

## A Brief Geography of Joy<sup>1</sup>

I am going to propose answers to three discussion questions from the list that Paul Heck sent out, focusing on the example of joy, an emotion that is prominent in the Bible and has an important place in Jewish and Christian spiritual life. Here are Paul's questions:

- Do emotions have religious/spiritual value and purpose?
- What is the relationship between emotions and affects such as pleasure and pain?
- Does devotion require a correct set of emotions?

To set up for answers, I'll make some general remarks about joy in its relation to other types of emotion.

**A note about vocabulary:** English has several words that are equivalent or nearly equivalent in meaning to 'joy': 'delight,' 'gladness,' 'exultation,' 'mirth,' 'jubilation,' 'pleasure' (in some contexts), 'happiness' (in some contexts), 'satisfaction' (in some contexts), 'gratification,' 'glory.' Some of the variation in sense of these terms is context-bound. These words have in common that they denote general, unspecific emotional pleasure or satisfaction. In particular contexts, joy, delight, or gladness takes particular objects with particular moral or spiritual significance.

I want to place Christian joy in the larger context of the whole range and variety of kinds of joys. Theologians tend to define joy under the influence of the *special* kind of joy that is normative in the Christian context. For example, George Vaillant, in his book, *Spiritual Evolution: a Scientific Defense of Faith*, says that "joy in any language means reconnection with a power greater than ourselves" (p. 120). He makes it sound as though joy as such involves this reconnection with a higher power. I don't deny that some joy has that character, but I think we'll understand joy better if we don't try to fit it into a preconceived theological mold. Having identified joy more generally should enable us to locate theologically determined kinds of joy more confidently and accurately.

### *Joy Among the Emotion Types*

It is widely accepted that emotions have intentional objects, and that emotion *types* (e.g. joy, envy, pride, anger, fear, hope, etc.) differ from one another in the *schemata* of their intentional objects (what some people call their "appraisal structure"). For example, to experience **envy** is to see a rival as winning against oneself in a contest for personal importance. Thus the intentional schema of envy is fairly complex. It involves reference to a **self** who is **losing** in a **contest** with a **rival** for some kind of **personal importance** (beauty, intelligence, wealth, skill, power, elite social associations, etc.). If the intentional object of a concrete particular emotion has these five elements, it is *guaranteed* to be a case of envy, and if it lacks any one of these elements, it *fails* to be a case of envy.

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<sup>1</sup> Possible titles for the longer paper: "The Moral and Theological Geography of Joy"; or "Joy: A Moral and Theological Geography"

These elements are related to one another in a narrational way, the “narrator” being the subject of the emotion: *I am in a contest with a rival over what is ultimately my importance as a person, and I am losing the contest to the rival, and so I wish the rival to be “put down” to my level or below.* The narrative structure or schema for envy is thus, *so-and-so is besting me in the competition for personal importance.* The narrative presupposes that the envious subject is concerned to have the kind of personal importance that the envious characteristically seek — to wit, importance by superiority. Without that concern, the subject can’t qualify for envy. Emotions are “concern-based construals” (Roberts 1988, 2003, 2013). They are all satisfactions or frustrations of some concern: if you lack concern (pro or con) for something, it won’t move you emotionally. Envy, then, turns on a specific kind of concern having to do with the self, and is structured by a particular narrative schema.

Joy, by comparison, can be based on *any concern whatsoever.* It might be based on the concern characteristic of envy. If the envious person succeeds in putting down his rival, he will typically experience joy — invidious joy. Or, if he is angry with a supposed offender and wants revenge, then if he gets it he will experience the joy of vengeance. Or he may love someone and take joy in the fact that that person is flourishing. Or he may love Picassos and rejoice on receiving a pass to a Picasso museum. Or he may care about the kingdom of God and rejoice upon seeing evidence of it in a sinful world.

Note that the concern or concerns on which an emotion is based and which it expresses are not necessarily theretofore consciously accessible to the subject. A woman’s heart leaps with joy on seeing an acquaintance of hers descend from the train, and she first *learns* from her joy that she is in love with him. Her joy evidences and instantiates a concern that existed but wasn’t evident to her before.

