

FULLNESS OF JOY OUR PRIVILEGE

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A SERMON

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And these things we write unto you, that your joy may be full.”
1 John 1:4.

VERY closely does the Apostle John resemble his Lord in the motive that prompted him to write this Epistle! You remember how Christ said in His last discourse to His disciples on the eve of His passion, “These things have I spoken unto you that your joy may be full”—and how He counseled them, “Ask and receive that your joy may be full”—and how He prayed to the Father for them, “that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves.” Here, then, the beloved disciple, moved by the Spirit of God, reflects and follows out the same gracious purpose—“These things we write unto you, that your joy may be full.” What an evidence of our Savior’s deep attachment to His people that He is not content with having made their ultimate salvation sure, but He is anxious concerning their present state of mind! He delights that His people should not only be safe, but happy! Not merely saved, but rejoicing in their salvation! It does not please your Savior for you to hang your head as the bulrush and go mourning all your days. He would have you rejoice in Him always and for this end He has made provision and to this end He has given us precepts. Therefore it appears—

I. THAT THE CHRISTIAN’S JOY NEEDS LOOKING AFTER.

We should not find the Apostle John writing to promote that which, in the natural order of things, would be sure to occur. In this object of pastoral anxiety, he seems to include the whole of the Apostolic College with himself when he says, “These things we write unto you that your joy might be full,” as if your joy would not be full unless Inspired Apostles should be commissioned of God to further it. Your joy then, I say, needs looking after. I do not doubt but you have very suggestive proofs of this, yourselves, *in your external circumstances*. You cannot always rejoice because, although your treasure is not in this world, your affliction is. Poverty will sometimes be too heavy a cross for you to sing under. Sickness sometimes casts you upon a bed on which you have not, as yet, learned to rejoice. Losses befall you in business, failures of hope, forsaking of friends and cruelty of foes—and any of these may prove like winter nights which nip the green leaves of your joy and make them fade and fall off your branches. You cannot always rejoice, but sometimes there is a necessity that you should be in heaviness through manifold temptations. I suppose none of you are so perfectly happy as to be without some trial. Your joy will need to be looked after, then, lest floods should come in and quench it. You will need to cry to Him who alone can keep its flame burning, to trim it with fresh oil.

I suppose, too, that *you have moods and susceptibilities* which make it no easy matter to maintain perpetual joy. If you have not, I have. Sometimes there will be deep depression of spirit—you can scarcely tell why. That strong wing with which you mounted like an eagle will seem to flap the air in vain. That heart of yours, which once flew upwards like the lark rising from amidst the dew, will lie cold and heavy like a stone upon the earth, and you will find it hard to rejoice.

Besides, *sin* will stop the beginning of your holy mirth, and when you would dance for joy, like David before the Ark, some internal corruption will come to hamper your delight. Ah, Beloved, it is not easy to sing while you fight. Christian soldiers ought to do it—they should march to battle with songs of triumph, that their spirits may be nerved to desperate valor against their inbred corruptions, but sometimes the garment rolled in blood and the dust, and the turmoil will stop for awhile the looked for shout of victory. With trials many and manifold—trials from the thorns and briars of this fallen world, trials from Satanic suggestions, trials from the uprisings of black fountains of corruption within your own polluted hearts—you have, indeed, need that your joy, to keep it full and flowing at high tide, should be guarded and supplied by an influence above your own—and fed from a celestial spring!

I dare say you have learned by this time, my Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, how exceedingly necessary it is that this joy of ours should be abundant. When full of joy, we are more than a match for the adversary of souls, but when our joy is gone, fear slackens our sinews, and, like Peter, we may be vanquished by a little maid! When our joy in the Lord is at its fullest, we can bear that the fig tree should not blossom, that the herd should be cut off from the stall and the flocks from the field, but how heavy our sorrows are to bear, how impatient we become when the chains that link Heaven and earth are disarranged, or the communication in any way intercepted. If we can see the Savior's face without a cloud between, then temptation has no power over us, and all the glittering shams that sin can offer us are eclipsed in their brilliance by the true gold of spiritual joy which we have in our possession. Oh, what rapture!—

