

the words came "Neither be ye sorrowful"—dry up your tears, "for the joy of the LORD is your strength." There is "a time to weep" and there is also "a time to laugh"; "a time to mourn, and a time to dance" (Eccl. 3:4)! After grief for sin there should be joy for forgiveness.

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Poor Yet Rich

by Arthur W. Pink

One of the prayers which the Lord teaches His people to pray is, "Bow down Thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy" (Psa. 86:1). Empty professors filled with pride, by their very attitude and actions, boast that they are "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Rev. 3:17). But the real child of God, whose eyes have been opened by the Holy Spirit to see his utter worthlessness, freely acknowledges that he is (in himself) "poor and needy"; and the Lord Jesus declares "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matt. 5:3). May more of this poverty be our felt portion.

Above we have said that the child of God is in himself "poor and needy"; that is a most necessary qualification, for in Christ he is rich and possesses all things (1 Cor. 3:21). In Christ there is an infinite "fulness," and it is the office and work of faith to draw upon and draw from the same. It is the Christian's unspeakable privilege to recognize that he is now (not simply will be in Heaven) a "joint-heir" with Christ. It is his glorious privilege to perceive that Christ is the Head of His people, and as a wife turns to her husband for money to meet the household expenses, so His Spouse should act toward her Husband—coming to Him for counsel, help, supplies of need, in full confidence that His love will freely bestow them.

Thus we have sought, again, to preserve the balance of Truth. Not until we are made to feel anew our emptiness, nothingness, sinfulness, woe-begone condition, shall we continue to turn unto Him whose exhaustless riches are ever available when the empty hand of faith is extended toward Him. Alas, so many of His dear people have been left with the impression (if not expressly taught so) that there is nothing better for them, while here in this wilderness, than to feel their helplessness and groan over their wretchedness,

remaining spiritual paupers to the end of their journey. No doubt that is greatly to be preferred to the self-sufficiency and self-righteousness of the bloated and Satan-deceived "free-willers." Yes, indeed; a million times better for any of us to lie wounded, stripped, groaning, and half-dead by the wayside, than be left by God wholly dead in a state of carnal complacency. And yet, beloved, it is far from glorifying to the Lord, as it is far from our entering into the Inheritance which is now ours, to be the helpless "victim of circumstances," the captive of the flesh, or the doormat of Satan.

Daily living by faith on Christ is what makes the difference between the sickly and the healthy Christian, between the defeated and the victorious saint. Not that we are suggesting it is possible for any of us to attain a state or experience where we are no longer tripped up by Satan, or wounded by the flesh. No; but rather that the Christian should refuse to continue in that wounded state and go on lying on the ground moaning and groaning. Our duty is to search out what it was in us which gave Satan the occasion to trip us up and the flesh to wound us; confess it to God, put it under the Blood, and seek grace to enable us to be more watchful against a repetition of the same. We should eye the all-sufficient Atonement, count upon its efficacy to cleanse from the guilt and defilement of the fall we experienced; and having put the matter right with God refuse to allow it now to hinder our communion with Him—our free approaches unto and our delighting ourselves in His promises.

Does the reader say, in answer to what has just been said, "That is easier said than done." Of course, for all "doing" requires effort! After the confession of a failure and fall, a feeling of shame and heaviness frequently oppresses the soul and makes it exceedingly difficult to approach the Holy One with filial freedom. What then is to be done? This: begin by thanking God for the marvelous grace which has made such full provision for our wretched failures: praise Him for laying all your sins upon Christ. Then what? Why, continue

praising Him that the blood of Christ is of such amazing potency, of such infinite efficacy, that it "cleanseth us from all sin." Bless the God of all grace that He invites needy souls to come to His throne for mercy. That, my Christian reader, is the way to overcome heaviness of soul when filled with shame (after confession), and the way to overcome Satan's efforts to keep you depressed: thanksgivings and praises for the provisions of mercy for failing saints will give "freedom of access" and restore unto the joy of communion quicker than anything.

It is written "the joy of the LORD is your strength" (Neh. 8:10). There can be no spiritual energy for the cheerful performance of duty, no buoyant heart for the trials of life, unless the joy of the Lord fills the soul. It was by the "joy that was set before Him" that Christ "endured the cross" (Heb. 12:2). True, He was "the Man of Sorrows," and "acquainted with grief" to an extent which none of us ever are; yet those sorrows did not incapacitate Him for attending to His Father's business: that deep "grief" hindered Him not from daily going about "doing good." No, there was a "joy" which sustained, which nerved, which energised Him for the doing of God's will. And beloved fellow-pilgrim—groaning it may be over vile corruptions felt within, or disheartened and dismayed by the multiplying difficulties and obstacles without—that blessed One is still saying "If any man thirst, (for joy, or any spiritual grace) let him come unto Me, and DRINK" (John 7:37)—draw from My fulness.

It is striking to observe the setting of these words "the joy of the LORD is your strength" (Neh. 8:10). They were spoken to the godly remnant in a "day of small things." That remnant had listened to the reading and expounding of the law (Neh. 8:7, 8). As they listened, they were rebuked, reproved, condemned; and, in consequence "all the people wept when they heard the words of the law." That was startling, unusual, blessed: to behold a contrite and broken-hearted people is both a rare and precious sight. But were they to continue thus? lying in the dust sobbing and groaning? No, to them