We’ve noted that envy has a much more complex narrative structure than joy. Other emotion types, such as fear and hope, have a simpler structure than envy (less specificity, fewer necessary elements), without being as simple as joy. Fear, for example, has the structure *something I care about is threatened.* A threat is something harmful or adverse that might (above a certain threshold of probability) happen. Fear, then, involves an intuitive probability estimate as to the likelihood of something adverse happening to what I care about.

Joy, by contrast, is *as simple and unspecific as an emotion type can get.* Its structure is: *something satisfies a concern of mine.* It is simply emotional pleasure, emotional satisfaction, whether that satisfaction be screamingly intense, or calm almost to the point of undetectability. It corresponds to the simplest possible emotional pain, whose structure is: *something frustrates a concern of mine.* We might call it (emotional) distress. All the “negative” emotion types — disappointment, anger, regret, fear, envy — have the form of it. It is general emotional pain or discomfort.

The structure of joy leaves entirely open what the ‘something’ (the intentional object of the joy) is. A person can be joyful about anything that he can be concerned about, if only

that concern is conspicuously satisfied. In knowing that a person rejoiced about X, you know about X only that he wished for (cared about) it and got it (so to speak). Compare this with envy. If you know that somebody was envious about X (say, another person's talent), you know several things about X. You know that the person sees X as involved in a **contest** with a **rival**, and that the issue is ultimately **personal importance**, and that the subject sees himself as **losing** the contest.

Joy, then, is the form of all the so-called positive emotions. I say 'so-called' because some of the "positive" emotions are extremely "negative" morally and spiritually. **Schadenfreude**, for example, is a kind of *Freude* (joy). In English, we might call it 'malicious joy.' Its narrative structure is: *An evil befalling S [usually a person] satisfies my concern*. Other "positive" emotions are pride, triumph, hope, relief, and gratitude. **Pride** is satisfaction of the concern to be valuable by being associated with excellent things. Its narrative structure is, *My (our) association with something excellent satisfies my concern*. **Triumph**<sup>2</sup> is satisfaction of the concern to overcome something difficult. Its narrative structure is, *A triumph satisfies my concern*. **Hope** is satisfaction of the concern for good prospects. Its narrative structure is, *Prospects satisfy my concern*. **Relief** is satisfaction of the concern for relief from something burdensome. Its narrative structure is, *This relief satisfies my concern*. **Gratitude** is satisfaction of a concern for some benefit through some benefactor's benevolence (good will). The narrative schema of gratitude is, *a benefactor's bestowing a benefit on a beneficiary satisfies my concerns*. Each of these kinds of joy specifies more narrowly and adds narrative structure to joy's basic schema. They are like variations on a theme, speciations of a genus.

While joy leaves unspecified what the nature of the concern and its satisfaction is, the others specify it: In *Schadenfreude* it has to be an evil; in pride it has to be an excellence associated with oneself; in triumph it has to be a triumph; in hope it has to be a prospect; and so forth. Each of these objects has a narrative structure that is richer than that of joy as such.

Hereafter I will forsake the language of "positive" and "negative" emotions because of its ambiguity, though I'll retain it using scare-quotes when in close dialogue with interlocutors who use it. Hedonically "positive" emotions I will call "pleasurable" and morally "positive" emotions I will call "good"; hedonically "negative" emotions I will call "distressing" and morally "negative" emotions I will call "bad." Joy can be good or bad, but it is always pleasant.

### *A Challenge to the Simplicity Thesis*

Let me now strengthen my simplicity claim by considering a recent paper that disputes it. Watkins et al. 2018, state that "joy can be distinguished from other positive emotions both in appraisals and function" (p.2). This is correct, in view of the foregoing discussion, because joy *per se* is not the same as any of the other "positive" emotions. It is not identical with pride, gratitude, or any or all of the other pleasurable emotions. That is

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<sup>2</sup> Vaillant associates joy especially with triumph.

because the other emotions are *speciations* of joy. But Watkins et al. take the statement to be a critique of my view, because they think that the “appraisal structure” — what I have called the “narrative structure” — of joy is more complex than that of the other “positive” emotions (p.2). If this were true, then joy’s appraisal structure could not be the form of all the other pleasurable emotions. What is their case for the complexity of joy’s appraisal structure?

