

OF JOY.

GAL. V. 22. *The Fruit of the Spirit is Joy.*

THE third fruit of justification, adoption, and sanctification, is joy in the Holy Ghost. Joy is the setting the soul upon the top of a pinnacle, 'tis the cream of the sincere milk of the word.

Q. What is this Joy?

Ans. Spiritual joy is a sweet and delightful passion, arising from the apprehension and feeling of some good, whereby the soul is supported under present troubles, and fenced against future fear.

1. *It is a delightful passion.* So it is contrary to sorrow, which is a perturbation of mind, whereby the heart is perplexed and cast down. Joy is a sweet and pleasant affection which eases the mind, exhilarates and comforts the spirits.

2. *It ariseth from the feeling of some good.* Joy is not a fancy, or bred of conceit; but is rational, and ariseth from the feeling of some good, viz. the sense of God's love and favour. Joy is so real a thing, that it makes a sudden change in a person; it turns mourning into melody. As in the spring-time, when the sun comes to our horizon, it makes a sudden alteration in the face of the universe, the birds sing, the flowers appear, the fig-tree puts forth her green figs; every thing seems to rejoice and put off its mourning, as being revived with the sweet influence of the sun; so when the Sun of Righteousness ariseth on the soul, it makes a sudden alteration, and the soul is infinitely rejoiced with the golden beams of God's love.

3. *By it the soul is supported under present troubles.* Joy stupifies and swallows up troubles; it carries the heart above them, as the oil swims above the water.

4. *The heart is fenced against future fear.* Joy is both a cordial and an antidote; it is a cordial which gives present relief to the spirits when they are sad; and an antidote, it fenceth off fear of approaching danger, Psal. xxiii. 4. 'I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me.'

Q. How is this joy wrought?

Ans. 1. It ariseth partly from the promise: as the bee lies at the breast of the flower, and sucks out the sweetness of it; so faith lies at the breast of a promise, and sucks out the quintessence of joy, Psalm xciv. 19. 'Thy comforts delight my soul;' that is the comforts which distil from the limbeck of the promises.

2. The Spirit of God (who is called the 'Comforter,' John xiv. 26.) doth sometimes drop in this golden oil of joy into the soul; the Spirit whispers to a believer the remission of his sin, and sheds God's love abroad into the heart, Rom. v. 5. whence flows infinite joy and delight.

Q. 3. *What are the seasons when God doth usually give his people these divine joys?*

A. Five seasons: 1st season, Sometimes at the blessed supper; the soul oft comes weeping after Christ in the sacrament, and God sends it away weeping for joy. The Jews had a custom at their feasts, they poured ointment on their guests, and kissed them; in the Eucharist, God often pours the oil of gladness on the saints, and kisseth them with the kisses of his lips. There are two grand ends of the sacrament, the strengthening of faith, and the flourishing of joy. Here, in this ordinance, God displays the banner of his love; here believers taste not only sacramental bread, but hidden manna. [Caution, not that God always meets the soul with joy.] He may give increase of grace, when not increase of joy; but oftentimes he pours in the oil of gladness, and gives the soul a privy seal of his love; as Christ made himself known in the breaking of bread.

2d Season. Before God calls his people to suffering, Acts xxiii. 11. 'Be of good cheer, Paul.' When God was about to give Paul a cup of blood to drink, he spiced it with joy, 2 Cor. i. 5. 'As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth:' this made the martyrs' flames beds of roses; when Stephen was stoning, he saw heaven open, and the Sun of Righteousness shined in his face. God candies our wormwood with sugar.

3d Season. After sore conflicts with Satan. Satan is the red dragon who troubleth the waters; he puts the soul into frights, makes it believe that it hath no grace, and that God doth not love it; though Satan cannot blot out a Christian's evidence, yet he may cast such a mist before his eyes, that he cannot read it. Now, when the soul hath been bruised with temptations, God will comfort this bruised reed: he now gives joy, *ad corroborandum titulum*, to confirm a Christian's title to heaven. After Satan's fiery darts, comes the white stone, no better balm to heal a tempted soul, than the oil of gladness: as after Christ was tempted, then came an angel to comfort him.

