

“JOY”

(Discourse below by H. Boehmer given at Asbury Park, N.J. June 29th as reported in the 1914 Convention report starting on page 213.)

Today is Joy Day; not that we should experience more of joy today than any other day; on the contrary, as we have sung, “Happy every day has been since I am His and He is mine:” but today is set apart on our program for special consideration of joy. I can see in the expression of your faces that you are right in style for the day, for happiness and joy seem to beam from your countenances. Well has the Psalmist said (Psa. 89:15), “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance.” It seems apparent that the Lord has favored us, in this harvest time of the Gospel Age, with more real cause for rejoicing than any other class of people on earth, and when I say “us,” I mean all wide awake Bible students who had the eyes and ears of their understanding opened to see and comprehend the Divine Plan in its lengths and breadths, heights and depths, as contained in God’s Word and revealed in these last days.

When we compare, or contrast, our present convictions respecting God’s plans and purposes with all the bountiful provisions in Christ Jesus, with the various sectarian beliefs and theories, we are awe-inspired with wonder, love and praise, and we can truly say, “God has put a new song into our mouths”—not the old, doleful, depressing songs, which Satan has foisted upon the nations during the Dark Ages, but the new song, “even the loving kindness of our God.” Yes, God’s loving kindness which Satan and all his unwitting emissaries have sought to hide from mankind, has shone into our hearts and has illuminated our minds. Surely we, above all people under the sun, feel inspired with joy and praise, and we can now tune our harps to praise and sing the new song, even the song of Moses and the Lamb, the chorus of which is found in Rev. 15:3, 4, “Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear [reverence] Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? ... for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest.” But mind you, the Revelator says that only those who have gotten the victory over the beast and his image and over his mark are able to sing this new song of Moses and the Lamb, fully attuned to the music of the harp.

“God’s Word is that harp which has long been unstrung;
Men heard but discordant its notes.
Now as tuned are its chords from Moses to John;
How grandly sweet melody floats.”

Who is it, dear friends, today who are saying that all nations shall come and worship before God when His judgments are made manifest? While about six hundred denominations may be said to be singing about horror and anguish and eternal woe for all

who miss Heaven, intermingled with shrieks and curses to God, etc., there is only one class of Christians who are singing the “glad tidings;” only one class who are singing heartily this new song with the above chorus; viz., in proclaiming the Divine purpose respecting the times of refreshing and restitution under Messiah’s kingdom soon to be inaugurated in which all nations shall join in singing praises to God.

The condition of our heart has a great deal to do with the attainment and maintenance of joy and gladness. The prophet says, “Light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart.” We must be of those who hunger and thirst for righteousness ere we can be filled. All who attain unto this joy in the Lord have recognized their own undone and helpless condition, and they have fled for refuge to the Rock of our salvation. They have recognized the Savior whom God has provided, and having appropriated unto themselves by faith that saving truth that “Jesus died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification;” they have cast all the burdens at the Savior’s feet, or as we sometimes sing, “It was there by faith that I first saw the light, and the burden of my heart rolled away.”

The object of the Gospel message as foretold by the prophet and as announced by our Lord Jesus when He entered upon His earthly ministry was, to preach good tidings unto the meek, to heal and bind up the broken hearted, to comfort them that mourn, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness, etc. If you have never passed through the experiences of sorrow and heartsickness on account of sin and your imperfections, then it is very questionable whether you have been properly healed and your heart bound up by the Great Physician. I trust that all present have come to the Savior, the Captain of our salvation, in the appointed way, and that at this moment your faith in God, and in the efficacy of the precious blood of Jesus is strong and clear. Our faith, really, is the basis for our peace with God and our joy in the Lord, and dear friends, our heart reliance in every word that proceeds from God determines the degree of our joy and inner peace. If our faith is lax and weak, then our peace and joy is at a low ebb, but if our faith is firm, strong, victorious, then, also, our joy and courage are triumphant. It is for this reason that the Apostles exhort us to hold fast the beginning of our faith firm unto the end; “Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.” Our peace and joy still deepen and become more bright and clear as we follow on to know God better, whom to know aright is life eternal, and to know Jesus Christ whom God has sent.

One of the logical steps to which implicit faith will lead us, is a full consecration to do God’s will at any cost. And the Scriptures tell us in unmistakable terms what God’s will is concerning us who have believed, “even you sanctification”—your setting apart to God’s service. Only by making a full, unreserved, surrender of our hearts, our lives, our all, a living sacrifice which is made holy and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, are we accepted and inducted into the Divine family. This adoption into the Divine family is