In a conceptual section of the paper titled “What is Joy?” Watkins et al. note that the intentional object of joy is something perceived as good, and they canvass some opinions about further qualities that a person must attribute to that good to experience joy in response to it. They mention the following: 1) it is something that the person *has been longing for*; 2) the good thing is such as to suggest that the person is *favored* or *blessed*; 3) the good thing is seen as *not owed* to the person who experiences joy in response to it; 4) its goodness *surpasses one’s expectations*; 5) it is seen as coming by a “*turning of fortune* or a redemptive twist, (McAdams, 2006) where something good follows on the heels of something bad”; 6) the good “involves some kind of *triumph after all seemed lost*”; 7) the good is “*consistent with one’s life plan*”; 8) the good thing indicates “*increased connection* with something good”; 9) the good thing belongs to a “situation of *secure attachment*.” Watkins et al. are making the point that joy has a very complex appraisal structure, perhaps even uniquely complex among the “positive” emotions. And it does indeed if 1)–9) are all necessary conditions for an emotion episode’s counting as joy!

All of these conditions are satisfied in *some* instances of joy, but some of them are more typical, or even required, conditions for more specific pleasurable emotion types. For example, 5) is characteristic of the kind of joy that we call “*relief*.” 2) and 3) seem to belong to *gratitude* (Watkins et al. confirm this judgment, p. 9), and to joy only to the extent that gratitude is a kind of joy. 4) belongs with joyful *surprise*. 6) belongs to the joy that we call “*triumph*.” Watkins et al. reject conditions 2) (favored or blessed) and 3) (unowed) as conditions for the object of joy, remarking that *instead*, these are conditions for gratitude:

in factor analyses gratitude and joy always emerged as distinct factors. Indeed, even though the DPES [Dispositional Positive Emotions Scale] does not have an explicit gratitude factor, one seemed to emerge that was distinct from the joy factor, and the item ‘I consistently receive blessings that seem undeserved’ (designed to tap the ‘unowed’ aspect of joy), loaded strongly on this factor. These findings contradict theories maintaining that gratitude is a form of joy (Watkins et al. 2018, p. 13).

The final inference in this quotation is invalid. Factor analysis shows only that people distinguish gratitude and joy, not that gratitude is not a kind of joy. To say so would be like pointing out that in factor analyses, people distinguish the categories ‘mammal’ and ‘raccoon,’ and concluding that this shows that raccoons aren’t mammals.

The only condition that’s strictly necessary for joy is that the object is taken to be (“seen as”) something good. Watkins et al. don’t claim that 1)–9) are necessary, or *defining* conditions for joy; they just say they are prototypical. I doubt that they are all

prototypical for joy *as such*, but if they are, they are even more prototypical for more specific emotion types. In fact, 5) seems to be *necessary* for relief, 2) and 3) for gratitude, 4) for joyful surprise, and 6) for triumph.

Watkins et al. say that, though gratitude is not a sub-species of joy, it is “related to” joy, and they speculate that dispositional gratitude (the trait of being a grateful person) makes a person more prone to experience joy. This claim is tautological if gratitude is a kind of joy, since dispositional gratitude is a disposition to gratitude. But it may be non-tautologically true as well if the following is roughly correct: Being a grateful person has a tendency to make one better liked by fellow human beings, and being well-liked tends to bring good things into one’s life; so the grateful person will tend to have more occasions for joys in general than a less grateful person.

Watkins et al. seem to be especially interested in the relation of gratitude to joy, but they might have studied any of the pleasurable emotions in relation to joy. And we can expect that factor analyses of appropriate questionnaires would yield similar results for any of them, namely, that pride, triumph, relief, hope, etc. will all belong to different, but “related,” factors. At any rate, this is what we would expect if they are all sub-species of joy.

