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Poetry.

How, When, Where, Why.

You ask me how I gave my heart to Christ?
I do not know.
There came a yearning for him in my soul
So long ago,
I found earth's flowerets would fade and die,
I wept for something that could satisfy;
And then—and then—somehow I seemed to dare
To lit my broken heart to him in prayer.
I do not know—
I cannot tell you how,
I only know
He is my Saviour now.

You ask me when I gave my heart to Christ?
I cannot tell.
The day, or just the hour, I do not now
Remember well.
It must have been when I was all alone
The light of his forgiving Spirit shone
Into my heart, so clouded o'er with sin:
I think—I think 'twas then I let him in.
I do not know—
I cannot tell you when,
I only know
He is so dear since then.

You ask me where I gave my heart to Christ?
I cannot say.
That sacred place has faded from my sight,
As yesterday;
Perhaps He thought it better I should not
Remember where, How I should love that spot,
I think I could not tear myself away,
For I should want, forever, there to stay,
I do not know—
I cannot tell you where,
I only know
He came and blessed me there.

You ask me why I gave my heart to Christ?
I can reply:
It is a wondrous story; listen, while
I tell you why
My heart was drawn, at length, to seek his face:
I was alone, I had no resting place;
I heard of how He loved me, with a love,
Of depth so great—of height so far above
All human ken,
I longed such love to share;
And sought it then,
Upon my knees in prayer.

You ask me why I thought this loving Christ
Would heed my prayer?
I knew he died upon the cross for me,
I nailed him there!
I heard his dying cry, "Father, forgive!"
I saw him drink death's cup that I might live;
My head was bowed upon my breast in shame,
He called me—and in penitence I came.
He heard my prayer!
I cannot tell you how,
Nor when nor where;
Why, I have told you now.
F. G. Brown.

Religious.

JOY.

BY REV. THOMAS HENSON.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."—John xv. 11.

Looking at these words in the light of the time and circumstances under which they were spoken, we must feel that they possess inimitable pathos and sweetness. It was after the Last Supper, which, with such longing desire, Christ had desired to eat with His disciples. The shades of evening had fallen upon them, and Judas Iscariot was gone out into the night-gloom to betray Him; thereby lifting a weight from the Redeemer's heart, so that He said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." It was after He had so wisely, yet so tenderly met Peter's half-sobbing question, "Lord whither goest Thou?" and his other half-rebellious one, "Why cannot I follow Thee now?"—after he had in a few simple words replied to the despondent question of Thomas, as to His destiny and the way to it—after He had satisfied the heart-craving request of Philip for a sufficient manifestation of the Father—after, in answer to the half-curious, half-sceptical question of Jude, as to the singular philosophy of concealed manifestations, He had made it so clear, that very glorious revelations of God can be made to, and enjoyed by the eyes of obedient love, which must be altogether imperceptible to the unspiritual and the sensual. It was near to Gethsemane, to the Judgment hall, and to Calvary, from whence vivid visions of the agony, the mocking

and scourging, and the suffering and death there to be endured came upon Him. Here and then it was that He talked to sorrowing men of his joy.

"My joy." This may be considered as threefold.

1. The joy of God. Self-existent as Himself, the essential out-flow of His own nature. But who can conceive what that is? Imagine the absence of the material universe. God, alone lives, and fills universal space. Infinitely wise, good, and holy, He is also infinitely joyful. What is the nature, and what are the manifestations of that joy? We can conceive of Him creating these suns and worlds, and peopling some of them with intelligent beings, pure and happy, as an expression of His love and joy. Such joy, however, must be inconceivably profound and sublime. Yet we often think, that to a restless, devout spirit, free from sinful enslavement and condemnation, nature sometimes affords one beautiful illustration of it. Go out in the bright spring Sabbath morning, the day which binds you to be free from the chains of toil, while the sun, unclouded, is yet approaching his zenith; when the wind, soft and balmy from the chambers of the south, blows upon you refreshingly; when the hills and fields, covered with soft verdant grass, and spangled with buttercups and bright-eyed daisies, reflect the sunbeams in softer forms, inviting the lambs to gambol, the sheep to feed, and the cattle to meditatively chew the cud; when the larks, the thrushes, and other songsters fill the air with thrilling harmonies; when the flowers flash out their gorgeous hues, and show their mellow tints, filling the air with a rich perfume of mingled odours; when the moth and the butterfly flutter in the sunshine, and the bee hums on the wing, or sips its nectar from the dew-filled cups; when the brook ripples sweet music like the whispers of a child's love; and the sea, in ceaseless, placid splashing on the shore, or in deep-toned swelling measures from its great bosom, sings its mighty anthem of praise. Surely these are the symbols of joy, pure, restful joy, yet only feeble symbols of the inconceivable joy of God. This was Christ's joy: He was with God, and came out from God, and the joy of God was His.