*“I would not change my blest estate
For all that earth calls good or great!
And while my faith can keep her hold,
I envy not the sinner's gold.”*

Thus the Christian, by his holy joy, outbraves temptation and is strong to endure a martyrdom of vice. Why, you can do anything when the joy of the Lord is within you! Like a roe or a young hart, you leapt over the mountains of Bether. The mountains cannot appall you—you make a stepping-stone across the brook. The heaviest tempests which lower over you cannot chill nor dampen your courage, for your song pierces it, and your soul mounts above it all into the clear blue of fellowship with your God! But when this joy is gone, then are we weak, like Samson when his hair was shorn. We become the slaves of temptation and if we do not yield to its treacherous enticements, at any rate, it harasses us, and so enervates the power with which we were known to glorify our God. The Christian's joy needs looking to. If any of you have lost the joy of the Lord, I pray you do not think it a small loss. I have heard of a minister who said that a Christian lost nothing by sin—and then he added—“except his joy.” And one replied, “Well, and what else would you have him lose?” That is quite enough! To lose the light of my Father's Countenance. To lose my full assurance of interest in Christ. To lose my Heaven below—oh, this is a loss great enough! Let us walk carefully, let us walk prayerfully so that we may realize perpetual joy and peace even to the fullest! Let none of us be content to sit down in misery. There is such a thing as getting habituated to melancholy. My bias is toward that state of mind, but, by the Grace of God, I resist it. If we begin to give way to this foolishness, we shall soon weave forged chains for ourselves which we cannot readily snap. Take your harp from the willows, Believers. Do not let your fingers forget the well-known strings. Come, let us praise Him. If we have looked black in the face for awhile, let us brighten up with the thoughts of Christ! At any rate, let us not be easy till we have shaken off this lethargic distemper and once again come into the normal state of health in which a child of God should be found—that of spiritual joy!

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S JOY LIES MAINLY IN THINGS REVEALED, otherwise it would not find its fitting sustenance in Inspired Words.

If the Christian's joy lay in the wine vat and in the barn, in the landed estate, or the hoarded purse, it would only be necessary that the vineyard should yield plenteous clusters, that the harvest should be crowned with abundance, that peace should prevail and trade should prosper—and forthwith the heritor and the merchant have all that heart could wish. But the Christian's joy is not touched by these vulgar things. These commonplace satisfactions do not suit the noble mind of the Believer! He thanks God for all the bounties of the basket and the barn, but he cannot feast his soul upon stocks or fruits that perish with the using. He needs something better! The Apostle John seems to tell us this when he says, “And *these* things write I unto you”—nothing about prosperity in this world, but all about fellowship with Christ—“And *these* things we write unto you, that your joy may be full.” From which I infer that *everything which is revealed to us in Scripture has for its intention the filling up of the Christian's joy.*

What is Scripture all about, then? Is it not, first and foremost, *concerning Jesus Christ?* Take this Book and distil it into one word, and I will tell you what it is—it is JESUS! All this is but the body of Christ. I may look upon all these pages as the swaddling-bands of the infant Savior, and if you unroll Scripture, you come to Jesus Christ, Himself. Now, Beloved, is not Jesus Christ the sum and summit of your joy? I hope we do not utter a falsehood when we sing, as it is our custom—

*“Jesus the very thought of Thee,
With rapture fills my breast,
Tho' sweeter far Your face to see,*

And in Your bosom rest.”

Jesus—Man yet God—allied to us in ties of blood. Why, here is mirth! Here is Christmas all the year round! In the Nativity of the Savior there is joy for us—the Babe born in Bethlehem—God has taken Man into communion with Himself! Jesus the Savior—here is release from the groans of sin! Here is an end to the means of despair! He comes to break the bars of brass and to cut the gates of iron in sunder—

***“Jesus, the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease!
‘Tis music in the sinner’s ears,
‘Tis life, ‘tis health, ‘tis peace!”***

Scripture, surely, has well taken its cue! Would it make us joyful, it has done well to make Christ its head and front.

