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CHRISTIAN JOY AND WORLDLY MIRTH

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"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth," Ecclesiastes 7:2-4. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him," Psalm 126:5-6.

I am asking you to think with me on a subject I have been thinking on for some time: **Christian Joy and Worldly Mirth**. I make no boast that it will be pleasing to the flesh, but through grace it may be of profit to the soul.

Christian Joy and Worldly Mirth. I suppose there was never as little of the one and as much of the other as in this our day. If some heavenly scales should be let down from above and Christian joy should be weighed, I am afraid the tonnage would be light. But the tonnage of worldly mirth would be heavy, or rather it would be bulky it might not weigh so much after all, for there is nothing solid and substantial about all this worldly joy.

Christian Joy and Worldly Mirth. The two must not be confused. Christian joy is from above; worldly mirth is from beneath. Christian joy is a divine product; worldly mirth is an

invention of the deceiver. Christian joy is in the energy of the Holy Spirit; worldly mirth is in the energy of the flesh. Christian joy is not destroyed by tribulation; worldly mirth is dependent upon circumstances.

We are so often told that the Christian should not be long-faced and gloomy. But this statement needs to be taken with a grain of salt, to say the least. If it means the Christian should not be concerned for the state of Zion and of heavy heart because of the sad estate of the lost, then the statement is not the axiom many take it to be. Is it not written in Holy Writ: *"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion?"* What prophet of old was not a weeping man? Who had a heavier heart than Paul? Hear him as he says, *"I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart for my brethren, my kinsmen after the flesh."* We read in the Bible that Jesus wept, but I have never found where it says, Jesus laughed.

The Christian life is a paradox: *"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."* The believer can rejoice in Jesus Christ, and at the same time have a heavy heart for others. The believer can rejoice in his salvation without forgetting the sad state of Christendom and the fearful danger of the lost.

But worldly mirth shuts its eyes to the real facts. It forgets the coming day of judgment. It stops its ears to the cry of warning. It stifles the cry of the soul for safety. Worldly mirth is associated with the pleasure of sin for a season.

Where do you find hilarity and loud laughing? Is it not in the world's pleasure parlors? Visit the amusement centers of this world and you will find

an abundance of worldly mirth. The deceiver of this world has built a kingdom of deception where everything is confused. He has changed the price tags on everything. Things of lasting and eternal value are labeled, "Not worth the taking," while trifles and poisons are marked high. Satan has turned this world into a sort of fool's paradise where his dupes are satiated—but never satisfied. It is God who satisfieth the longing soul and filleth the hungry soul with gladness.

The biggest enterprise in this world is the entertainment business. The highest wages are paid men and women whose sole business is to make people laugh. This entertainment business is made to appeal to every type of personality and culture. It reaches from comedy to tragedy; from low class to high class drama. This entertainment business leaves nobody out. It caters to the high and the low; to the rich and the poor; to the intellectuals and to the ignoramuses, to the socially elite and to the social outcasts.

Worldly mirth comes pretty high. Satan charges for his entertainment, and he has no bargain counter, either. Everything you get in Satan's world comes high. It costs in money and in tears and broken hearts, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. Gambling joints, drinking dives, amusement centers of all kinds and variety, are Satan's bid for your soul.

Solomon was wiser in the things of this world than any man of his day. He set his heart on things that would produce mirth and laughter. He pursued the ways of pleasure and reached this conclusion: *"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to*

the house of feasting....Sorrow is better than laughter for by sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools."

Let me draw still another contrast between Christian joy and worldly mirth. The believer's sorrows will soon be over and the world's mirth will also soon cease. The believer is passing through his night here and now, but joy cometh in the morning. When worldly mirth has died away in the distance, Christian joy will have only begun.

Here are some occasions for Christian joy:

1. The joy of salvation. When the seventy returned to Christ and exaltingly told him that the demons were subject to them through His name, He said, *"Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you: but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven,"* Luke 10:20. When Sir James Simpson was asked what was his greatest discovery, he instantly replied, "It is that I have found a Saviour."

2. The believer has a person in whom he can rejoice. From a prison cell, Paul called upon the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord always. Christ is dependable. He will never let you down. You can depend on His blood to make you safe. You can depend on His word to make you sure. *"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."*

3. The believer has a hope in which he can rejoice. The believer has a future. *"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."* Some of the sweetest joys we have are by way of anticipation. Rejoicing in the hope of a better place will make us patient in present tribulation. There is the hope of our Lord's return; the hope of personal perfection when we are made like Him, the hope of heaven where there will be nothing but delights.

4. When the believer is persecuted for loyalty to Christ, this is an occasion for joy. *"And they departed from*

the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name," Acts 5:41. *"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you,"* Matthew 5:12. *"But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy,"* I Peter 4:13.