2. The joy of conscience. This was on His human side. He was conscious of perfect love to God, and of perfect obedience rendered to Him. Without hesitation or misgiving He could say, "Even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love." On this level, with Christ as with His friends, true heart joy is the fruit of true heart love, generating full obedience; so true is it, that love feeds its own light, and obedience carries its own reward. Every imperfection in love is a channel of fear, but perfect love casteth out fear. Every ripple of fear is a breach upon perfect joy. Christ's joy of conscience was perfect, because His love was perfect. Whatever might befall Him in the next few hours, He was conscious of His own perfect love and obedience to His Father—confident, too, of His Father's unabated, unchanging love to Him. In His conscience He had a perennial spring of joy.

3. Joy of anticipation. God, infinite and eternal, anticipates nothing; to anticipate is very human. Yet most truly did Jesus look forward to "the joy that was set before Him." "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self." "If God be glorified in the Son, God shall also glorify Him in Himself." And yet again, He anticipates the joy of having His people with Him—"Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold my glory." The voice of prophecy had deeply inspired His soul to anticipate the fullest satisfaction for His travail; and now he has joy, full, unmingled, in contemplating His final glory, when, as Lord of all, He shall Head-up all things in Himself, and God, through Him, shall be all in all. And He, with all His consciousness

of what awaited Him, so calm, so restful, standing there in the midst of those half-sobbing men whose hearts were filled with trouble, could not but impress them with His profound joy. Just as in the Atlantic, when storm and tempest agitate the waters, rolling the waves up like hills, filling ships and mariners with confusion, terror, and death, while yet down in the ocean depths, all is tranquil and restful as an infant's sleep; so was it with Jesus. Outwardly the treachery of Judas—the hard denial of Peter—the terrified flight of the rest; beyond these, the merciless fury of his foes—the malicious scorn of the priests—the scourging of Pilate—and the agony of death; but within, in His soul, calm and peaceful, resting in the joy of God, the joy of a pure conscience, and the joy of mediatorial anticipation.

Selfish conservatism is not an element of pure joy. As light, and air, and water are dispersive, so is joy, especially the joy of God. The Divine Being could not contain His joy unshared, He created a universe that he might pour it into and through it. Neither can Jesus, God with us, contain His joy within Himself alone. He gathers men, women and children about Him, redeems them, sanctifies them, and teaches them with gentle words, that He may fill them with His own joy and send them forth to make constant increase of it in themselves, by love, obedience, and fruitfulness.

Christian life is a separation from the world of sin and carnal pleasures. Godly souls are not to be unequally yoked together with the ungodly. They are to come out from all that is unclean and hurtful to spiritual life, to be entirely separated. That separation may create a pang, may cost a right hand, or an eye—for the world has its charms, sin has its pleasures, and godless wealth its power. But then, the bitterness and loss of separation and self-denial are more than compensated by the new friendships in Christ, and the sweetness of Divine satisfaction made known to the soul. Bunyan's picture of "Christian" leaving wife, children, and all in the City of Destruction, is the true Gospel idea. He who aspires to the heavenly kingdom must forsake the earthly one. The law of the new kingdom admits not sinful associations and delights, but it abundantly rewards isolation therefrom with Divine relationship. "I will be to you a Father, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." To faith and love the afflictions of God's people are preferable to the pleasures of sin, which are only for a season; and the reproach of Christ is greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for it has an unseen recompense. The world has its pleasures, but the cup breaks, and the sparkling draught evaporates in its votary's hand. But at God's right hand the pleasures are overcome. The trumpet which summons the soul to Christ tells honestly of tribulation, but then it also assures impregnable peace. In this separation unto God, love, having its root in Him, and its life in us, is the constraining power, and joy, the joy of Christ in us, the ripening fruit.

Moreover, Christian life dwells in a higher region. Its citizenship is in heaven, from whence it expects the Lord Jesus, who will change the corruptible into the incorruptible, and give both employment and enjoyment there. Being risen with Christ, it sets its mind on things above, where He sits at the right hand of God. It lives with Christ in the heavens, in heavenly places. The gold and silver of earth, except as they can be made to serve heavenly uses, are empty baubles compared with the treasures of God. Earth's palaces are dim and sordid compared with the resplendent thrones and crowns of heaven. The joyous music of heavenly life exceeds the earthly, as the strains of Mozart or Handel do those of a beggar's wail. And though at present it is a pilgrim here, finding no resting place, still it is unable to drink the joys of sin—they are bitter to its purified taste. It possesses a joy indescribable,

the joy of Christ. Not in mere ephemeral, fitful gleams and flashes, but ever flowing from Christ Himself.

For he says, "That My joy may be in you." What! that joy of God which is the joy of Christ? Yes; else how can the Christian have joy in himself? Christ's joy in us is the condition of our "joy being full." Not only joy in Christ as their Redeemer, but that joy of God, and in God, which He possessed, should, as it were, percolate from Him to them just as the sap does from root and stem to the dependent branches and twigs. In Him this joy was perfect, for as Stier says, "He had it from the beginning, He brought it with Him out of eternity. Our joy is made perfect out of His, the more fully we grow together with Him, and bring forth fruit." To be sure, you cannot put an ocean into a wine-glass, but you can fill that wine-glass out of the ocean; and, even so, the infinite joy of God cannot be put into an imperfect creature, but that creature can be filled with His joy. And to be united to Christ, and in Him included in the love of God, must be perfect joy. What a compensation for coming out of the world for God!