All the doctrines of the Bible have a tendency, when properly understood and received, to foster the Christian’s joy. Let us mention one or two of them. There is that ancient, much-abused, but most delightful Doctrine of Election, that “all worlds before,” Jesus elected His people and looked with eyes of Infinite Love upon them as He saw them in the glass of futurity. What? Christian, can you believe yourself “loved with an everlasting love,” and not rejoice? Was it not the Doctrine of Election that made David dance before the Ark? When Michel sneered at him for dancing, he said, “It was before the Lord who had chosen me before your father (Saul), and all his house.” Surely to be chosen of God, to be selected from the mass of mankind and made favorites of the heart of Deity—this ought to make us, in our worst moments, sing with joy of heart! Oh, that Doctrine of Election! I wish some of you would acquaint yourselves with it in the Psalmody of the Church, rather than in the wrangling of the schools! It is a tree that puts forth its luxuriance in the tropical climate of Divine Love—but it looks dwarfed and barren in the arctic regions of human logic! Then there are the Doctrines which like living waters, drop from this sacred and hidden fountain. Take, for instance, that of Redemption. To be bought with a price—a price whose efficacy is not questionable—bought so that we are now the property of Jesus, never to be lost! Bought not with that general redemption which holds to the sinner’s eye a precarious contingency, but bought with an effectual ransom which saves every blood-bought sinner because he was redeemed—his own proper self, of God’s own good will! Oh, here is occasion for song!—

***“Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God—
He to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.”***

Can you see the blood-mark on yourself, and not rejoice? Oh, Christian, surely your joy ought to be full! Or turn to the Doctrine of Justification and consider how, through faith, every Believer is “accepted in the Beloved,” and stands, wrapped in Jesus’ righteousness, as fair in God’s sight as if he had never sinned. Why, here is a theme for joy! Know and acknowledge your union with Christ—

***“One with Jesus,
By eternal union one!”***

Members of His body, “of His flesh, and of His bones,” and what?—not a song after this? How sweet the music ought to be where this is the theme! Then, too, to mention no more, there is one Doctrine which is like a handful of pearls—that of Eternal Preservation unto Glory which is to be revealed at the appearing of Jesus Christ. You are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.” You shall be with Him where He is. You shall behold His Glory. “Whom He justified, them He also glorified.” Oh, can you put on this robe of splendor and go up to the Throne where Christ has already made you sit representatively in His own Person, and can you not begin, tonight, your song which shall never end? Truly we have but to mention a Truth of God and you can think it over for yourselves—every Doctrine of Revelation is to the Christian a source of joy!

Well, and *every part of Christian experience is to further our joy*. “Why,” says one, “all a Christian’s experience is not joyful.” I grant you that, but remember that all a Christian’s experience is not Christian experience! Christians experience a great deal which they do not experience as Christians—but experience it because they are not such Christians as they ought to be! I believe that much of that groaning which some people think such a deal of, is rather of the devil than of the Spirit of God. Certainly that unbelief which some people seem to look upon as such a precious flower, is rank herbage, never sown in us by the hand of God the Holy Spirit! Beloved, there is a mourning which comes from the Spirit of

God that is a joyful mourning, if I may use such a strange expression. Sorrow for sin is sweet sorrow. I would never wish to miss it. I think Rowland Hill was right when he said that it would be his only regret in going to Heaven that he could not repent any more. Oh, repentance, true evangelical repentance, is not that half-bitter thing which comes from the Law! It is a sweet genial thing. I do not know, Beloved, when I am more perfectly happy than when I am weeping for sin at the foot of the Cross! I find that to be one of the safest and best places where I can stand. I have sometimes thought that the raptures of Communion I have known are not altogether so deep—though they may be higher—not, I say, so deep as the pensive joy of weeping over pardoned sin, when—

*“Dissolved by His goodness, I fall to the ground
And weep to the praise of the mercy I’ve found!”*

