

JOY

By Alden Truesdell

JOY FOLLOWS Love in the orderly unfoldment of divine fruitings. We rejoice in the vital response of Love. Joy in the Lord gives us strength and endurance.

Paul must have seen the products of the Spirit, for he called them "the fruit of the Spirit." This was original with Paul, for the Apostle John had not yet written in his Revelation the description with which he begins the last chapter:

"And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

As all good fruit is pleasant to the taste and refreshing to the appetite, so the fruit of the Spirit feeds and nourishes man as he learns to partake of spiritual qualities. This is particularly true of joy, for much of man's effort is direct toward enjoyment and pleasure. When a man enjoys himself, everything goes right: his digestion is good; his actions coordinate; he is apt to get the breaks; and as he might express it, he does all the good.

With the spiritual qualities of Love and Joy available, to be had for the taking, all the sadness that is prevalent in the world seems tragic, the animosity very non-essential. For the spiritual qualities of Love and Joy can be invoked by anybody sincere enough and diligent enough to go after them as though he honestly wanted them. If he asks he will receive; if he calls he will be answered. And whatever his individual way of seeking happiness may be, the Joy of the Lord is what he really wants and will ultimately have.

Joy in the Lord is God's own Pleasure in having an opportunity to give what He has.

Man has set up a psychic curtain between himself and God. Man does not go far enough in his attempt to set up connections with the divine gifts and receive joyous benefits. But in the time when he realizes that he is not getting the job done and must have help from above, he breaks through the curtain and lets his protective Divinity swing into action. His emergency is God's opportunity.

God takes pleasure in giving man the benefits of His Kingdom. One of Meister Eckhart's chapters is given to the idea that God laughs and plays, taking great delight in having someone with whom and through whom He can express Himself.

We recall in Jesus' Parable of the Prodigal Son, how delighted the father was when the son came home, and how he ran out to meet him when he was yet a long way off.

Maybe God is lonesome for all the children who hide outside, behind the psychic curtain. Maybe this is why Jesus reported that there is great rejoicing over one sinner who returns to the Father. For all of us are sinners when we separate ourselves from the good of our original Heavenly Estate. But all of us again become sons as soon as we start the homeward trek. As the son approaches, and the Father moves out to meet him, there is rejoicing by all.

All of us recollect our joy in going back home for a visit. But the times of our return are few compared with the times that we remain away, and of course the present time is never propitious. There is so much that we have to do, so many things to attend to, that it is difficult for us to set a time of return. However, we know that when we become definite in our intention to make the effort for the return trip, we will find a warm welcome to reward us.

So it is that, when we determine to rise and go to our Spiritual Home, the spiritual machinery for that return is set into motion. Curtains are drawn aside; doors we had not known were there are opened. Suddenly, silently, all things mesh into a free-flowing, easily moving, orderly activity that helps us to take the right steps.

I would like to think of God as an ocean, with the special qualities of love, joy, and peace as mighty rivers flowing in the depths of that ocean - rivers, such as the Gulf Stream in the Atlantic Ocean and the Japan Current in the Pacific.

The Gulf Stream makes England habitable; the Japan Current tempers the cold climate of Southeastern Alaska. With a bit of imagination we can compare these streams to rivers of Life and Joy in the Ocean of God, who is Love.

Life and Intelligence radiate from Love, as light and heat radiate from fire. Apparently the activity of such vital radiation is cause enough for the Joy of the Lord to appear. At any rate, it does appear; it always appears where love is expressed in its purity.

Man realizes, when he considers these qualities, that they are the stuff of which he is made. "I will praise Thee," sang the Psalmist: "for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." It does not hurt man to hear how wonderful he is if he does not take the credit to himself. I know a leader in Truth ministry who tells her people how wonderful they are, and they keep coming back to hear. She does not teach them anything; she does not explain how or why they are wonderful; she does not tell them that the wonder of them is that of the wonderful Christ in them.

Our way of teaching seems rigorous to those who have been much exposed to such flattery. But the joy of the Lord that will result from our teaching of the Christ Truth will yield, in the end, a quality of satisfaction beyond the fleeting pleasure of personal admiration. It is far better to have an aspiring heart than itching ears. The teacher who minimizes personality, to magnify the Truth and Light of the inner man, will eventually reveal the true Joy of the Lord, which made one finder shout: "God, my exceeding joy!" If anyone ever has this realization, he will not need to be bolstered by the flattery of another. He will know the wonderful material out of which he is made, the wonderful law the Maker has placed in his inward parts; he will find the delight that is the Joy of the Lord to be the vitality and sustaining power of his being - the delight of the divinity that is in him.

I do not frown on the pleasant expressions of appreciation for talents and appearance. I would point out only the worthlessness of excessive flattery, the harm that it does to the itching ears that listen to it. I too like to hear good words and to see pleasant appearance, but my first love is the Truth of Christ that enables His gifts and talents to show forth through us. I believe that when we find the tree of Life, its fruits will show forth readily.