4th Season. After desertion: desertion is a poisoned arrow which shoots to the heart, Job vi. 4. God is called a fire and a light: the deserted soul feels the fire, but doth not see the light; it cries out, as Asaph, Psal. lxxvii. 8. 'Is his mercy clean gone?' Now, when the soul is in this case, and ready to faint away in despair, God shines upon the soul, and gives it some apprehension of his favour, and turns the shadow of death into

the light of the morning. God keeps his cordials for a time of fainting. Joy after desertion is like a resurrection from the dead.

5th Season. At the hour of death, such as have had no joy in their life-time, God puts in this sugar in the bottom of the cup, to make their death sweet. Now, at the last hour, when all other comforts are gone, God sends the comforter; and when their appetite to meat fails, God feeds them with hidden manna. Sure, as the wicked, before they die, have some apprehensions of hell and wrath in their conscience; so the godly have some fore-tastes of God's everlasting favour, though sometimes their diseases may be such, and their animal spirits so oppressed, that they cannot express what they feel. Jacob laid himself to sleep on a stone, where he saw a vision, a ladder, and the angels ascending and descending; so, when the saints lay themselves down to sleep the sleep of death, they have often a vision: they see the light of God's face, and have the evidences of his love sealed up to them for ever.

Q. 4. *What are the differences between worldly joys and spiritual?*

Ans. The gleanings of the one are better than the vintage of the other.

(1.) Spiritual joys help to make us better, worldly joys do often make us worse, Jer. xxii. 21. 'I spake to thee in thy prosperity, and thou saidst, I will not hear.' Pride and luxury are the two worms bred of worldly pleasures, Hof. iv. 11. 'Wine takes away the heart;' it is *fomentum libidinis*, Aug. the inflamer of lust. As Satan entered in the sop, so often in the cup; but spiritual joy makes one better; it is like cordial water, which (as physicians say) doth not only cheer the heart, but purges out the noxious humours: so divine joy is cordial water, which doth not only comfort, but cleanse; it makes a Christian more holy; it causeth an antipathy against sin: it infuseth strength to do and suffer, Neh. viii. 10. 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.' As some colours do not only delight the eye, but strengthen the sight: so the joys of God do not only refresh the soul, but strengthen it, 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.'

(2.) Spiritual joys are inward, they are heart-joys, John xvi. 22. 'Your heart shall rejoice.' Seneca saith, true joy *latet in profundo*, it is hidden within, worldly joy is *in superficie*, it lies in the outside, like the dew that wets the leaf, 2 Cor. v. 12. who 'rejoice in appearance,' (in the Greek) in the face. It goes no farther than the face, it is not within; in 'laughter the heart is sad.' Like a house which hath a gilded frontispiece, but all the rooms within are hung in mourning. But spiritual joy lies most within, 'Your heart shall rejoice.' Divine joy is like a

spring of water which runs under ground : a Christian, others can see his sufferings, but they see not his joy, Prov. xiv. 10. 'A stranger intermeddleth not with his joy.' This joy is hidden manna, hid from the eye of the world ; he hath still music, which others hear not : the marrow lies within, the best joy is within the heart.

(3.) Spiritual joys are sweeter than others, better than wine, Cant. i. 2. They are a Christian's festival ; they are the golden pot and the manna, they are so sweet, that they make every thing else sweet ; sweeten health, estate, as sweet water poured on flowers make them more fragrant and aromatical. Divine joys are so delicious and ravishing, that they do very much put our mouth out of taste to earthly delights ; as he who hath been drinking spirits of alkermes, tastes little sweetness in water. St. Paul had tasted these divine joys, and his mouth was out of taste to worldly things : the world was crucified to him, Gal. vi. 14. it was like a dead thing, he could find no sweetness in it.

(4.) Spiritual joys are more pure, they are not tempered with any bitter ingredients ; a sinner's joy is mixed with dregs, it is embittered with fear and guilt ; the wolf feeds in the breasts of his joy, he drinks wormwood wine : but spiritual joy is not muddied with guilt, but like a crystal-stream, runs pure ; it is all spirits and quintessence ; it is joy, and nothing but joy, it is a rose without prickles, it is honey without the wax.