Yes, sorrow for sin is a part of the Christian’s experience which helps to fill his joy. And though your cares and anxieties, dear Friends, with regard to the things of this world may be very distressing, yet remember, in every drop of gall which your Father gives you to drink, there is, if you can find it, a whole sea of sweetness! God sends you trials to wean you from the world—a happy result, however grievous the process! Oh, that I might never desire to suck of the breasts of *her* consolation anymore! Oh, to come to Christ, and find my all in Him! Believe me, Beloved, our joy ends where the love of the world begins. If we had no idols on earth—if we made neither our children, nor our friends, nor our wealth, nor ourselves our idols—we should not have half the trials that we have. Foolish loves make rods for foolish backs. God save us from these, and when He does, though the means may seem severe, they are intended to promote our joys by destroying the eggs of our sorrows. But there is much of a Christian’s experience that is all joy, and must be all joy. For instance, to have faith in Christ, to rest in Him—is not that joy? To sing from one’s heart—

*“I know that safe with Him remains,
Protected by His power,
What I’ve committed to His hands,
Till the decisive hour.”*

Is not that joy? And even that humbler note—

*“Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Your Cross I cling,”*

has the germ of Heaven in it! Truly, there can be no more delightful place for the soul to stand than close to the Cross, covered with the crimson drops of blood and clasping Christ Himself! And then hope is another part of the Christian’s experience. What a fountain of joy it is! We are saved by hope. Sweetly does the Psalmist express himself, “My soul faints for Your salvation, but I hope in Your Word.” To the followers of Christ there is a full assurance of hope—“which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil.” Above all things, Christian fellowship is the chief auxiliary of Christian joy. Read the verse that immediately precedes our text, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” Ah, now we hit the mark! This is the center of the target. Fellowship with Christ is the summum bonum—it fills up the measure of joy! All other graces and gifts may help to fill our cup of blessedness but fellowship with saints in their fellowship with the Father and the Son—surely this, of itself, must suffice to fill our vessels to the very brim! Fullness of joy! Did you ever prove it, my Beloved? I think some of you have. No, I know you have! You could not have contained more joy—you were full to overflowing! Do you know that a little joy is healthful? Be it relief from anxiety, pleasure after pain, or even a cheerful thought in breasts to sorrow prone. But to have a fullness of joy, joy that pulsates through our every nerve and paints the entire universe of God’s goodness before our eyes in a meridian glow, this is a myriad of blessings in one! If I held in my hand a glass, and poured water into it till it were full, right to the very brim, till it seemed as if the least touch would make it run over—well, that is how the Christian sometimes is. “Why,” he says, “I could not feel more happy! If anyone should make me rich, if I could have all that the worldling craves, I could not be any happier! I am rich to all the intents of bliss since You, God, are mine.” It is not every man that can go home and say, “There is nothing on earth I want, and there is nothing in Heaven that I yearn after beyond the endowments my God has already bestowed on me! “Whom have I in Heaven but You, and who is there upon earth I desire beside You?” Go, you that pine for joy, and traverse the wide earth round in fruitless search—my soul sits down at the foot of the Cross and says, “I have found it here!” Go, like the swallow. Fly across the purple seas to find another summer now that this is over—my soul would stop just where she is—living at the foot of the Cross, my sun

is in its solstice, and stands still forever—never stirring, never moving—without parallax or shadow of a tropic! Evermore the same—bright and full and glorious! Oh, Christian, this is a blessed experience! May you know it all your life!

