

# Joy In Heaven

Augustus M. Toplady | Added: Jul 13, 2023 | Category: Theology

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The hymnwriter, Augustus Toplady, author of Rock of Ages was also a powerful and successful preacher and minister. One of Toplady's clear calls to the unrepentant was delivered from the pulpit of St Luke's, Old Street, on Sunday morning, October 29, 1775. Toplady's double text was Hebrews 12:22, 23, 'Ye are come unto the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect', and Luke 15:7, 'Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance'. After explaining the nature and need of repentance and the wonderful way Christ has of drawing men to Himself, Toplady continues:

I firmly believe, upon the warrant of the text, that as often as divine grace converts a single sinner to Christ, the pleasing event is immediately known in heaven; and our great High Priest says in effect to the radiant throng that encircle His throne, Rejoice with me, for another of my lost sheep is found.

Indeed there is nothing in heaven but joy. The peculiar presence of Deity most eminently manifested there, is an endless and ever-increasing source of blessedness, both to the spirits of the just, and to the seraphs that never fell. Where God is possessed; where Christ is seen; where the adorable Trinity pour forth their plenitude of glory unclouded on the delighted, undazzled view; where saints, the children of redemption, are the melodious songsters; and angels, the first fruits of creation, are the enraptured musicians; where the grand employ is praise, and Jehovah Himself is the exceeding great reward; surely there the cup of joy must overflow. Only the blest inhabitants themselves can tell how blest the inhabitants are.

Is there then anything that can heighten the celestial triumph? that can add to the felicity of those who stand in the divine presence and enhance even their transcendent joy? There is: and we have just heard what it is. It is the regeneration of a fallen soul. It is the renewal of a sinner below. As our Lord expresses it at the 10th verse, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. No sooner is every fresh conversion made known on high than additional joy is there. The memorable day is, if I may so speak, marked as a festival in the calendar of heaven. Beatified saints exult, angels clap their wings, and the whole united choir raise their voices, and strike their golden harps for joy that a soul is born of God and made free for the Jerusalem which is above.

Such exalted hosannas would not resound, on these occasions, among the inhabitants of the skies, if the doctrine of final perseverance was untrue. Tell me, ye seraphs of light; tell me, ye souls of elect men made perfect in glory, why this exuberance of holy rapture at the real recovery of a single sinner to God? Because ye know assuredly that every true conversion is 1.) a certain proof that the person converted is one of your own elect number: and 2.) that he shall be infallibly preserved and brought to that very region of blessedness into which ye yourselves are entered. The contrary belief would silence your harps, and chill your praises. If it be uncertain whether the person who is regenerated to-day may ultimately reign with you in heaven, or take up his eternal abode among apostate spirits in hell; your rejoicings are too sanguine, and your praises are premature. You should suspend your songs until he actually arrives among you: and not give thanks for his conversion until he has persevered unto glorification.

But there are no 'election-doubters', no perseverance-deniers in the kingdom of heaven. The happy spirits there are as orthodox as the sun is bright. When a sinner repents, they rejoice over him. Knowing that he could not have repented if he had not been elected: and that as surely as he was elected, so surely shall he be glorified.

It is this which occasions the jubilee above. It is this, which raises the harmonious concert high; which gladdens the shining trusts already saved; and puts a new song into their mouths, even accumulated thanksgiving unto God. They rejoice when they perceive the Redeemer's interest advanced, and the empire of the cross extended; when the communion of saints is enlarged, and when God's secret purposes of mercy have their open accomplishment in a sinner's visible accession to the kingdom of grace. For they are confident of this very thing, that he who hath began the good work in that sinner's heart will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ: and, consequently, that every man or woman upon earth, who repents after a godly sort, is an heir of the grace of life, and shall be their companions in blessedness to all eternity.

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