

J O Y

BY

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IT does seem, sometimes, that we Christians forget that Christ came to share our joys as well as our sufferings. 'My soul shall be joyful in my God', yet I talk as though he were only to be found in my pains and sorrows.

He shared everything with us, our work and our sleep, our affections and our pleasures. When he came back to earth he made a picnic for his friends, broiling fish on hot coals, preparing a meal on the gritty sand by the lake. A breeze from the water, bits of grass sticking to the pan, and the delicious smell of food beneath the hot, blue sky, with the joy and wonder of friendship—it must have been an extraordinarily happy feast. And of course he is still here in all our friendships and our fun. He is laughing in the ridiculous jokes of any happy baby; he was a man and understands the laughter of men. One can suspect hidden laughter in his rallying of Martha for her bustlings, even in his fierce gibes at the Pharisees.

We surely ought not to be afraid of joy. Christ is joy: there could be no real happiness if he were not God. His joy is in all the loving-kindness which you will find curled up at the bottom of the crustiest heart and which, if we keep our own delight in him alive and real, will be given a chance to show itself. Compassion is joy's sister, in its selflessness it may call out that little wisp of love which is a puff of smoke from God's tremendous bonfire of happiness.

If we were not afraid of joy we should find a glimmer of it in everyone's heart—and then we should have found God. We would find him, too, in our boredoms and in our pains. Down at the core and centre of any hurt there is a spring of eternal joy; but this we shall never know until we have understood that he is there, himself, in the smallest sparkle of true delight.