Never doubt, my dear Friends, *that every precept in the Word of God is intended to further the Christian's happiness*. When I read the Ten Commandments, I understand them to be just and salutary directions not to do myself any harm. The spirit of the Law seems to be benevolent in its warnings. If I were commanded not to put my finger into the fire, and did not know that fire would burn, I ought to be thankful for the prohibition. If I were commanded not to plunge into the sea, not having known before that the sea would drown me, I should be thankful for the interdict. God's precepts are designed to enlighten our eyes and preserve our feet from falling. They forbid what is dangerous, hurtful. God never denies His servants anything that is really for their good. His laws are freed-men's rules—they are never fetters to the Christian. And as for the precepts of our blessed Christianity, they, every one of them, promote our happiness! Let me take one or two of them. "Love one another." That is the first. Well, now, when are you happiest? When you feel spiteful and bitter towards everybody else, or when you feel charity towards the faulty, and love towards your fellow servants? I know when I feel best. There are some people who seem to have been suckled upon vinegar—wherever they go, they always see some defect. Were there to be men on earth again such as Chrysostom and others of his day, who have been portrayed in history, or like the Nazarites of Jeremiah's plaintive hymn, "Purer than snow and whiter than milk," they would say, "Ah, well, though their reputation is unsullied, we do not know what they do in secret!—we cannot scan their motives!" Some people are always in a cynical, suspicious humor, but they who "love one another" can see much to rejoice in everywhere. We are told in Scripture to "serve the Lord with diligence," and I am sure it is "the diligent soul" that is made fat. The do-nothing people are generally those who say—

*"Lord, what a wretched land is this,
That yields us no supplies."*

It ought to be a wretched land to lazy people! Those that will not work, neither shall they eat, neither in spiritual things or in temporal shall they be fed. If, in the winter, you complain of cold, get to the plow and you will soon be full of warmth! Sit you down, groan, and complain, and blow on your blue fingers and you shall soon find the cold will starve you yet more and more. Holy activity is the mother of holy joy! And growth in Grace, again—why, when is a man happier than when He grows in Grace? To be at a standstill, to contract one's self—why, this is misery! To force one's understanding, like a Chinese foot into a Chinese shoe, is torture! But to have a mind that is capable of learning, to be able to sometimes say, "There, I was wrong"—to be able to feel that you know a little more today than you did yesterday because God, the Holy Spirit has been teaching you, why, this is joy! This is happiness! This is such as God would have us know!

All the writings of Scripture, whether they are doctrinal, experimental, or practical, have the drift which John indicates in these words, "That your joy may be full!" Having thus shown that the Christian's joy needs looking after and that it is mainly fed upon things revealed in Scripture, the inference clearly must be that—

III. WE SHOULD CONSTANTLY READ THE SCRIPTURES.

Read the Scriptures *in preference to any other book*. What a deal of reading there is now-a-days! But how large a proportion of what you call, "popular literature," is mere chaff-cutting—nothing more! Why, I am really ashamed to state the fact that I am bound, as a Christian minister, to denounce. You cannot publish a religious newspaper, or a religious magazine, as a rule, to make it pay, without a religious novel in it—and these religious novels are a disgrace to the Christianity of the 19th Century! People's minds must be in an odd state when they can eat nothing but these whipped-creams and syllabubs—for people who would be healthy, should sit down to something solid, and their stimulants should be consistent with sobriety. You will never attain the mental growth of men and women by feeding on such stuff as that! You may make lackadaisical people in the shape of men and women, but the thinking soul with something in it, the woman who would serve her God as a true helper to the Christian ministry, the young man who would proclaim Christ and win souls need some better nutriment than the poor stuff that modern literature deals out so plentifully. Oh, my dear Friends, read the Bible in preference to all such books! They only deprave your taste. If you want these books, have them. We would not deny pigs their proper food and I would not deny any person living that which his taste goes after, provided it does not shock decent morals. I lament the taste rather than the indulgence of it! If you have a soul that can

appreciate the pleasures of wisdom, eschew the trifles of folly. And if you have been taught to love verities, and substantial truths, you scarcely need that I should say, “Search the Scriptures.” Search them diligently and frequently!