manifested by our begetting and anointing with the Holy Spirit. The possession of the Holy Spirit is God's pledge and our receipt for our first payment or earnest of our inheritance. The covenant thus entered into is binding to both parties. When we consider the great prize, our inheritance in all the glory, honor and immortality to which God has invited us, and then think of how little we have to give, we surely ought to strike the bargain at once and consider ourselves lucky indeed if we receive the pledge of our future inheritance, the Holy Spirit, witnessing with our spirit that we are the sons of God. Thus we have become sons of God, "and if sons, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ." Just think of that! *Joint-heirs*, partner-heirs with Jesus, to an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled and that never fadeth, reserved in Heaven for us who are being kept by the power of God through faith, ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet. 1:4, 5). Surely dear friends, we have inexpressibly great cause for rejoicing; we ought to leap for joy at such a happy lot as is ours. To be sure, we must be faithful to our covenant of sacrifice in order to gain that prize, but is not this what we want to do anyway? Yes, and it seems to me, dear friends, that the Lord is not making the conditions as hard for us as possible. No, on the contrary, He is favoring us much every way. None of you look as though you were having a hard time of it. No, dear friends, God in His boundless love and mercy has made ample provision for our every weakness, and for every need—"and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." But, says one, this narrow way is so beset with difficulties; there are so many trials and hardships and tribulations and persecutions, that seem almost too much to bear. Yes, dear brother, dear sister, certainly there are all these trials and tribulations, but do you not know that each and all of these are blessings in disguise? The very object for which you and I have entered into this covenant of sacrifice is that we, like Jesus, might be made perfect, might be fitted and qualified for membership in God's Royal Priesthood, and be developed in His character-likeness. Thus, if we take a proper view of the matter, we should count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations and St. Paul declares, "We glory in tribulations;" i.e. we are proud of our tribulation. Why? Because tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. If you ever get despondent because of your tribulations, just think of St. Paul's experiences and the view he took of them. The Lord took St. Paul especially in hand, because he was a chosen vessel unto the Lord and he was of such a make-up, a diamond in the rough, that God wanted to specially grind and highly polish him. You recall that the Lord said of him, "I will show him how great things he must suffer." Yes, and St. Paul did suffer many great things. I suppose he was one of the most crucially tested followers of Jesus from that day to this. You remember he gives a brief summary of his experiences in 2 Cor. 11:23-33, where he tells how he had been in perils on land and on sea, in perils amongst robbers, in perils by his own countrymen, in perils amongst the heathen, and amongst false brethren. Thrice he had been beaten with rods, once he was stoned; thrice he had suffered shipwreck—he had been facing starvation and famishing, had been in weariness and pain, etc. How did St. Paul regard these afflictions? Did he grumble and

lament or bewail them? O no, dear friends, listen, here is what he says—2 Cor. 4:17, 18, “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Have you ever specially noticed how St. Paul here fosters the thought of glory? The word glory itself has never yet been fully defined. *Eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man* what heavenly glory really is, but the Apostle felt so enraptured with this hope of glory that he calls it a *weight of glory*; but still he felt that he had not sufficiently described the glory, so he adds *eternal* to the weight of glory. But still some might think that the glory would be, perhaps, like the glory of the angels, etc., so he fosters the thought further by the word EXCEEDING, *an exceeding and eternal weight of glory*—and then, to cap the climax and to show the wide distinction of our promised glory to any inferior glory, he adds two more significant terms; viz., FAR MORE. These tribulations of ours by comparison with the prize are very light and momentary, work out for us this far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things that are seen, but the unseen, eternal things.

Dear friends, it all depends upon where you are looking as to whether you are getting joy or grief out of your experiences in life. If you are looking at the earthly things, and try to serve God and mammon, you will make a failure, and you won't get peace and joy out of your experiences, either. Of Jesus, it is written that He for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, disregarded the shame, and as a result of His faithfulness, is now seated at the right hand of God. As He was, so are we in the world.

I love to read and ponder over our Lord's last sermon to His Apostles as recorded in the 15th and 16th chapters of John. In the 11th verse He says, “These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full,” thus indicating that the same joy which He, Himself had maintained, which had buoyed Him up in all of His trials and tribulations should also be their portion through life. You see, our Lord did not wish His followers to be sad, long-faced and fretful. Then He tells them how great things they must suffer, that they would be persecuted and slandered and have their names cast out as evil, yea, that the time would come when they that kill them will think they do God service. In the 20th verse, chapter 16, He tells them that for a time they would weep and lament, and the world would seem to triumph over them and rejoice, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy; then in the 22nd verse Jesus promises them perpetual joy, and your joy no man taketh from you. That perpetual joy, even in the midst of trouble, is the legacy Jesus left for His faithful followers. Joy, you know, is ranked by the Apostle amongst the foremost fruits of the spirit, and that means, dear friends, that joy, like love, and meekness, and patience, etc., needs to be cultivated as a fruit. In the first place it is essential that we have the fruit tree on which to grow these

fruits, viz., the Spirit, and no one has the Holy Spirit except the sons of God. But after we are partakers of the Holy Spirit, we need to give all diligence to put forth our signs of spiritual life, first, the leaves (confession), then the buds (zeal for service), then the blossoms (fragrant activity in service), and then we want to develop and ripen these luscious fruits, and this joy fruit is a very delicious one when properly developed and ripened. It has a very sweet-smelling savor, both to God and to man. The very smell of it has an invigorating, healing influence upon our surroundings. Thus Solomon says, “A merry heart *doeth good like a medicine*, but a broken spirit drieth the bones.” And again, “A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.”

So, dear friends, we all want to cultivate more and more of these luscious fruits of the Spirit, eminent amongst which is joy, and the way to develop joy is by sweetening our tempers more and more with the oil of joy. The Holy Spirit is likened unto an oil—an unction. It has a soothing, lubricating, healing effect. But there are certain *acids*, as it were, in our systems which seem to counteract and destroy the beneficial effects of this holy oil, and these acids are called works of the flesh and the Devil. The Apostle says, therefore, “Purge out the old leaven of bitterness, anger, hatred, strife,” etc.

As a closing word, let us all give daily diligence to purge our vessels of all acids and leaven and go often to the Throne of Grace, and the supply house (the Bible), and let us strive to grow in faith and knowledge, and your joy shall remain, and no man taketh your joy from you. Amen.