Some people feel that an emotion is not joy unless it reaches an intensity threshold. H. K. Sloan, for example, says, “. . . joy, by its nature, involves a feeling over a particular threshold. Joy cannot be joy without a certain intensity which the designation happiness, in the psychological sense, does not convey” (*Journal of Value Inquiry* (2011) 45:419–431 DOI 10.1007/s10790-011-9297-6, p. 420). The first definition in the OED supports Sloan: “A vivid emotion of pleasure arising from a sense of well-being or satisfaction; the feeling or state of being highly pleased or delighted; exultation of spirit; gladness, delight.” Watkins et al. seem not to want to impose an intensity condition on joy, and I think they are right not to do so. One of the positively scored items on their Dispositional Joy Scale reads, “I consistently feel a subtle but enduring feeling of joy.” I think there is nothing paradoxical about such expressions as “a mild joy,” “calm joy,” “faint feeling of joy,” “an almost indiscernible joy,” and the like.<sup>3</sup>

### *Joy as a Virtuous Emotion*

The case of *Schadenfreude* shows that not all joy is virtuous. Some joy is downright vicious. In fact, all of the pleasurable emotions can be vicious. One can hope for a disaster; triumph and pride can be invidious; and so forth. But a lot of joys are just trivial — not especially evil, but not virtuous either. For example, I may be joyful that I was able to get 50 gallons of filtered water from just one \$13 filter. The triviality of this joy is a function of the triviality of my concern to get my money’s work in water filters. Compare this with joy over a baby’s healthy birth. That joy has some moral depth because the concern on which it turns has moral depth. In general, people can care about moral goods: human welfare, justice for all, the preservation of the natural world, the

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<sup>3</sup> I am grateful to Matthew Wilson for help in understanding the paper by Watkins et al.

flourishing of one's friends, the worship of the true God. When such concerns seem to be satisfied, the resultant joys share in their moral depth, and merit the name of virtuous joy. An example is the joy that many good people felt at the end of apartheid in South Africa. But since the virtue resides primarily in the concern, it seems that "negative" emotions based on that same concern can be equally virtuous: If you are a just person, and see rampant and intractable injustice all around you, you may feel virtuous disappointment, regret, anger, fear, or even despair. Emotional pleasure has no monopoly on the morally admirable among emotions.

### *Joy as a Trait*

Some people are more prone to positive emotions than others. This may be due to temperament, a proneness to be in a "positive" mood. Such people are generally inclined to look on the bright side, to be hopeful, grateful, and proud (invidiously or not) of their achievements, their children, their friends, and their abilities. In sum, they are joyful *persons*. If their joys are vicious, I think they will be less sustainable than if they are virtuous. Generally, virtue tends to make life better, and thus to afford more occasions for joy. But it seems at least imaginable that someone have a life dominated by evil joys. Such a person would be viciously joyous, but in most people, I think joyousness tends toward virtue.

### *Joy as a Virtue*

The apostle Paul lists joy as one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, along with others such as love, longsuffering, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5.22–23). The context suggests that Paul is not here talking about an emotion, but about something more like a trait of character — a disposition of mind and heart that is characteristic of persons who are deeply involved in the fellowship of Christ-worship, which Paul takes to be fellowship with the Holy Spirit of God.

Joy as a fruit of the Spirit differs from a virtuous disposition to joy such as the disposition to rejoice when justice prevails, because the situational object of the emotion of joy in this case is invariable. It's a fixed historical truth that functions like an eternal truth. Paul speaks frequently of rejoicing "in the Lord," and sometimes this rejoicing is about some event that Paul takes the Lord to have had a hand in, such as the faithfulness of the church at Rome or at Philippi. But sometimes, I think, and always in the background, he has in mind the central event of the gospel: "the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ," to use the words of the General Thanksgiving prayer in the *Book of Common Prayer*. The reason for calling this disposition 'joy,' even though it isn't properly an emotion that goes by that name, is that it regularly and consistently *issues* in that and other positive emotions, and does not, like the virtuous love of justice, ever issue in any emotion of the "negative" types. The disciple's setting her mind on the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ yields the emotion of joy because she loves the Lord and cares about the redemption that he has brought about. It's because of the invariance of the "situation" of God's having redeemed the world in Christ that Paul can exhort his readers to "rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4.4). By contrast, in the

face of the spottiness of the occurrences of justice in the world, it would not be good advice to “rejoice in justice always.”