Prefer the Scriptures to all religious books. In our books and our sermons—we will say it of all of them—we do our best to give you the Truth of God, but we are like the gold-beaters whose brazen arms you can see out over their doors—we get a little bit of gold and we hammer it out. Some of my Brothers are mighty hands at the craft. They can hammer out a very small piece of gold so as to cover a whole acre of talk. But the best of us, those who would seek to bring out the Doctrines of Grace in love, are poor, poor things. Read the Bible for yourselves more, and confide less in your glossaries. I would rather see the whole stock of my sermons in a blaze, all burned to ashes, than that they should keep anybody from reading the Bible. If they may act as a finger pointing to certain chapters—“Read this! Read this!”—I am thankful to have printed them. But if they keep you away from your Bibles—burn them! Burn them! Do not let them lie on the top of the Scriptures—put them somewhere at the bottom, for that is their proper place. So with all sorts of religious books—they are a sort of mixture—their human thinking dilutes Divine Revelation. Keep to the Revelation of God, pure and simple.

And, *when you read your Bible, read it in earnest.* There are several ways of reading the Bible. There is a skimming over the surface of it—content with the letter. There is also diving into it and praying yourselves down deep into the soul of it—that is the way to read the Bible! Do not always read it one verse at a time. How would Milton’s *Paradise Lost* be understood if read by little snatches selected at random? You would never scan the purpose or design of the poem. Read one book through. Read John’s Gospel. Do not read a bit of John and then a bit of Mark, but read John through, and get at John’s drift. Remember that Matthew, though he wrote of the same Savior as Luke, is not more various in his style than he is distinct in his aim and, in a certain sense, independent of the testimony he bears. The four Evangelists are four separate witnesses, each giving a special contribution to the Doctrine as well as the history of Christ. Matthew, for instance, shows you Jesus as a King. You will notice that most of his parables begin with “a king.” “Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened.” Mark shows you Christ as the Servant. Luke shows you Christ as Man, giving sketches of His childhood. And His parables begin with, “A certain man,” while John teaches you Christ in His Godhead, with a starting point far different from the other three, which have been styled the Synoptical Gospels. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Try, if you can, to get a hold of what the books mean, and pray God the Holy Spirit to lead you into the drift and aim of the sacred writers in so writing. I would like to see my Church members, all of them, good, hard, solid Bible students. Beloved, I would not be afraid of all the errors of Popery, Infidelity, Socinianism, Plymouth Brethrenism, or any other “ism” if you were to read your Bibles! You will thus keep clear of the whole lot. There is no doubt about your standing firm to the good old faith which we seek to teach you, if you do but keep to Scripture—the Book, the one Book, the Book of books, the Bible! That studied, not hurriedly, but with a determination to compare spiritual things with spiritual, and to observe the analogy of faith, you shall find a well-spring of delight and holy joy which men of letters who dabble in the proudest classics might envy, for Isaiah is better than Homer, and David is richer than Horace. But better still, you shall stand while others fall!

IV. BUT ARE WE ALL BELIEVERS? IS THIS BOOK JOY TO ALL OF US?

That is a significant pronoun in the text, “These things we write unto you that *your* joy may be full.” To whom writes he? Is it to *you*? Young woman, does the Scripture write to *you* that *your* joy may be full? Young man, does the Scripture speak to you to fill *you* with holy joy? You do not know whether it does or not—you do not care about it. Then, it does *not* speak to you. You get plenty of joy elsewhere. Well, it does *not* speak to you. It does not intrude upon you. It leaves you alone. It offers you no joy. You have enough. “The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.”

But there are some of you here who need a joy, and you have not found it. You are uneasy. You cannot find a tree to build your nest. You are like the needle, when it is turned away from its pole—you cannot be quiet. You have got a horseleech in you, that is always crying, “Give! Give!” You are uneasy. Oh, dear Friend, I am glad to hear it! May that uneasiness go on increasing. May you become weary of heart, and heavy-laden of spirit, for I have a whisper for you. Jesus Christ has come into the world to call to Himself all those who labor and are heavy-laden! And when you are sick and weary with the world, come to Him, come to Him! What? You have been turned out, have you? The world has got all it could out of you and thrust you away? Now, Jesus Christ will have you. Come to Him! Come to Him! He will receive you.