Joy always attests to sincere subscription to Christ Truth. If our teaching causes pondering, it may be that, through it, the spell of foolish teachers, bewitching with pseudo-sanctity and piety, may be broken.

I advocate joy; I recommend joy. The first announcement of the teaching of Christ Truth is of the "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

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SPIRITICITY October 1960

A SERMON

By Saint Augustine (Translated by Robert Applegate, Jr., Ph.D)

(I have translated the following piece from one of St. Augustine's sermons, because I think it has a message for us today. I know that it does for me.

(When St. Augustine spoke these words, the Vandals had already raided the coast of Africa, where he lived and preached. Instead of weeping with those who weep, instead of wringing his hands and lamenting, St. Augustine used the depredations of the Vandals to point out the exalted value we put on our temporary phase of existence, the little value we put on the Eternal Life that is given to us, and the wrongness of this perversion of values. Fast-writing secretaries took down his words as he talked; so they have come down to us intact.

(His words follow without quotation marks, except to set off his imaginary dialogue with one of the men who had been captured by the Vandals.)

RICHES ARE sought for the sake of life, not life for the sake of riches. How many have made a pact with their enemies, so that they might ransom their lives! - - and only their lives! All that they had they gave, lest they should lose their lives.

"Did you give everything you had to the barbarians, brother?"

"I gave everything," he says; "I am left stripped; but though I am stripped, I am alive."

"Why did you do this?"

"I was about to be killed; so I gave everything."

"And why did this happen to you? (May I answer for you?)

"Because before the barbarian came, you did not help the poor,* that through the poor help might come to Christ. *{The poor for the early Christians meant in the first instance those who had given up everything for Christ, who lived lives of dedication, calling nothing their own [as did St. Augustine and his friends]. The best way that you can give to Christ is to give to those who are doing His work.}

" You did not give a modicum to Christ; you gave all you had to the barbarians, and you gave that with an oath. Christ asks and does not receive; the barbarian tortures and takes all. If you ransom a transitory life at such a price, what value is to be set on an Eternal Life? You who give to the enemy, that you may live a pauper, give something to Christ, that you may live blessed. You do what the enemy demands, so that you may live a few days. Do you spurn what Christ demands?"

All the days of man from infancy up to old age are few. If Adam himself had just died today, he would have lived but a few days, because he would have finished them all. He would have lived six thousand years, but they would have been few because he had come to the end of them.

You have ransomed a few toilsome days, full of trials, so that you may have but a patch of ground, a grave. Consider: the enemy who captured you said, 'Give me whatever you have.' And you gave him everything, that you might live: ransomed today, to die tomorrow; ransomed from this one, to be cut down by another."

Think how much men suffer from the barbarians for the sake of a fleeting life; they are loath to suffer anything for the sake of an Eternal Life. These hardships teach us, brothers.

"Behold, you gave up everything; you threw it away and you rejoice because you are alive. You say, 'Although I am poor, naked, in need, a mendicant, I rejoice that I am alive and have not lost this sweet light.'

"Christ appears; He makes a pact with you - not the barbarian who captured you, but He who was captured for you, who deigned to die for you. He who gave Himself for you - He says: 'make a pact with Me. Do you want to hold onto your life? Hold onto Me. It is to your advantage to despise yourself - and love Me. You should find your life by losing it, lest you lose it by holding onto it.'"

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Man tries himself, judges himself, convicts himself, sentences himself, puts himself on parole, pardons, and exonerates himself until he learns to judge not.

- A.J.T.-

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FOR BEGINNERS

Q. What is Truth?

A. Truth, for you, is what you firmly believe. Your conviction may or may not be correct, but in your mind it is right. Changeless, fundamental Truth is never affected by your current belief, but you are affected. In His last prayer Jesus said, "Thy Word is Truth." (John 17:17) Truth to Jesus Christ was the Word of God, not what men believe about God.

Q. What is the "Word of God"?

A. The Word of God is His Utterance, His Power to make Himself known. "Be still and know that I Am God." (Psm. 46:10) God creates by His Word. "The worlds were framed by the Word of God." (Heb. 11:3) The vital Breath activates God's Word and causes creation to be made manifest. You may understand this by being conscious of your breath going out from you as you utter words. This breath activates your words, so that they formulate according to your secret intention, and consequently manifest with constructive or destructive effects. But your words will pass away, because your values change; God's Word is eternal, because "I AM the Lord, I change not." (Mal. 3:6)

Q. Jesus said, "God is Spirit." Will you please explain?

A. Language cannot describe God. Our language tells what we believe about God, but never tells what God IS. However, we may use symbols to explain Spirit. Think of electricity. It is everywhere all at once. With proper devices, we can convert electricity into current, by which machinery is run, lights go on, etc. Think of radio waves. With the proper device, we may tune in on any program anywhere in the world. Through study, prayer, meditation, dedication we may make ourselves devices through which Spirit, the Activity of God in us, works for our good and for the good of mankind. "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13)

Q. How do I "practice Truth"?

A. How did you learn to read? As you gave your attention to words, you acquired skill in words. If you will give your attention to God's eternal verities, you will perceive and be able to use the hidden principles in them. Seriously read the words of Jesus in the Gospels and take time to comprehend the significance of His instruction.

