

THE JOY SET BEFORE US

MY DEAR SISTERS IN CHRIST,—I have been asked to write a paper to be read at your Class which is held at Sister—'s house.

I am now quite unable to say anything but just what is very simple, and to offer you some of the comforting thoughts that have helped me along the great and terrible wilderness—a wilderness which in our day means a course of self-denial and cross-bearing, a giving up of many things we hold very dear and a resolute hold-fast of many things that we shrink from.

We are all fellow - pilgrims with hearts all fashioned alike and aspirations all of the same character. We often cry out for a little joy, but God has so arranged matters that we cannot have much now. However, He tells us that He has joy for us ahead, and asks us to wait His time.

I thought it would be good to try to realise in measure this joy that is set before us, by seeing its analogy to that sort of happiness which would now bring joy to our souls.

God has so formed our mental constitution as to make perfect happiness dependent on affinity to Him. In the future He will let us drink of the rivers of His pleasures.

Some are liable to think that they know something of happiness now, but I rather doubt it, except as they approach God in communion through Christ.

Why, we do not even know what life is yet. Our present existence is not life at all as compared with immortality.

The condemnation on Adam was “In the day thou eatest thereof, dying, thou shalt die.” Adam ate and became a dying man henceforth, so that the only thing Adam's race can know is dying, not living.

Our mortal career is merely a dying period and we surely need not grieve at the conclusion of a dying day. What we want is life, and that more abundantly. As to happiness now, well, when we do attain to the joy set before us, we shall regard it as a mild form of misery. We are all endowed with instincts that long for gratification.

We need not for a moment fear that the instincts are wrong, for they are implanted by divine wisdom, and I think that they will mostly, by divine wisdom, be stereotyped in the immortal state. It is in this fact we may now imagine what delights God has in store for His children. Joy is made up of a good many things. Brother Roberts has often said that it consists in the harmonious action of EVERY phrenological organ—all acting together.

No doubt Adam, before he sinned, had the same brain formation that he had after the fall, and as he was made very good and in the image of the Elohim, it is highly probable that when equal to the angels, our mentality will not change its present make-up, but that our rebellious human will-power will be perfectly merged in the divine. This will make a

world of difference to character, for character, good or bad, depends on the direction of will. More strength to regulate will is what we agonise for now, and what we shall obtain when in full possession of spirit.

When we become partakers of the divine nature, when we are inseparably affinitized to God, when our wills and minds are absorbed in His, of course His mind and ours will be one. In doing God's will we shall be satisfying self, only it will be a new sort of self, a divine self. Our minds and wills being merged in His, does not necessitate an entire change of phrenology, for I think that our instincts being divine in origin, and elohistic in character are a reflex of the mentality of Deity Himself. The Kingdom He is going to give His children embraces all that our phrenology now craves.

Owing to sin, we are now detached from God. He is outside our mere natural perceptions, and as finite beings, our intelligence can climb no higher in divine directions than our perceptions of hearing, seeing, and feeling will allow it. The human mind does not include the God of Truth within its operations, and naturally does not care to make an effort to contemplate Him.

To those who patiently continue in well doing, God proposes to bestow glory, honour, and immortality. This promise includes everything that anybody can really want. Do we yearn close communion with a Father whose love transcends all earthly experience? It may be ours if we take the right course for obtaining it. Do we crave a deeper, wider understanding of the source and giver of life? Do we want to be in touch with the sudden subtle force which fills all space, and which is the strength of Deity? Do we desire a closer affinity with the perfect man, Christ Jesus, in eternal companionship with him? Are we not longing, like Mary of old, to fall at his feet in prostrate adoration? Are we not agonizing for an audible expression of his love for us and for his invitation to enter into his joy? All this will be ours if we are faithful, and they are all of a nature that our present brain organisation is fitted to appreciate. Should we like to ride the high places of the earth in royal splendour? Should we appreciate adoration of a righteous population? Should we like to live in palaces instead of holes and corners? Should we like to be the channel of blessings untold, with plenty of time for everything, and plenty of strength for every occupation? We can contemplate with joy our enthusiasm when with Christ, we lead the worship of suppliant crowds in the House of Prayer for all nations. We can imagine the intellectual zest with which we shall administer the law that goes forth from Zion. We can revel in the prospect of the Paridisaic beauties of our respective homes, the stately splendour of our centres of jurisdiction, the magnificent equipment of each regal court. We can imagine the godly conviviality which will characterise the social intercourse of the sons and daughters of God. Oh, what ripples of laughter—such sweet laughter—will flow along the halls of mirth and gladness, when, with unbounded hospitality, we exchange the delights of entertaining immortal guests. And then, what joy to retire to that superb residence of the holy oblation, where Christ will have his portion, and will share it with his cherished bride, where there will be a holy abandonment; in communion with Christ, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets.

The only difficulty in imagining these things lies not in their being outside our capacity to desire but in their being so far above our mortal experience.

Ah, yes, we do need some joy; we crave it; we are made for it, and if among God's children, we are destined for it. It is hard to trudge the wilderness year in and year out, but Canaan lies the other side, and the angel of the Lord will go before us to guide us. We have only to travel a step at a time. The wilderness must be wilderness, you know. It is of God's own appointment and He is "too wise to err and too good to be unkind." Let us be of good courage, and He will give us the desires of our heart.—Affectionately your fellow pilgrim,

Mary G. Brabyn.