It is Christ's desire that his people should possess this joy abundantly, and also, that they should manifest its influence before others. His joy must have been very clear to His disciples—yea, even to His foes. How it sustained Him, and by it He possessed His soul in patience. But too often Christians afford a poor specimen. Their whole deportment suggests vinegar rather than milk; aloe rather than honey. Christ has spoken, that His joy may be in us. Let us hear and obey, so that it may be, and our joy be so full, that its influence may be felt by all around us.

Luthardt's Apologetical Discourses on the Fundamental Truths of Christianity.

(Translated from the German by Prof. D. M. Welton.)

SEVENTH DISCOURSE.

Revelation.

This bad moral nature—as Kant the moralist called it: this radical evil—it is more than simply the power of our sensuous nature. It is a spiritual power of moral perversion; it is an evil inclination and tendency of our will. And should we designate that which is deepest and most mischievous within us, we should feel obliged to say: we are all radically egotists—only in different forms. It is this selfish nature that mixes with everything, even with our best virtues, and corrupts them, and it is only excelled perhaps by our self-righteousness and self-satisfaction.

From this evil nature we cannot deliver ourselves. We have indeed a moral consciousness in us and a moral power of will. But our moral knowledge, our conscience frees us not from our sin, but convicts us of the same; it commands and chastises us, but does not help us. The power of our will serves us indeed to this end—and this is demanded of all and cannot be remitted to any—that we govern ourselves, and it is valuable for self-government; but we do not hereby change the evil disposition of our hearts. We place ourselves in fetters, but hereby we only make ourselves slaves of the moral law and come not into true moral freedom. Our heart must be changed, the inner bias of our will—then only does it go well with us. Kant has contented himself with requiring that man act in opposition to his inclinations. But this is not the highest standpoint of morality. On the contrary Schiller rightly holds:

To triumph over the heart is great, I honor the brave; But him who conquers by means of his heart, I esteem still more. But then the heart itself must be rightly ordered. Only this is effected by no one of himself. Schiller supposed that Aesthetics exerted this power—he put this in the place of the categorical imperative of Kant—; through the morning-gate of the beauti-

ful must we enter the land of moral freedom. But this has shown itself to be a deception. No natural power, no strength of intellect can make us other men than we are. God only can do this. For who can change his own heart? A higher power must come upon us to renew our inner life. We are unable to perform the work. The liberating and renovating moral power can come to us from God only.

The fundamental principle of christian morality was, that man must rely upon his own moral power, while Christianity refers him to the grace that is revealed in Christ. The weakness of that morality is demonstrated by the decline of the old world, while the gospel proclamation of mercy has renewed the world and shown itself to be the only moral force, which conquers the moral contradictions of human life.

Human existence and its history are full of contradictions, which at their lowest bottom are of a moral kind and nature. Contradictions of the inner life, between desire and realization, between purpose and fulfilment, and contradictions of the outer life, as the never ending conflict of truth with falsehood or the injustice of the external lot &c. For these contradictions there is no other explanation than that early transaction which set human life at variance with itself, by which the moral world ran from its proper groove. Whence now must come healing and help for this condition? No better moral knowledge, as Socrates supposed, no progress of culture and civilization, as many now imagine, can meet the wants of the case. For the completest knowledge and the highest discernment are impotent against the evil inclinations of the heart. And with the unfolding of intellectual power evil is also developed. And as it is with individual men, so is it also in the history of the race. Civilization changes the form of sin, but does not diminish its essence and power. Culture put art in the place of naturalness. Hereby sin became the sin of culture, it was only refined, but it was none the less sin; indeed, oftentimes culture gave it an intense form. Thus the development of the human mind cannot of itself lead from sin, but God must meet it with another power, and place that power in humanity and in human history. We all carry within us an ideal, the thought and picture of a state of things, in which everything is as it should be, in which God's will only is continually and joyfully done and righteousness reigns upon earth, and no guilt any more presses the conscience, and no passion holds the mind and will under bondage, and we have nothing to be ashamed of or to fear, it we keep near the Holy One. We name this as our ideal of the Kingdom of God. That Kingdom is the solution of all contradictions, the goal of all history, its impelling, moulding power. It is no natural product of history. We cannot gather grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles. The kingdom of God must be an act and achievement of God, the result of his revelation.

Thus in sin, which has put our being out of harmony with God, the necessity of a revelation must in the last analysis be laid, if we would generally derive benefit from it.

3. Various objections have indeed been raised against the possibility of a revelation. But these are easily disposed of. In reality there is only one objection to the possibility of revelation, and that is: there is no God. Where no personal and living God is known, there of course the possibility of a revelation of God cannot be admitted. Thus many arguments are advanced by which to veil this last and true ground of a revelation. Whoever, however, believers in a personal and living God, very readily admits the possibility of a revelation of him. For why should he who is life be immovable, why should he who is love be silent? This were a contradiction of his being. And were he ever so clearly shown u—this contradiction or inconsistency in him would greatly perplex our faith. So far from revelation being inconsistent with God's character, the