

"JOY"

*Jesus said: "These things have I spoken unto you,
that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled." John 15:11*

If any one asks the question, "**How can I be a happy Christian?**" our Lord's answer is very simple: "*These things,*" about the Vine and the branches, "*I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled.*" "*You cannot have My joy without My life. Abide in Me, and let Me abide in you, and My joy will be in you.*" All healthy life is a thing of joy and beauty. Live undividedly the branch life—you will have His joy in full measure.

To many Christians, the thought of a life wholly abiding in Christ is one of strain and painful effort. They cannot see that the strain and effort only come, as long as we do not yield ourselves unreservedly to the life of Christ in us. The very first words of the parable are not yet opened up to them: "*I am the true Vine; I undertake all and provide for all; I ask nothing of the branch but that it yields wholly to Me, and allows Me to do all. I engage to make and keep the branch all that it ought to be.*"

Ought it not to be an infinite and unceasing joy to have the Vine thus work all, and to know that it is none less than the blessed Son of God in His love who is each moment bearing us and maintaining our life?

That My joy may be in you. We are to have Christ's own joy in us. **And what is Christ's own joy? There is no joy like love. There is no joy but love.** Christ had just spoken of the Father's love and His own abiding in it, and of His having loved us with that same love. **His joy is nothing but the joy of love, of being loved and of loving.** It was the joy of receiving His Father's love and abiding in it, and then the joy of passing on that love and pouring it out on sinners. It is this joy He wants us to share. The joy of being loved of the Father and of Him. The joy of in our turn loving and living for those around us. This is just the joy of being truly branches: abiding in His love, and then giving

up ourselves in love to bear fruit for others. Let us accept His life, as He gives it in us as the Vine, His joy will be ours—the joy of abiding in His love, the joy of loving like Him, of loving with His love.

And that your joy may be fulfilled. That it may be complete, that you may be filled with it. How sad that we should so need to be reminded that as God alone is the fountain of all joy, "*God our exceeding joy.*" **The only way to be perfectly happy is to have as much of God, as much of His will and fellowship, as possible!** Religion is meant to be in everyday life a thing of unspeakable joy. And why do so many complain that it is not so? Because they do not believe that there is no joy like the joy of abiding in Christ and in His love, and being branches through whom He can pour out His love on a dying world.

Oh, that Christ's voice might reach the heart of every young Christian, and persuade him to believe that His joy is the only true joy, that His joy can become ours and truly fill us, and that the sure and simple way of living in it is—only this—to abide as branches in Him our heavenly Vine.

Let the truth enter deep into us—as long as our joy is not full, it is a sign that we do not yet know our heavenly Vine aright; every desire for a fuller joy must only urge us to abide more simply and more fully in His love.

My joy—your joy. In this too it is: as the Vine, so the branch; all the Vine in the branch. Thy joy is our joy—Thy joy in us, and our joy fulfilled. Blessed Lord, fill me with Thy joy—the joy of being loved and blessed with a divine love; the joy of loving and blessing others.