Let us accept God's verdict about things. He knows their value and He is honest with us. The father of lies puts great value on the things that produce worldly mirth. To hope for things this side of the grave is tragic and most pathetic. And yet this describes the hope of multitudes. A young man was being interviewed by an old preacher. He was asked what his plans and hopes were after he had finished high school. He replied that he would go on to college, work hard, and graduate with honors. "What then?" queried the minister. The young man said he would take a post-graduate work in his chosen field, in the hope of being one of the most capable and successful. "What then?" continued the old minister. The young man then told of his plans to marry, settle down in some good town, work at his profession, make a lot of money, and move into the best society. "What then?" persisted the old man. The young man was not so glib by this time, but he went on to say that he would finally become old and have to retire, but that he hoped to have competency for his old age. "And then what?" continued the old man. The young man dropped his head and said, that of course, he would have to die. "And then what?" the old man asked. And to this he had no answer, for all his plans and hopes were this side of the grave and eternity. The poor worldling the man without Christ has his hopes, but they are dying hopes.

The Christian hope is the well-founded expectation of future good. The Christian hope is a living hope. *"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall*

ye also appear with him in glory," Colossians 3:2-4.

WITNESSING...

A medical missionary was leaving by ship for a foreign field. The famous Andrew Bonar of Scotland came to the pier to bid farewell to his friend, only to discover that the doctor was to be accompanied by his sister.

Turning to her, he said, "My dear, I don't believe I've ever had the privilege of making your acquaintance. I'm pleased that you are going as your brother's assistant, and I'd like to remember you in my prayers. What is your first name?"

"Christine," was the reply. "I like that!" said the aged servant of the Lord, "for you have Christ in your name. I trust you also have Him in your heart!"

The woman looked away and was silent for a moment. Before she could think of an answer, the last call to board the ocean liner was given. Convicted by Bonar's words, she began to think about her relationship to the Lord. Although she went to church regularly, she suddenly realized that she was not truly saved and had never actually become a "new creature" in Christ. That night she knelt and asked the Saviour to pardon her sins and make her His child.

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SALVATION

BY: C. D. COLE

Salvation is the most important word ever uttered and yet how meaningless it is to the masses who are absorbed with the thought of food and raiment and pleasure, during their brief stay on this earth.

Salvation--the greatest blessing that can possibly come to a human soul, and without which it would be better never to have been born--is the most neglected thing in the world today. Salvation is the blessed gift of God, paid for by His darling Son; and yet that which conceited men think they can earn with their own puny hands.

What Is Salvation?

Salvation means soundness and safety. The opposite of a saved state is to be unsound and to be in peril. There is the double thought of sickness and danger in sin. Sin is both a disease and a crime. Sin as a disease has to do with our nature--it is a state of being. As a crime it has to do with our position or standing before God as a transgressor of His law. Salvation is deliverance from the curse of God's law and deliverance from a sinful nature.

Salvation From The Guilt of Sin.

1. Instantaneous. "The moment a sinner believes and trusts in the crucified Son, His pardon at once he receives, salvation in full through His blood."

2. It rests upon the substitutionary death of Christ. II Corinthians 5:21, "*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" Galatians 3:13, "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*" I Peter 2:24, "*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*" Isaiah 53:5-6, "*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our*

iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

3. It is eternal. John 5:24, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*" John 6:47, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*" Hebrews 10:14, "*For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*"

4. It is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8, "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*" Romans 6:23, "*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

Salvation from the guilt of sin is called justification. This means that there is nothing against us in the sight of the law. The law inflicted punishment for our sins on the body of Christ.

Salvation From The Nature of Sin.

1. It is progressive. It is not done in an instant, but is a process. It begins in the new birth in babyhood and ends in the glorification of the body. You can grow in the grace of sanctification you can become more and more sanctified, but you cannot become more justified.

2. It is certain of accomplishment. Philippians 1:6, "*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*" Proverbs 4:16, "*For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.*" I John 3:2, "*Beloved,*

now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

3. There is a group of scriptures which give us the two contrasted conditions of believers and unbelievers, as processes going on in the present, but not complete. I Corinthians 1:18, "*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*" Acts 2:47, "*Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*" II Corinthians 2:15, "*For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish.*"

In these passages the human race is divided into two classes: "*Them that are being saved and them that are perishing.*" The condition of neither class is said to be fixed or complete. There is the thought of progressiveness. Some are being saved; others are perishing. The climax of neither state will be reached until the resurrection. No man is what he ultimately will be. Believers are progressing towards a condition of complete sinlessness utter soundness and glorious health; while unbelievers are progressing towards a deterioration that is indescribable. The climax of being saved is to be conformed to the likeness of Christ; but who can say what the climax of a perishing state will be as to the actual state of the man? In either case there will be meetness for environment every man will be fitted for the place where he is to go. Heaven is a prepared place for the prepared people of God; there will be a prepared place for the devil and his angels.