(5.) These are satisfying and filling joys, John xvi. 24. 'Ask that your joy may be full.' Worldly joys can no more fill the heart, than a drop can fill a cistern ; they may please the palate or fancy, (Plato calls them pictures of joy) not satisfy the soul, Eccl. i. 8. 'The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing ;' but the joys of God satisfy, Ps. xciv. 19. 'Thy comforts delight my soul.' There is as much difference between spiritual joys and earthly, as between a banquet that is eaten, and one that is painted on the wall.

(6.) These are stronger joys than worldly, Heb. vi. 18. 'Strong consolation.' They are strong indeed, that can bear up a Christian's heart in trials and afflictions, 1 Thess. i. 6. 'Having received the word in much affliction, with joy.' These are roses that grow in winter, these joys can sweeten the waters of Marah ; he that hath these can gather grapes of thorns, and fetch honey out of the carcase of a lion, 2 Cor. vi. 10. 'As sorrowing yet always rejoicing.' At the end of the rod a Christian tastes honey.

(7.) These are unwearied joys : other joys, when in excess, oft cause a loathing, we are apt to surfeit on them ; too much honey nauseates : one may be tired with pleasure as well as labour ; Xerxes offered a reward to him that could find out a new pleasure : but the joys of God, though they satisfy, yet

they never surfeit ; a drop of joy is sweet, but the more of this wine the better ; such as drink of the joys of heaven, are never cloyed ; the satiety is without loathing, because they still desire the joy wherewith they are satiated.

(8.) These are more abiding joys. Worldly joys are soon gone : such as crown themselves with rose-buds, and bathe in the perfumed waters of pleasure, yet these joys which seem to be sweet are swift ; like meteors they give a bright and sudden flash, and then disappear : but the joys which believers have, are abiding ; they are a blossom of eternity, a pledge and earnest of those rivers of pleasure which run at God's right hand for evermore.

Q. 5. *Why is this joy to be laboured for ?*

Ans. Because this joy is self-existent, it can subsist in the want of all other carnal joy. This joy depends not upon outward things : as the philosophers once said, when the musicians came to them, " philosophers can be merry without music ;" he that hath this joy can be cheerful in the deficiency of carnal joys ; he can rejoice in God, in sure hope of glory, ' though the fig-tree doth not flourish,' Hab. iii. 17. Spiritual joy can go without silver crutches to support it. Spiritual joy is higher built than upon creatures, it is built on the love of God, on the promises, on the blood of Christ.

2. Because spiritual joy carries the soul through duty cheerfully ; the sabbath is a delight, religion is a recreation. Fear and sorrow hinder us in the discharge of duty ; but a Christian serves God with activity, when he serves him with joy. The oil of joy makes the wheels of obedience move faster. How fervently did they pray, whom God made joyful in the house of prayer ? Isa. lvi. 7.

3. Joy is the beginning of heaven here ; it is called the kingdom of God, Rom. xiv. 17. because it is a taste of that which the saints have in the kingdom of God. What is the heaven of the angels, but the smiles of God's face, the sensible perception and feeling of those joys which are infinitely ravishing and full of glory ? And, to encourage and quicken us in seeking after them, consider, that Christ died to purchase this joy for the saints : he was a man of sorrows, that we may be full of joy, he prays that the saints may have this divine joy, John xvii. 13. ' And now I come to thee, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.' And this prayer he now prays over in heaven ; he knows we never love him so as when we feel his love : which may encourage us to seek after this joy ; we pray for that which Christ himself is praying for, that his joy may be fulfilled in us.

Q. 6. *What shall we do to obtain this spiritual joy ?*

Ans. Walk accurately and heavenly ; God gives it after a long and close walking with him. (1.) Observe your hours :

set time every day apart for God. (2.) Mourn for sin: mourning is the seed (as Basil saith) out of which the flower of spiritual joy grows, Isa. lvii. 18. 'I'll restore comfort to my mourners.' (3.) Keep the book of conscience fair written: do not by presumptuous sins blur your evidences: a good conscience is the ark where God puts the hidden manna. (4.) Be often upon your knees, pray with life and fervency. The same Spirit that fills the heart with sighs, fills it with joys. The same Spirit that indites the prayer, seals it. When Hannah had prayed, her countenance was no more sad, 1 Sam. i. 18. Praying Christians have much intercourse with God; and none are so like to have the secrets of his love imparted, as those who hold correspondence with him: by close walking with God, we get these bunches of grapes by the way, which are an earnest of future happiness.