So you are burnt out, are you? All the goodness that was in you is burned up and you have now become nothing but smoking flax—a stench in the estimation of your once flattering companions? You are nowhere. They do not like you. You are mopish and miserable. Oh come to Him! Come to Him, come to Him! He will not quench you. Your music is all over, is it? You were like a reed, like one of Pan's pipes. You could give out some music, once, but you got bruised and you cannot make one sound or note of joy. Well, poor Soul, come to Him! Come to Him! He will not break you. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax—

*“Weary souls that wander wide
From the central source of bliss,
Turn to Jesus' wounded side
Look to that dear blood of His.”*

Here is peace, here is joy in Christ Jesus! Oh, if you are sick of the world, come to my Master! May God the Holy Spirit bless this sickness and make you come because you have nowhere else to go! Jesus Christ will receive the devil's castaways. The very sweepings of pleasure, the dregs of the intoxicating cup, those who have gone so far that now their friends reject them, Jesus Christ accepts! May He accept me, and accept you—and then in Him our joy shall be full! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
PSALM 66:1-15.

Verse 1. *Make a joyful noise unto God, all you lands.* Let not Israel alone do it. Take up the strain, you nations. He is the God of all the nations of the earth. “Make a joyful noise unto God, all you lands.”

2-4. *Sing forth the honor of His name: make His praise glorious. Say unto God, How terrible are You in Your works! Through the greatness of Your power shall Your enemies submit themselves unto You. All the earth shall worship You and shall sing unto You. They shall sing to Your name. Selah.* I still must always cling to the belief that this whole world is to be converted to God, and to lie captive at the feet of Christ in glorious liberty! Do not fall into that lethargic, apathetic belief of some that this is never to be accomplished—that the battle is not to be fought out on the present lines, but that there is to be a defeat—and then Christ is to come. No, foot to foot with the old enemy will He stand, till He has worsted him and until the nations of the earth shall worship and bow before Him!

5, 6. *Come and see the works of God: He is terrible in His doing toward the children of men. He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in Him.* Where God is most terrible to His enemies, He is most gracious to His friends! As Pharaoh and his hosts went down beneath the terrible hand of God, the children of Israel lifted up their loudest hallelujahs and sang unto the Lord, who triumphed gloriously! And so shall it be to the end of the chapter. God will lay bare His terrible arm against His adversaries but His children shall, meanwhile, make music! “There did we rejoice in Him.”

7-9. *He rules by His power forever: His eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah. O bless our God, you people, and make the voice of His praise to be heard. Who holds our soul in life and allows not our feet to be moved.* Loudest among the singers should God's people be! If others can restrain their praise, yet let the love of Christ so compel us that we must give it a tongue and tell forth the majesty of our God! It is He alone who keeps us from Hell—which holds our soul in life! It is He alone who keeps us from falling foully. Yes, and falling finally, “and allows not our feet to be moved.”

10. *For You, O God, have proved us.* All God's people can say this. It is the heritage of the elect of God. “You have proved us.”

10-11. *You have tried us, as silver is tried. You brought us into the net.* Entangled, surrounded, captive, held fast. Many of God's people are in this condition.

11. *You laid affliction upon our loins.* It was no affliction of hand or foot, but it laid upon our loins—a heavy, crushing burden.

12. *You have caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water.* It was the full ordeal. One was not enough. Fire destroys some, but water is the test for others—but God's people must be tried both ways. “We went through fire and through water, but”—. Blessed “but.”

12. *But You brought us out into a wealthy place.* Out of the fire and out of the water they came because God brought them! And when He brought them, it was not to a stinted, barren heritage, but into a wealthy place. Oh, Beloved, when we think of where the Covenant of Grace has placed every Believer, it is a wealthy place, indeed!

13-15. *I will go into Your house with burnt offerings: I will pay You my vows which my lips have uttered, and my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble. I will offer unto You burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams. I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.* The best, I think. “The best of the best will I bring You, O my God. I will bring You my heart. I will bring You my tongue. I will bring you my entire being!

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**