### *Pure Joy*

The “positive” emotions all are construals of their objects as good. You might say that the formal intentional object of joy is the good. “Positive” emotions other than joy all pick up on an *aspect* of the good, the good from some particular angle — as relief from something bad, as in the future, as received gratis from a benefactor, as elevating oneself, etc. Joy as such, as the general form of the pleasurable emotions, sees the object simply as good. Goodness is perhaps never seen simply as such, and not from any particular angle. But surely we are sometimes emotionally impressed with the goodness of something, without seeing it from the angle of any of the other *named* pleasurable emotions. You see your children playing happily and harmoniously together. You’re not thinking of this as a gift (gratitude), or as auguring good prospects (hope), or as a relief from recent wrangling (relief), or as an accomplishment of your own wise parenting (pride) (though it may *be* a gift, a sign of hope, a change from recent wrangling, and an accomplishment of your wise parenting). You see it simply as something lovely. This would be a case of simple joy. Maybe when Paul encourages his churches to rejoice in the Lord, he is simply recommending that they contemplate the goodness of the Lord and what God has done.

### *Joy as an Epistemic Power*

Joy functions as a kind of *understanding*: Imagine someone who receives good news, but without experiencing any joy in it. If the news really is good news *for the one who receives it*, and he assents to what we’ve told him, our response to him will be, “You don’t understand what I’m telling you.” First, we’ll naturally think that he’s missing some of the facts or implications of the facts that we’re relating. But if it turns out that he can perform flawlessly on a factual/logical exam about what we have told him, we’ll have to conclude that, though he “understands” in one sense what we have told him, he doesn’t see the goodness in it. He doesn’t see how the things we’ve narrated to him amount to something good. (Imagine that he’s clinically depressed, or that he has a damaged pre-frontal cortex but is otherwise intellectually intact.) His failure to respond to this good news with joy is also a failure to understand what we have reported.

We’ve seen that joy is not infallibly *right* about the good. When people rejoice in what is not good, their joy subverts them, and they verge, not just on failing to understand what is good, but on positively *misunderstanding* it. If they assent to their joy by endorsing it in their hearts, it leads them into misunderstanding and darkness. Just as we don’t always assent to what our eyes tell us (seeing is *not* necessarily believing), we don’t always assent to our joys, and can protect ourselves to some extent against the bad effects of unwise joy by wisely withholding our assent. Good people who feel *Schadenfreude* often know that it’s deceptive, and undertake disciplines to correct for the distortion. However, merely feeling *Schadenfreude* while withholding endorsement from it is somewhat confusing, because, though one clearly *disbelieves* that the object of *Schadenfreude* is

good, it still *appears* to one as good. The best epistemic situation vis-à-vis evil is to feel repugnance or one of the other distressing emotions (anger, regret, guilt, shame, disgust, fear, or some other emotion, depending on the particular context of the evil).

### *Joy as Instantiating Goodness of Will*

Episodes of joy, like episodes of other emotions that may be based on virtuous concerns, are concrete instantiations — situational precipitates — of those concerns. They have a status analogous to that of actions motivated by the same concerns. (As Aristotle says, a virtue is a *hexis* with respect to actions *and* passions, namely, a *hexis* that yields *correct* actions and passions. And I am saying that concerns are the chief ingredient of such *hexeis*.) Gratitude has a characteristic action-expression: thanking, making the benefactor aware of one's joy in his gift and his benevolence. The action of thanking, then, is an *expression* of gratitude, and an instantiation or concretion of the grateful person's concerns for the benefit and for the benevolence of the benefactor and for the benefit *as* an expression of the benefactor's benevolence. Does joy have a characteristic action-expression? Yes, I think the very general word 'celebration' denotes a type of action that is a special expression of joy. This I will treat under another heading, but my present point is that the joy itself, when it is about something genuinely and deeply good, is a precipitate of the concern on which it is based. When the concern is virtuous, the joy is a precipitate of the virtue.

