a powerful life. In proportion as you maintain your joy, you will be strong in the Lord, and for the Lord. Do you not know that if you are full of joy you will be turning the charming side of religion where men can see it? I should not like to wear my coat with the seamy side out—some religionists always do that. It was said of one great professor that he looked as if his religion did not agree with him.

Godliness is not a rack or a thumbscrew. Behave not to religion as if you felt that you must take it, like so much medicine but you had rather not. If it tastes like nauseous medicine to you, I should fear you have got the wrong sort and are poisoning yourself! Believe not

that true godliness is akin to sourness. Cheerfulness is next to godliness! "When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that you appear not unto men to fast." Weed out levity, but cultivate joy. Thus will you win other hearts to follow Jesus. Remember that if you are always joyful, you are rehearsing the music of the skies. We are going there very soon—let us not be ignorant of the music of its choirs. I should not like to crowd into my seat and hear the choirmaster say, "Do you know your part?" and then have to answer, "Oh, no, I have never sung while I was on earth, for I had no joy in the Lord."

I think I shall answer to the choirmaster and say, "Yes, I have long since sung, 'Worthy is the Lamb'" —

"I would begin the music here And so my soul shall rise: Oh, for some heavenly notes, to bear My passions to the skies!"

With joy we rehearse the song of songs! We pay glad homage now before Jehovah's Throne. We sing unto the Lord our gladsome harmonies and we will do so as long as we have any being. Pass me that score, O chief musician of the skies, for I can take it up and sing my part in bass, or tenor, or treble, or alto, or soprano as my voice may be! The key is joy in God! Whatever the part assigned us, the music is all for Jesus! May some of you that have never joyed in Jesus Christ learn how to praise Him today by being washed in His precious blood! You that have praised Him long, may you learn your score yet more fully and sing in better tune from now on and for evermore! Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— [Psalms 4](#) and 5. HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—136 (SONG I); 4; 103 (VERS. II).