Q. Why practice the Truth?

A. To know the Truth that Jesus said will free you from bondage to the common ills of humankind; to change your attitude toward God, yourself, and others; to have a healthier body, enriched affairs, harmonious relations with the people around you; to experience a new joy that will dissipate the irritations of existence and give you an understanding of how to receive the blessings of God here and now.

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SPIRITICITY October 1960

SOUND TEACHING

By Nell Truesdell

"I CHARGE you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus," Paul wrote in his letter to Timothy, "preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching

ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths.

"As for you, always be steady, . . . fulfill your ministry. Continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

The test by which every student may know whether or not the metaphysical instruction he is receiving is of the highest order lies in his answer to the questions: does the teaching point to the attainment of the good life in the world through the use of Truth? or, Does the teaching hold open the door to the Kingdom of God?

If the study of Truth is primarily for the purpose of living a good life in the world, the student is being led to misapply Divine Principle to further his own selfish demands. By betraying his right to spiritual sonship, he is selling his birthright for a mess of pottage that will feed him today. But tomorrow he will again be hungry.

To use Truth to advantage oneself in the world is sacrilege because the practice diverts a sacred privilege, and forces it to serve a profane purpose. The payment for such practice is sacrifice of eternal Being for transient mortal existence.

The teachers of Truth who hold unsuspecting students in bondage to the limitations of the world by instructing them to use Truth to get worldly benefits are transgressing their original high call to minister in the name of Jesus Christ. Such teachers reveal that it is they who crave the world's riches - the good life of wealth, excellent social relations, and prestige. But if such things were worth while there would have been no need for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which strips all His followers of worldly lusts and urges them to gain eternal life through knowing God. The riches of the world impoverish, rather than enrich, men; but Jesus Christ gave the doctrine by which any person may free himself from the grip of mortality with all its perversions, which pass for successful attainment in the world.

The essence of Jesus' teaching is exposed in simple words:

"Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. . . . Follow Me. . . . Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him. . . . Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, . . . drink, . . . put on. . . . Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. . . . Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you. . . . Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven. . . . I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. . . . Forgive, if ye have aught against any. . . . Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be children of your Father which is in Heaven. . . . Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

Jesus always pointed man's attention to God only; His mission was to reveal man's need to turn away from the world and toward God. "The flesh profiteth nothing," He said. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Students point to the sentence, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you," and contend that Jesus said that a person is entitled to anything he wants. They do not read the words that follow, which reveal a condition to be obeyed: "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

To ask for something in the name of Jesus Christ is to ask for it in His Identity, His spiritual Sonship. To ask for some mundane thing in His name is to divert from a sacred to a profane purpose the capacity to ask. The whole process of asking reveals whether a person loves God for God's sake or loves him for what he can get, whether God or things are the object of his love.

A mystic of the Eleventh Century wrote: "God is not loved without reward, although He should be loved without reward in view. True love is never left with empty hands; and yet she is no hireling, out for pay, but 'seeketh not her own.' The disposition of the will in love is not a bargain; no stipulation enters into it. It is a voluntary movement of the effective faculty, an action of free will. True love is therefore self-sufficient, self-contented; its object is itself its recompense. . . . The soul that loves God seeks for God, and wants no other prize. Where it is otherwise, you may be sure it is some other thing, not God, that really is the object of love."

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Alphabet of
DAILY MEDITATIONS
For Every Week Day of the Month

October 1960

1. Lord, who shall ABIDE in Thy tabernacle?
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3. BECAUSE He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
4. I will bless the Lord who hath given me COUNSEL.
5. DO good.
6. The Lord my God will ENLIGHTEN my darkness.
7. In Thy Presence is FULNESS of joy.
8. Holy my GOINGS in Thy paths.
*
10. My HEART is glad.
11. The Spirit maketh INTERCESSION for us.
12. We also JOY in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.
13. He that KEEPETH thee will not slumber.
14. I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy LIKENESS.
15. MIGHTY works are wrought by His hands.
*
17. We have NOW received the atonement.
18. We know not what we should pray for as we OUGHT.
19. Seek PEACE, and PURSUE it.
20. Study to be QUIET.
21. The Lord RECOMPENSED me according to my RIGHTEOUSNESS.
22. I have SET the Lord always before me.
*
24. Do all THINGS without murmuring.
25. With an UPRIGHT man thou wilt show thyself UPRIGHT.
26. God hath VISITED His people.
27. It shall be WELL WITH thee.
28. We bless YOU in the name of the Lord.
29. Be glad, ye children of ZION (peace).
*
31. Give unto the Lord glory and strength.

* * *

"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

SPIRITICITY is the Working Power of the Spiritual Principle
as electricity is the working power of the electrical principle.