### *Joy as a Product of Religious Discipline*

In each of the discourses in Part 2 of *Christian Discourses*, Kierkegaard seeks to elicit the reader's joy about the reader's suffering by placing it in the framework of an eternal truth about the relation of suffering to the good. The title of each discourse is, "The Joy of It: That Hardship Does Not Take Away But Procures Hope," "The Joy of It: That One Suffers Only Once But Is Victorious Eternally," and so forth. The reader who succeeds in contextualizing his suffering in this way applies the eternal truth to the narrative of his own suffering — say, a narrative of personal loss — and thus re-construes his larger situation as it impinges on his concern for the eternal. Kierkegaard presents considerations about which he invites the reader to think, and the reader's considering these considerations, taking them into account, meditating on them, leads, possibly and ideally, to a transformed construal of the reader's situation-in-life, a construal amounting to joy.

Kierkegaard also instructs and encourages the reader in the art of considering. Note that he calls the discourses in *Works of Love* "deliberations." In presenting "upbuilding" considerations, Kierkegaard is following the lead of the apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians where he says, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — **meditate** on these things." This consideration of what is good, this setting the mind on the things of the Spirit (Romans 8), is our primary access, leverage,

handle, control, in the cultivation of the highest and best joy. It is likely to recruit our concern for things eternal in such a way as to manifest (instantiate) it in joy.

### *Joys and Other Kinds of Enjoyment*

We can distinguish at least three kinds of pleasures: sensory pleasures, emotional pleasures, and activity pleasures, though in human experience these mix with and enhance one another in various ways.

Sensory pleasures are experiences that come through modifications of our sensory organs. Flavors accessed by our tongues can be pleasurable, as can arrangements of color and shape as accessed by our eyes and patterns and combinations of pitches arranged rhythmically as accessed by our ears. There are pleasures of touch: the sensation of warmth when we have felt cold, the sensation of cool water lapping against our feet on a hot day, the pleasures of sexual contact. Many sensory pleasures are felt at particular bodily locations — *in* the tongue, *in* the hands or feet (the warming example and the lapping example), *on* the tongue, etc. But the pleasures of music and of beautiful visual displays seem, to me at least, not to be as specifically located in the ears and eyes. After Beethoven went deaf, he experienced musical pleasures without the benefit of input from his ears, yet the pleasure was still elicited by “sound.” But the point is that the sensory pleasures are all closely tied to activation of the sensory organs.

Emotions sometimes have more or less detectable sensory concomitants (sensations in the skin and gut, feelings of muscular tension), but those sensations are not the locus of emotional pleasure. To me, the sensations associated with emotions seem to be neither very pleasant nor terribly unpleasant (compare the pleasures of taste and audition), and their hedonic character certainly does not match the enormous pleasure of some joys, or the misery of grief and despair. I have argued that joy is satisfaction of a concern: it is “seeing” something we care about in a condition that satisfies our concern about it. As such, this is quite a different kind of pleasure than pleasures of the senses.

Aristotle discusses what may be a third kind of pleasure, though he doesn’t distinguish it from emotional pleasures. It is the pleasure of unimpeded competent activity. It’s the kind of pleasure a craftsman takes while engaged in the activity of her craft, the kind a good tennis player experiences on a day when the activity is not disturbed by environmental conditions, defective equipment, an unskilled partner, and the like. It is true that the good craftsman may take emotional pleasure in the good outcome of the various stages of her craft (satisfaction of her concern for the outcome at each stage), and the tennis player may take pleasure in achieving the goal of winning a match, or at his success at some stage in the activity. This pleasure seems to be different from joy in the outcome of the activity or joy in the anticipated outcome (hope) or joy in being the agent of an excellent outcome (pride), or any of the other pleasurable emotions. It is the enjoyment of the activity, of being *in the flow* of the activity. It is a kind of joy particularly connected to agency, but isn’t the same as pride, another kind of joy in one’s agency. If you take pleasure in someone else’s activity, the pleasure isn’t activity pleasure. Unlike sensory pleasures, this kind of pleasure seems to be a kind of joy, even if