Q. 7. *How shall we comfort them that want joy?*

Ans: such as walk in close communion with God, have more than others.

1. Initial joy, joy *in semine* in the seed, Psal. cxvii. 11. 'Light (a metaphor for joy) is sown for the righteous.' Grace in the heart is a seed of joy; though a Christian wants the sun, he hath a day-star in his heart.

2. A believer hath real, though not royal comforts; he hath, as Aquinas saith, *gaudium in Deo*, tho' not *a Deo*: joy in God, though not from God. Joy in God is the delight and complacency the soul takes in God, Psalm civ. 34. 'My soul shall be glad in the Lord.' He that is truly gracious, is so far joyful, as to take comfort in God: though he cannot say, God rejoiceth in him, yet he can say, he rejoiceth in God.

3. He hath supporting, though not transporting comforts; he hath so much, that keeps him from sinking, Psal. cxxxviii. 3. 'Thou strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.' If a Christian hath not God's arm to embrace him, yet to uphold him: thus a Christian, who walks with God, hath something that bears up his heart from sinking; and it is but waiting a while, and he is sure of those joys which are unspeakable, and full of glory.

Use 1. Then see that religion is no melancholy thing; it brings joy: the fruit of the Spirit is joy; *Mutatur non tollitur*. A poor Christian, that feeds on bread and water, may have purer joy than the greatest monarch; though he fares hard, he feeds high: he hath a table spread from heaven, angels food, hidden manna: he hath sometimes those sweet raptures of joy, as a cause of jubilation of spirit, 2 Cor. xii. 3. he hath that which is better felt than can be expressed.

Use 2. If God gives his people such joy in this life: O then what glorious joy will he give them in heaven, Mat. xxv. 21.

‘ Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord :’ Here joy begins to enter into us, there we shall enter into joy : God keeps his best wine till last. Heliogabalus bathed himself in sweet perfumed waters : What joy when the soul shall forever bathe itself in the pure and pleasant fountain of God’s love ? What joy to see the orient brightness of Christ’s face, and have the kisses of those lips which drop sweet smelling myrrh ? *Laetabitur sponsa in amplexibus Domini*, Aug. Oh ! if a cluster of grapes here be so sweet, what will the full vintage be ? How may this set us all a-longing for that place, where sorrow cannot live, and where joy cannot die.

GROWTH IN GRACE.

2 PET. iii. 18. *But grow in grace.*

FRUIT IV.

GROWTH of grace. True grace is progressive, of a spreading, growing nature. It is with grace, as with the light : First, There is the *Crepusculum*, or day-break : then it shines brighter to the full meridian. A good Christian is like the crocodile, *quandiu vivit crescit* ; he hath never done growing. The faints are not only compared to stars for their light, but to trees for their growth, Isa. lxi. 3. Hof. xiv. 5. A good Christian is not like Hezekiah’s sun that went backward, nor Joshua’s sun that stood still, but it is always advancing in holiness, and increasing with the increase of God, Col. ii. 16. Now, to amplify and illustrate this ?

Q. 1. *How many ways may a Christian be said to grow in grace ?*

Ans. 1. He grows *vigore*, in the exercise of grace ; his lamps are burning and shining : therefore we read of a lively hope, 1 Pet. i. 3. Here is the activity of grace ; the church prays for the blowing of the Spirit, that her spices might flow forth, Cant. iv. 61.

2. A Christian grows *gradu*, in the degree of grace ; he goes from strength to strength, Psal. lxxxiv. 7. viz. from one degree of grace, to another. A faint goes from faith to faith, Rom. i. 17. and his love abounds more and more, Phil. i. 9. Here is growing in the degree.

Q. 2. *What is the right manner of a Christian’s growth ?*

Ans. 1. The right manner of growth, is to grow less in one’s own eyes, Psal. xxii. 6. ‘ I am a worm, and no man.’ The sight of corruption and ignorance make a Christian grow into a