

THE JOY OF THE LORD

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The joy of the Lord by J. R. Miller

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J. R. MILLER

**THE JOY
OF THE LORD**

THE
WINTER
ALMSHOUSE



While we are feasting at our own table we must remember those who are hungry outside, and send portions to them.

THE
JOY OF THE LORD

BY

J. R. MILLER

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joy

FOREWORD

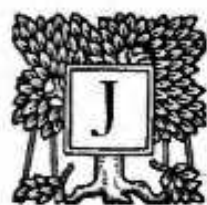
FAR more earnestly than we know does God want us to be happy. It grieves a true human father to see his children unhappy. Our heavenly Father is pained and disappointed when his children on the earth are discontented and anxious, or when they do not rejoice. This little book is a call to joy, to Christian joy, and to joy that will make joy in others.

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JOY is the highest attainment of life. It comes of perfect living and is marred by imperfection. It is music without a note of discord. It is motion without a trace of friction. It is health without the slightest sickness. It is pleasure unalloyed.

Says William George Jordan, "Happiness is the greatest paradox of Nature. It can grow in any soil, live under any conditions. It defies environment. It comes from within; it is the revelation of the depths of the inner life as light and heat proclaim the sun from which they radiate. Happiness consists not of

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having, but of being; not of possessing, but of enjoying. It is the warm glow of a heart at peace with itself."

Joy is deeper than happiness. Happiness is the fruit of good hap. Strictly it is the outcome of fortuitous happenings, of favorable circumstances. Joy is independent of circumstances. It dwells in the heart, a fountain which never fails. Happiness laughs when the sun shines but grows sad when clouds gather. Joy sings on in all weathers and in all experiences.

Joy is the ideal of Christian life. God is happy; we cannot conceive of him as unhappy. As he is love so he is also joy, and his joy, like all his attributes, is infinite and eternal. Only once in the Bible is God said to sing, and then it is in his love for his own. "He will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest

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in his love; he will joy over thee with singing." The thought is exquisite in its meaning. God's joy never fails. He is never dismayed by calamities. He is not disturbed by convulsions. It was said of Christ, "He will not fail nor be discouraged." Life's mysteries break our joy, for we cannot understand their meaning. But there are no mysteries with God, and therefore his joy is never dimmed.

To grow toward God's likeness and become more and more filled with his life, is to grow in joy. It would seem that not many even of those who are followers of Christ reach the life of joy to which the Master calls them. How many even of godly people are never cast down! Our Christian faith claims that we never should be discouraged, never should lose our gladness. But how many

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of us live up to this profession? Yet should we not do so? Is God not able to help us to rejoice always? If it is our privilege and our duty to attain a joy that never shall lose its song, is God not able to help us to reach this height? We say he never requires of us an impossibility. "Give what thou commandest," was the prayer of one of the Fathers, implying that everything God asks us to do we can do through his help. Surely it is not too hard for God to enable us to live a life of joy.

This is not a New Testament lesson only; it is taught also in the Old Testament. The ancient festivals were full of song and gladness. On the most joyous of them all, the feast of tabernacles, they made the coverings of branches so thin, so open, that the stars could be seen through them, suggesting