it doesn't have quite the usual profile of emotion. Celebration, as a kind of activity, is enjoyable without necessarily being something one is joyful *about*. Of course, one might be joyful about celebrating, but that would be different from the joy of celebrating. Just as joy the emotion can be enhanced by and can enhance sensory pleasures, it can be enhanced by and enhance pleasure in activity. In fact, all three kinds of pleasure can interact and interpenetrate one another, having in common what we might call "euphoria" (contrast with dysphoria).<sup>4</sup>

### *Joy in the Excellence of One's Own Agency*

The apostle Paul sometimes uses *kauchaomai* (boast, boast about, take pride in, glory (v.); rejoice, be glad [according to a NT Greek dictionary]) in a morally and spiritually unobjectionable way. I think that *kauchaomai* can be either spiritually objectionable or not, depending on how the object of joy is more precisely taken (construed). In most passages, Paul uses the word for illegitimate boasting or sinful pride. But he also says, "For our *καύχησις* is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity [generosity, *□πλότητι*] and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you" (2 Corinthians 1.12). Here Paul's joy is emotional joy. It is not activity joy, because here he is thinking *back* on his activity. It is joy in his own agency, in the fact that *he* has *acted* well, making good and faithful use of the grace that has been given him. He seems to be taking *credit* for the goodness of his good use of God's grace to him, just as he takes *responsibility* or *discredit* for having persecuted the church (I Corinthians 15.9). Paul is here "feeling good" about how he has acted. His "boasting" would be sinful pride if he thought he could do so independently of God's grace, or if he took his good demeanor as the basis of God's favor toward him, or if he rejoiced in his being intrinsically superior to other apostles (any of these might qualify as "fleshly wisdom" and as sinful pride). But none of these things is implied by his *καύχησις*.

### *Answers to Paul Heck's Three Questions*

- Do emotions have religious/spiritual value and purpose?

Joy and other emotions have spiritual value when they are directed at good spiritual things, such as the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, the means of grace, and the hope of glory. They are valuable as concretions of our concern (virtue) for these good things; they are an epistemic access or contact with these goods, a way of not only

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<sup>4</sup> Further development of the Aristotelian idea and its relation to emotional joy will result from considering Mihali Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. At one point Csikszentmihalyi gives what we may take as reason for assimilating activity joy to emotional joy. He suggests that, at any moment in competent unimpeded activity, we have some goal (say, to serve the tennis ball to just *that* corner of the court), and when we succeed we feel ordinary emotional joy: the satisfaction of a concern. If we are to show that activity pleasure is not just a kind of emotional pleasure, we will need to show that this is not a complete explanation of activity pleasure.

acknowledging, but of appreciating them. They are ways in which we participate in these good things of God's activity and provision, and are thus the personal "substance" of our fellowship with God and God's people.

- What is the relationship between emotions and affects such as pleasure and pain?

Emotions are modes of pleasure (joy, gratitude) and distress (regret, sorrow). They are not the only modes. Two other kinds are *sensory* pleasures and distresses, and pleasures and distresses of *activity*. In general, emotional pleasures are *satisfactions* of our concerns, and emotional distresses are *frustrations* of our concerns. Since the central species of virtue is intelligent concerns, these pleasures and pains are expressions and precipitates of human virtues. When those concerns are for spiritual objects — for example, righteousness, the kingdom of God — they are spiritual virtues, and their emotional "outputs" are spiritual emotions.

- Does devotion require a correct set of emotions?

A "yes" to this question follows from the thesis that emotions can be evil as well as trivial. If devotion is concern for spiritual objects, it will require emotions that express such concern, and it is an understatement to say that not all emotions do so.